

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 4]

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

46th Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 29th March, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

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 Education (Absent)

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister Trade (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Absent)

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

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

Appointed Ministers

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

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

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

Dr. the Hon. Sylvia Talbot,
Minister of Health (Absent)

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture (Absent)

Mr. W. Haynes,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

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
(Absent)

Other Members

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

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr.C.B. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition (Absent – on leave)
Mr. Ram Karran (Absent)
Mr. R. Chandisingh (Absent – on leave)
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P.,
Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. A.H. Hamid, J.P.
Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. 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
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholā Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mrs. R.P. Sahoye
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent – on leave)
(Absent – on leave)

United Force

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

(Absent – on leave)
(Absent – on leave)

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

OFFICERS

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2.p.m.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Leave to Members**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for two weeks from today and also to the hon. Members Mr. Bhola Persaud, Mrs. DaSilva and Mr. M.F. Singh for today.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES****FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 1 OF 1971**

Be it resolved that the committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for 1970, totalling \$1,540,317.36. [**The Minister of Finance**]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 80 of the Constitution of Guyana, I hereby signify that the Cabinet has recommended that Financial Paper No. 1 of 1971 for consideration by the Assembly.

The Chairman: We will now consider it page by page, but will hon. Members please indicate the items on which they wish to speak?

Mr. Jagan: I wish to speak on subhead 1, item 4. Mr. R.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Item 5.

The Chairman: Will the hon. Member Mr. Jagan please proceed.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, the voted provision under Head 9 – Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, subhead 9 – Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries the Minister is now asking for \$7,751. Was this increase due to more persons being appointed during this year? Or was it due to the fact that the amount previously voted was inadequate to pay the persons who were employed?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, the Opposition always had, and still do have reservations about this particular item on the Supplementary Estimates. Subhead 10 – Community Development Workers: It is our view that person selected as Community Development workers are not really persons with a particular skill. It is our view that this provision is there to employ party hacks and members. Thus the Opposition would like the Minister to tell us why the need for an increase?

The Government has been talking about people doing self-help work throughout the country and saying that there is a spirit of self-help prevailing and a spirit of co-operation and what have you. If this is really true then where is there need for additional work? The Government must strive and must make efforts to persuade people to give voluntary service in community work instead of calling on Parliament to increase this already high sum under the item “Community Development Workers”. In the Estimates there is provision for community development officers. In my view those are legitimate officers who have got some functions to perform, who are skilled and who are experienced and have a job to do. We cannot support an item to find jobs for the boys.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Chairman, I think my hon. friend Mr. Jagan realizes that this supplementary expenditure is all for 1970. Regardless of how carefully one calculates, when it comes to the end of the year, there will be

certain figures that will come forward to be noted so as to make sure that the actual amount is correct.

2.25 p.m.

In this case, the ministerial private secretaries were appointed late last year and during the time of calculation, it was difficult to give any exact amount. This figure is just to round it off.

As far as the Head, Community Development Workers, is concerned, I do not think anybody would speak against that Head because, notwithstanding that you have community development officers, the circumstances of development in Guyana demand that we have extra committee people to undertake certain tasks and assignments. I am certain people in every walk of life, regardless of their political affiliations, have benefited tremendously by the organisation of this type of worker. Moreover, this country saves millions of dollars due to the activity of these people, motivating our community so that they will do, by self-help, work that is valued at millions of dollars.

I have a long list of jobs that have been undertaken and done, which other Governments would have had to pay in cash for, but by inspiring and motivating people, we have been able to get them to give voluntary service. Think of the national highway project: That alone can cover everything that one can dream about, where people have been motivated and inspired to give of their services for freely so that the development of this country can go on. It is surprising that any member, in this House, would question this small amount when the benefit from it could be summed up in millions of dollars.

The Chairman: Page 2.

Mr. Teekah: Item 7.

Mr. Jagan: Item 10.

Mr. Hamid: Item 11 and 12.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: Item 7, Promotion of Youth work. During the Budget Debate, I expressed the view that much more needs to be done for the youth of Guyana. I even called for a Ministry of Youth and the greater involvement of youth at the national level. I was looking at the results of the Cabinet reshuffle in the New Year but, to my disappointment, there was no Minister of Youth. This afternoon, I should like to say very clearly that Youth, responsibility for youth, vehicles such an important segment of the Guyanese society, ought not to be hitched to the Office of the Prime Minister because that is a very wide Ministry and, indeed, the necessary supervision is lacking as far as youth work is concerned. Inefficiency in youth work comes about as a result of a lack of adequate supervision.

The National Youth Council, for example, does not function. It looks impressive on paper. According to item 7, Promotion of Youth, the sum of \$35,000 was voted last year. The Press will carry the news that the sum of \$13,991 has been voted to increase the sum voted last year and so the nation feels that very much is being done for the youth of Guyana. But when one looks at the results of what was in fact done, one is not at all impressed. The record on paper bears no relation to reality and this is why we would like to call from this side of the House for a new look at the youth of Guyana.

I do not know if the National Youth Council meets but I know the representatives of the P.Y.O. on the National Youth Council has never since he was appointed been invited to a meeting of the National Youth Council and so one concludes that the National Youth Council does not meet.

The second point is that there is to be celebrated National Youth Week in May this year, and to show you, sir, and the members on the Government side what I mean when I talk about inefficiency, I want to refer to a letter from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Youth Division, dated 26th march, inviting the P.Y.O. to take part in a meeting, in relation to National Youth Week celebrations the following day, 27th March, at 10 o'clock, to plan a rally to commemorate National Youth Week. This was very important youth week that was being planning and they wanted to make it a success. When I went to my office at about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, I found it, under the door, this letter inviting my organisation, the P.Y.O., to attend a meeting on the following day at 10 o'clock in the morning.

We did not attend because it was too late. We did not have enough time. The point is, we do things democratically. We have to meet. We have to discuss who will be the representative of the organisation. We have to discuss what should be discussed at the meeting, what ideas to introduce for National Youth Week this year. If one is given notice of a week or two in advance of such a meeting, then the organisation can meet and put forward ideas which can be taken to such a meeting in order to make the celebrations a success. That is what we are concerned about. But this is not being done.

No matter what any apologist for the Youth Division or any department of Government would say, the fact is that very little is being done in this country for youth. How many playing fields were established last year? how many new libraries were set up during last year? These are some of the things we want to see done because it is not good for us to put a lot of money on paper and then in fact, nothing much is being done. The Government can answer by saying: we have a sufficient number of youth work organisers appointed in 1970. Many of these officers do very little because the main administrative body, the National Youth Council, does not function. Therefore, if no programme is there, new policies cannot be worked out, no proper direction can be given and youth work, as a whole, suffers.

That is why I should like to urge the Parliamentary Secretary who is responsible for youth to see that this Division of the Prime Minister's Office is re-organised. If help is needed, then let the National Youth Council function, invite the representatives of the P.Y.O. and other youth organisations to contribute. Give them proper notices to attend meetings so that they will be able to make substantial contributions towards the success of Guyana.

Mr. Jagan: In view of the fact that item 10 Contribution to the International Commission of Tourists is new item, I wonder if my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General will explain on what basis contribution was worked out for Guyana.

Mr. Hamid: On item 8, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles, additional provision of \$3,612 is being sought. This has something to do with the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. This sum of money is "to meet increased maintenance costs and unanticipated heavy repairs." I wonder whether this has something to do with the accident in which the Prime Minister's Austin Princess was involved. I was made to understand that this car was in a serious accident in which it was partly destroyed. Inasmuch as a cow damaged this car I wonder why it should cost so much. I saw this car in the compound on the last occasion we were here and the engine was running for about two hours. I asked the driver what was responsible for that and he said that since the car was damaged the engine cannot stop; it has to be running constantly.

This is a heavy cost, which falls on the taxpayers of this country, for bullet-proof car. I was wondering whether this is not money wasted on a car of that kind. I would be glad if the Minister, in his reply, could tell us something which we would consider a good reason for increasing this amount.

On item 12, Contribution to flood relief efforts in Pakistan, I would say that we on this side have no objection to the sum of \$5,000 being contributed but we are worried in that this Government has seen it fit to grant a sum of \$5,000 to the people of Pakistan for flood relief whereas absolutely nothing was earmarked for our own Guyanese in the Cane Grove area who

suffered because of floods. For several years members on this side of the House have been trying to find a way to help these unfortunate people whose livelihood depends on farming and who lost everything that they had. Government has not found it possible even to send someone to assess the damage in the Cane Grove area. I am sure that the Government will be able, through the Minister, to tell us what will be done to assist our farmers in Guyana who suffered because of floods.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal): Mr. Chairman, may I reply to the question that was asked in relation to item 10. The question was: On what basis was the contribution to the International Commission of Jurists calculated? The answer is that it was regarded as a token sum and that it was contributed in conjunction and after consultation with our Commonwealth Caribbean colleagues, the upshot being that Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana have each undertaken to contribute a sum of \$5,000 a year towards the cost of the Commission.

This matter was, in fact, very fully dealt with when the Annual Estimates were being debated and I should like to refer my hon. and learned Friend to page 36 of the Estimates for 1971, which are conveniently laid on the Table today. A reference to the contribution for 1971 will be found under subhead 29.

A question was raised on item 12 concerning the Ministry of External Affairs but, as the hon. Member himself said, it was not a question relating to this expenditure but directed to other extraneous matters not the subject of consideration on the Supplementary Paper.

The Chairman: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary Mr. Thomas.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister (Mr. Thomas): In relation to the question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Teekah, it is to be noted that the National Youth Council is again under attack by the hon. Member. This is particularly noteworthy in the light of

the fact that in 1963 99.9 per cent of the membership of the National Youth Council, which advises Government on policy relating to youth, was from the People's Progressive Party. The only two members of the Council who were not members of that party were the Minister of Home Affairs and Mr. T.A. Sancho.

Unfortunately, there were on this Council people who then had no knowledge or understanding of the aspirations of young people. I doubt whether they now have such knowledge and understanding.

The members of the Council included three Minister of the then Government, the hon. Member Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, the then Minister of Education and the Deputy Prime Minister.

With the restructuring of the National Youth Council we have attempted to allow young people themselves to be on the Council. The hon. Member's organisation, the Progressive Youth Organisation, was invited to send a representative. It was about six months before a name was submitted. The member was summoned to meetings of the Council. The Council is doing a fine job. This is evident by the fact that its draft for a programme for Youth Week in 1971 has come out two months before the actual date for the celebrations.

The question about the playing fields is a simple one to answer in that during 1970 we attempted to rehabilitate almost all the playing fields in Georgetown. The P.Y.O. was part and parcel of the rehabilitation of one of these playing fields, the one in the Campbellville area. It appears to me, therefore, that the Chairman of the P.Y.O. has no knowledge of the part the P.Y.O. played at that time.

2.45 p.m.

In passing, I must say that there have been discussions since we started to plan our programme of action during Youth Week 1971. So far, the hon. member who is Chairman of the

P.Y.O. has indicated his willingness to participate in the programme. I sincerely look forward to the assistance of this organisation along with others.

Mr. Teekah: The hon. Member has refused to answer why the National Youth Council is not functioning.

The Chairman: I think the hon. Parliamentary Secretary has replied to the points raised.
Page 3.

Mr. Lall: I wish to speak on items 14 and 19.

Mr. Sutton: Items 14 and 19.

Mr. Jagan: Item 15.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Lall.

Mr. Lall: First of all, I want to make an observation. It is stated in the Supplementary Estimates that voted provision for 1971 under Head 19 – Ministry of Home Affairs, subhead 5 – Telephones, was \$150,000, whereas if you turn to page 51 of the Estimate4s you will see that voted provision for 1971 was \$18,000. [**Dr. Reid:** “This is 1970!”] I do not know if I am mistaken, but have seen that the Estimates call for \$180,000. I thought that this was a Supplementary Estimate for 1971. [**Hon. Member:** “No!”] I should like to raise the point that the actual amount spent in 1969, was \$113,556. This amount was voted for that year, but the legend here states “to meet expenditure on additional telephone facilities and the payment of 1969 account”. The question I should like to ask is: what is the amount due for 1969? Since the actual amount voted for 1969, was \$113,556, I should like to know what is the balance for 1969. It you permit me, as I am standing. I should like to speak on item 19, maintenance of Dogs, Ministry of Home Affairs – Police.

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Lall: I should like to know the number of dogs in the Force in 1969, what was the number in 1971, and how many we have now. I notice here that provision is now sought for an additional \$3,000.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

The Jagan: Mr. Chairman, when we debated the Estimates on the last occasion Item 15, Ministry of Home Affairs, subhead 13 – National Registration I referred to the provision dealing with National Registration which were at page 59 of the Annual Estimate. Clearly one would see from this that the sum of \$150,000, was the voted Provision in 1970. The 1970 Revised Estimates, \$80,000, and then the Estimates for 1971, \$50,000. What I am concerned with is the 1970 Approved and Revised Estimates. When these Estimates were being debated the Government gave us the impression that the sum of \$80,000 would be the only amount required for 1970 although the sum voted was \$150,000. Then to make it worse it seemed to indicate that in 1971 only \$50,000 would be needed. But when one looks at the supplementary paper now presented one sees that the voted provision was \$150,000, which was stated in the Estimates, and now another \$50,000 is required which means, in effect, that the sum spent was \$200,000.

2.55 p.m.

The hon. Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Clarke) was not the Minister on that occasion. One would wish to enquire, since this estimate is for 1970, how it is that at the end of December the Government could not have said what would have been the amount required for the salaries of the people on the staff up to the end of December. One can understand \$5,000 or \$10,000 in respect of salaries, but surely, the Government could not make a mistake to the extent of \$50,000 in respect of people who should have been paid and who, the Government knew, were on the staff and who would have had to be paid up to the end of December, 1970. Can the Minister

explain this to us? This is not an expense which the Government could not have foreseen, it is not a case where bills were outstanding and the people did not render their accounts to the Government. This is in respect of salaries.

Mr. Sutton: I noticed that when I mentioned that I would speak on items 14 to 19, a certain amount of levity was present. It seemed to be a joke. The reason I said 14 to 19 is because the general principle which I am about to discuss seems to run through not only the items on this particular page but also all the pages of this Financial Paper.

Starting at item 14, Telephones, we see that the previous supplementary provision was \$189,650, and the supplementary provision now sought is \$10,350, when the original estimate was \$150,000. As I said, I would crave your indulgence to give me permission to discuss all the items at the same time in order to illustrate the point I wish to make. In the case of National Registration, item 15, and item 18, Revenue Protection, what is rather disturbing is that these supplementary provisions are sought even though it would appear that at all times the requirement of the departments in question could have been calculated in advance. It gives one a sense of alarm when these estimates are put before us in the early part of the year because it seems that what is done is done on a more or less ad hoc basis rather than a basis of considered calculation.

It is generally considered as a good financial practice that you must have, under certain circumstance, supplementary estimates, but supplementary estimates, if you are to run the affairs of the Government based on properly prepared plans, should never exceed 2 to 5 per cent. But what do we find? We find in the case of item 14, the total of supplementary estimates originally granted and now sought exceeds 100 per cent of the original estimate. One asks oneself: by what measure was the original estimate arrived at when all that is said here in the explanatory note is, "To meet expenditure on additional telephone facilities and the payment of 1969 accounts?" certainly, when the supplementary estimates were passed for 1970, it was then known what the 1969 accounts would be.

If additional telephones are going to be put in departments of the Ministry of Home Affairs, it must be done as a result of some planning in advance. Are we to understand that the \$150,00 was an estimate pulled out of the air and the additional estimates was only arrived at after the work was done? One would, therefore, wonder how we arrive at the answer to the question, whether we can afford this or whether we can afford to spend that, when it would appear that the estimates bear no relation or very little relation, to what turns out to be the true picture.

Members of the House would clearly remember that when the Budget Statement was being considered, I made this point very clearly, that the total of supplementary estimates, put before us in Capital and Current Expenditure, was in the vicinity of \$22 million, with supplementary estimates and original estimate of expenditure in the vicinity of \$200 million. That clearly shows that the government is not really trying to work within plans that are made in advance, but is prepared to spend money without taking any real cognizance of what it plans to spend. If the Government says it came up as a result of no planning, it is still a very dangerous and frightening situation because we would be told that that Government is then spending money wantonly, without previous planning, without any reference to where the money is going to come from.

The object of a Government is to ensure that the money that is required for necessary government activity is properly spent. In the case of item 15, National Registration, the excess is 33 1/3 per cent; it is about the same for item 16, Transport and Travelling; it is 8 1/2 per cent, which in proper well-organised financial circles is still considered high, for item 17, Maintenance and Operation of Air, Land and Water Transport; and for item 18, Revenue Protection, it is approximately 70 per cent. In the case of item 19, Maintenance of Dogs, certainly the Government must have known that the dogs had been ordered.

If emergencies arise, naturally, the Government must have supplementary estimates, but it is rather disturbing to see supplementary estimates of this size when it is clear that the

Government should have been able to calculate far closer to the figure that is required if it had been working to a pre-conceived and proper plan.

3.05 p.m.

Mr. Hamid: Item 14, under Ministry of Home Affairs, deals with telephones. The legend refers to “telephone facilities” and the sum to be voted is \$10,350. I would be very happy if the Minister could state what telephone facilities cause this increase. The Minister of Home Affairs is always able to come to this House and to point to a member and say, “You said so and so; you know so and so.” I would like to know if the Ministry uses this money for tapping telephones. The Minister must tell this House because it seems that he has quite a lot of information though some of it is random. He always knows what is discussed privately. Will the Minister tell us if some of this money was spent for this purpose?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Clarke): The answer to the question of item 14 is as follows: Supplementary provision in the sum of \$200,000 was required under this subhead in November 1970 to provide for additional telephone facilities and also to meet the payment of unpaid 1969 accounts. The sum of \$189,650 was then provided pending a more detailed examination of the request which was made at the time. An additional sum of \$10,350 is now being sought by this Supplementary Paper to cover the cost of the services for 1970.

My hon. Friend Mr. Jagan asks for an explanation with respect to item 15. It is very simple. The sum of \$150,000, which was approved in 1970, was a sum approved on the basis of the department being run totally on a block vote. This amount was put down. It covered personal emoluments as well as other services for that department. It was anticipated that during the year the Fixed Establishment would have been formalized and therefore one would have been able to determine exactly how many person would be working in this department.

This exercise took longer than was anticipated and, as a result, Government had to seek a further \$50,000 to carry the services of this department until the end of the year. It will be noted that the department is now properly established in 1971 and that the sum of \$156,000 was actually spent for personal emoluments in 1970. This accounts for the increase of \$50,000 which we now seek to cover.

There was a question on dogs, which was the only other substantive question raised on this page. The answer to the specific questions by my hon. Friend Mr. Harry Lall is also follows: In 1969 the establishment of dogs in the Police Force was eight and in the month of April in 1970 an unanticipated gift of six dogs came in. This gift was made by the United Kingdom constabulary. As a result we had to find money to feed and to keep the dogs. We have a total of fourteen dogs and the amount required is fairly reasonable in the circumstances. This is also in answer to the hon. Member Mr. Sutton. There were some other general comments but no specific questions. Therefore, I shall not volunteer answers to them.

Mr. Jagan: I have heard what the hon. Minister has said but I am afraid that he has not really answered my question.

I have pointed out that the sum that is now required is in respect of salaries of the staff employed, as stated in the legend. My contention is that at the end of December the Government must have known what salaries would have to be paid to these persons and this \$50,000 should have been added, if necessary, to the sum of \$80,000 that was set out in the Revised Estimates for 1970.

This has nothing to do with expenses which the Government might not have known of and which might have been submitted after December 1970. If there is some mistake the legend should state that this sum of \$50,000 is required to meet the cost of running the National Registration Centre, in which case it might be alright. If the provision is in respect of salaries,

then the Government might have known at the end of December that this expenditure would have to take place.

The Chairman: This is the first supplementary Estimate for 1971 and therefore it is the first opportunity that the Government has had to bring it.

Mr. Jagan: What I am saying is this: The Government must have known at the end of December how much salary would be required for 12970. The Estimates were prepared and were debated in December. The amount in the Revised Estimate for 1970 is \$80,000. *[Interruption.]* Even if we take into consideration what my hon. and learned Friend the Prime Minister is saying namely, that it was prepared in November, is the Prime Minister telling us that the salaries for the staff at the Registration Centre for November and December was \$50,000?

Page 4.

The Chairman: Page 3.

Mr. Lall: Items 23 and 26.

The Chairman: Proceed.

3.15 p.m.

Mr. Lall: I have noticed under item 23, Maintenance of Public Buildings, that he voted provision for 1970 was \$800,000. The previous supplementary provision for 1970 was \$400,000. We are asked now to vote for an additional \$70,000. The total supplementary provision provides half of the voted provision. I should like the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply to indicate to this House what major additional maintenance works had been done to cost \$470,000 and where they have done. It is obvious that this is over 50 per cent

of the voted provision. One would agree that the Government would anticipate in advance that it would have maintenance works to do and so it would at least vote for an amount to cover the cost of maintenance for 1970. But one observes that more than 50 per cent of the original vote has been asked for. Let the hon. Minister tell us where the additional work was done?

If you will permit me I will deal with item 26 at the same time.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Lall: Item 26. Ministry of Labour and Social Security, suspension of weighing of cane on Sugar Estates. We observe that the Government is asking for an additional \$6,000 for the appointment of two scale checkers. If the Government wants to do something meaningful for the cane farmers and the cane cutters of this country then I have submitted proposals through the union, in another capacity, that is the President of the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union. It is no use the Government doing something for the cane cutters and the cane farmers and doing it in a piecemeal way. If the Government cannot find money to protect the cane cutters and the cane farmers then tax sugar so as to get the money to protect the people who are the real producers of sugar.

During the whole of 1970 the cane cutters at Rosehall elected three workers from amongst themselves. They collected over \$1,300 and were paying for the service. But this exercise is a strenuous one, and the Government had indicated through the Minister of Labour that it is prepared to do something meaningful to help the cane cutters and the cane farmers. Why does the Government want to do it in a piecemeal way? If you are watching the scale, then you have to watch it 24 hours a day. Ask the Minister of Labour. We paid a visit to Enmore Estate on a public holiday and the amount of old iron we saw there, my God – found iron with poles that can be hung at one side of the scale so as to weigh in favour of management. I must thank the Government for allowing me to visit the sugar industry to observe. But the Government must allow my colleagues to do so too.

At Skeldon the scale was normal. I have seen weight on the northern side of the scale and a ladder leading to that weight. I went up on top of the ladder and I hung myself on the scale's shaft. I told a worker to stay on top and watch the scale when it is stamped. I told the engineer to stamp now. Sir, according to that scale, I weight between 140 and 143 lbs., but to my surprise, I weighed two tons. *[Laughter]* Which means if you take a weight and hang it at the opposite side of the scale it will give you two tons less. I made the point to the Minister of Labour. I said, "Sir we should have the mechanism on top sealed with seal coming from the Ministry of Labour and the bottom also sealed with seal from the Ministry of Labour." I do not know if the seal has yet been provided.

We are asking the Government to do something meaningful so as to protect the well-being and the welfare of the sugar workers. Let the sugar workers elect three representatives of their choice. Let it be done every crop. If their services are unsatisfactory, then another three should be elected. In this way you will be protecting your workers, you will get more revenue. Because if the people work for more wages the Government will bet more P.A.Y.E. This is constructive criticism. Maybe this is not the advice that the Government wants, but this is the advice it needs. We are giving it the advice.

At Rosehall, because the three supervisors were not at the scale mainly because of non-payment – the workers did not contributed to the pay packets of the cane cutters – and there has been a decrease in the pay packets. How did this disparity arise? When these people had three checkers they were getting \$95 to \$105 per week. Let justice be done; we do not want it to appear to be done but let it be done. It is the Government's duty to protect the citizens of Guyana and their rights. It is the duty of the Government to protect the sardines from the sharks. We are calling on this Government now to protect the cane cutters and the cane farmers by allowing them to select three representatives, to be paid by the Government, and then let the money be recouped out of taxation on sugar. I hope that this my plea will not fall on deaf ears.

The Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Carrington): This estimate includes provision for additional scale supervisors. During 1970, I had discussions with the unions, the MPCA and GAWU, on this question. I also had discussions with the SPA on the matter. It was agreed then that we should introduce the question of the election of the workers. This was the first consideration of the Government but, as you know, sir, there is in the sugar industry conflict between the unions, and we had to give way to the recognised union.

We feared then that if we did give way completely to the recognised union, the GAWU would not have been happy about the situation, so we abandoned the idea of selections. We have decided to have the nomination of these checkers by Government and this has been agreed to by the recognised union. It is agreed, and the representatives of all the unions are satisfied, that since the Government made this move to appoint the checkers, the situation on the question of weighing of canes in the sugar industry is very much improved.

We would like to go a bit further and to appoint three checkers, but to show the Government's interest in the sugar cane farmers and the workers, the Government took the initiative in appointing these person and they are presently paid from funds from the Treasury. I have discussed this with the President of the GAWU and the MPCA and I hope that when we introduce the three checkers we will be able to recoup the money from the S.P.A. This, we hope, will satisfy the workers and the peasant cane farmers.

We are still on this difficult question of having the workers elected because, at the present moment, we must deal with the recognised union, which is the MPCA. [Mr. Lall: "Which the workers do not want?"] Whether this is so or not, the MPCA is the union recognised by the SPA and we fear that if there is any such election, it may reveal a situation that may not be satisfactory to the MPCA. I think the hon. member Mr. Harry Lall knows the position and he knows as a fact that the Government is doing everything possible to avoid conflict in the sugar industry, to have stability in the sugar industry. It is for this reason that we are doing many other things in the sugar industry.

On the question of sealing, the hon. Member knows that we are now getting the seal. It is not a question of using any seal. We have to get a special seal with a stamp of the Ministry of labour to seal the weights and the scales. The hon. Member knows that in the past the test weights for the scales were checked by the employers. This was one of the points he raised and we corrected it. At the present moment, the estates' scales are checked by the Government. All of this is to remove suspicion and to give justice to the workers.

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Green): Mr. Chair, the question asked by my hon. Friend Mr. Harry Lall with respect to maintenance of public buildings, this is a problem we have in the country, and not particularly in the Ministry. When we attempted to do a number of maintenance pieces last year in an effort to improve the buildings and to prevent further decay, we were forced to exceed the provision which we had last year. I do not think the hon. Member would require details but I am sure that if he moved around Guyana – and I know he does he would notice substantial improvements, painting and other maintenance of Government buildings in every district he can think of.

The Chairman: Page 5. Will hon. members indicate the items on which they wish to speak?

Mr. Lall: Head 62 – Ministry of Finance – Accountant General, item 29, Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. This is small item. I just want a clarification from the hon. Minister of Finance. As I was looking at the Estimates, I did not see Head 62, subhead 14, Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. I wonder if the Minister can give an explanation.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, may I be allowed to say just a few words on four items, item 30, Leave Passages, Public Officers, under Head 62, Ministry of Finance – Accountant-General, item 33, Gratuities to non-pensionable officers and employees and item 34, Gratuities to Contract Officers under Head 66, Ministry of Finance – Pensions and Gratuities; and item 32, Personal Emoluments under Head 63, Ministry of Finance – Customs and Excise. One sees in

the notes the usual thing, “voted provision inadequate”, but when one looks at items 30, 33 and 34, one wonders what is the position.

In the case of item 30, the supplementary provision granted was actually 20 per cent. The supplementary now asked for is approximately a further 20 per cent. In the case of item 33, the original supplementary granted was 33 1/3 per cent, and the one now applied for is in the vicinity of 17 per cent. In the case of item 34, it is in the vicinity of 17 per cent. In the case of item 34, it is in the vicinity of 22 per cent. As I said before, it seems to me that these expenses are fully calculable factors. They could have been calculated in advance.

There is no question of leave passages having gone up. If anything, leave passages went down. One wonders how the original estimate was arrived at and why it was necessary to overspend the amount to the extent now applied for. Was there no way in which the amount could be properly calculated to avoid this supplementary?

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): I always find it extremely difficult when the hon. Member Mr. Sutton speaks. In this case, I am really not certain what was the purpose of his contribution.

It is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy what will be the total sum of money required for leave passages or gratuities. Nobody can say in advance how many public officers will opt to go on leave: how many will go on leave because of illness or because of the exigencies of personal problems: how many will retire either because they have opted to retire before reaching the compulsory retirement age or because they have been medically boarded off because, at the instance of the Government, they are required to retire.

I think that on an objective consideration of these heads one must come to the conclusion that one is in an area of controlled speculation. If any one comes anywhere near the true mark, I

think he had done well. I do not think that any reasonable person would expect subheads like these to be accurate to the nearest penny.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now go on to Capital Estimates, page 1. Will hon. Members please indicate the items on which they wish to speak.

Mr. Teekah: Division V – Prime Minister, subhead 5 – Youth Development. Items 2 and 5.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, I observe that the sum of \$105,949 is required for the Youth Corps for the year 1970. The Youth Corps featured prominently in the debate on the 1971 Budget. But I contend that the whole concepts of the Youth Corps needs re-examining. We are not opposed to there being a Youth Corps. It is probably necessary in a developing country like Guyana, but what we contend is that the youth Corps should have its aims and objectives relevant to Guyana.

First of all, military training is given in the Youth Corps. This is important if we want to teach our people the skills necessary to defend their country, but the Youth Corps goes further than that in that, after training is completed, the youths are required to settle in the interior. No doubt they are to form the basis, if not the whole, of the buffer zone in Guyana which the Prime Minister spoke of.

It is important that Guyana should have a reserve army but what is wrong with the concept of the Youth Corps in this, and this is the reason for the large percentage of dropouts: After training, it is compulsory for the youths to live in the interior. What should be done is this: The young people of Guyana should be given training. We do not dispute this point; military

training is excellent. That they should go into the interior and settle, the P.P.P. is not against but it is important that it should be done on a voluntary basis and not made compulsory.

I should like to quote from paragraph (vii) of a brochure on the Guyana Youth Corps, which was issued by the Prime Minister's Office:

“In interviewing youths for the Youth Corps, care is taken to select primarily those who are determined to join with the Government in the development of the Interior. A youth passing through the Corps will not be encouraged at the end of his training to come back to the city or towns or villages to seek employment in the Police Force, Guyana Defence Force, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, etc.

It must be pointed out that it is not the Government's duty to find jobs on the coastlands for trained youths of the Corps. The Government is responsible first to train the youths for two years and after training to find them good lands (25 acres each) and to help them build prosperous farm villages in the interior.”

All that is said there is very good, but the fact is that this is put in language which means that it is compulsory for the youths to remain in the interior and not return to the coastlands. I think the young people of Guyana should not be compelled to go into the interior. This should be left to them as a voluntary effort. People should be inspired to go into the interior to develop it.

I was looking through the Hansards of the early 1960s and I say where the Prime Minister was criticizing very severely conditions attached to any Government project which, in effect, compelled citizens to take up a particular position. He said that people would not be inspired to do things effectively and happily and to the best of their ability if they are compelled to do such things or if they do them against their desires. Inspirations should be given to them. Confidence should be generated so that the youths themselves would want to go into the interior and thereby contribute to the development of the country

We would like to suggest very strongly that the Government should re-examine the whole concept of the Youth Corps and we on this side of the House would be willing to attend any meeting called by the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss a new concept or new approach to this whole question of the Youth Corps of Guyana. We would participate if, of course, the new objectives of the Youth Corps are relevant to the youths of this nation.

I observe that Item 5 deals with Division VI, Public Service Ministry, subhead 1 – Conditional Scholarship and Training Courses and the sum of \$136,500 is now sought. I have been doing some investigations concerning this question of conditional scholarships. From my investigation, a conditional scholarship costs the Government some five to six thousand dollars at an average. Since 1969, I have been calling for a Faculty of Technology at the University of Guyana. At first, this was ignored and then after repeated calls from this side of the House, a Division of Technical Studies was established.

Of course, there were some scholarships taken up in disciplines which we do not offer here or we will not in the very near future be providing but last year disciplines to which some of the scholarships were elected were disciplines which the University of Guyana will be offering in 1971 from their new programme. All it needed was better foresight for Government to have launched such a programme in 1970 and so that we would not have had to send students from Guyana to take up studies in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering and other subjects, which we are now offering and very soon will be offering at the University in its new Faculty of Technology, because it cost about five to six thousand dollars to provide a scholarship on what is now called a “conditional” scholarship.

I am told further that some of these students have their Bachelor's Degree and are now contemplating doing their master's Degree. If the same scholarship is offered at the University of Guyana, the cost will be very small. I think the sum of \$108 or \$112 per year is spent in fees. If you give students, as a scholarship award \$100 a month maintenance allowance, it means that the cost will be very small and from that money which is now being used to provide such

scholarships in Canada, U.K. and U.W.I. about five persons will get the same training at the University of Guyana. As a matter of fact, the original amount voted last year \$360,000 is about the same as DEMBA uses for its whole Trade School. So all it needs is better co-ordination and better planning and much of the money will be saved. May I make this further point that money spent outside the country is money lost to Guyana; money spent at the University of Guyana is money spent within Guyana.

Another point is that when the students are doing their practicals, for example in geology, they will be doing their practicals under European circumstances and conditions. They now will have to come back to Guyana to learn geology all over again in so far as the practical aspects are concerned; the practical training will have to be re-learnt in Guyana. So all of this could have been saved. There should be greater foresight on the part of the Government with better planning and co-ordination in its education policy in so far as training concerned and the future of the University of Guyana is concerned.

The Chairman: The hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Chairman, I had anticipated that my hon. Friend Mr. Teekah would have sought an explanation for the increased expenditure on youth development, but he did not. Instead, he proposed that the settling of graduates of the Youth Corps in the Interior should be voluntary. We agree that there must be a voluntary element. But that voluntary element is at the time of entry. That is why the brochure is published. The brochure states that if you join you are expected, on the completion of your course, to settle in the hinterland. At that point – the point of entry – you can decide you are not joining for this Youth Corps has as one of its chief purposes to encourage and train youths to settle and form communities in the hinterland. They need not join the Youth Corps. Therefore, I cannot agree with my hon. Friend.

He is guilty of a certain hiatus of thought and logic. There is the voluntary element there. It is not, as the hon. Member has said, that you are free to join if you want, but then you are free to leave after you have joined. No such thing. Once you have signed the contract and entered into agreement you are bound by the terms.

I could not quite follow what my hon. Friend was saying about item 5, Conditional Scholarships and Training Courses. The Department or Division, as he cares to call it, of Technical Studies at the University of Guyana does not at the moment take graduates or undergraduates through to the professional examination. Therefore, if a person is qualified to go on to a professional qualification it is not true to say that the facility is offered, in more fields on the technical side, professional qualifications.

I take the point that money spend here is better spent abroad. But (a) it depends on whether the facilities are available here and (b) one has to appreciate that there are circumstances in which it is a proper investment to spend money abroad. We, for instance, do not have the facilities for training anyone in actuarial studies. Amongst this number here, for whom the supplementary provision is asked are some who have gone to study mining engineering. We do not yet have the facilities for mining engineering. We should hope that proper arrangements could be made for us perhaps to provide training in these fields.

3.55 p.m.

Mr. Teekah: The University of Guyana is to start of course in mechanical engineering this year but still, this year, courses are being offered in mechanical engineering.

The Prime Minister: I think my hon. Friend, whose acuteness of mind has always been an object of admiration on my part, is perhaps suffering from the enervating climate today. At the University of Guyana, even if it is mechanical engineering, at this time it is up to the sub-professional level. Anyone that we send away on a course in mechanical engineering is going

away to qualify at the professional level, so it is not true to say it is a waste of time in that particular instance. But, sir, even I feel a little down in the mouth with this heat.

The Chairman: Page 2.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, may I propose a slight textual amendment to item 6, Division VIII – Ministry of Economic Development. I ask that the words “Guyana National Co-operative Bank” be substituted for the words, “Co-operative Credit Bank”

Mr. Jagan: Item 6, Guyana National Co-operative Bank. When one looks at this item, one sees voted provision \$750,000 under Code No. 007, 021 Division VII, Ministry of Economic Development. Your Honour, I looked in vain at page 42 of the Estimates of Current and Capital Expenditure for this item. I cannot find it at page 42, I wonder whether the Minister can give us some explanation as to whether this sum has already been spent, or is being spent, although it was not voted, since it does not appear in the estimates.

For the legend, one sees that \$30,000 is now required to provide for the continuation of work on the Markenburg Branch. Where is that? I presume that the Minister is referring to the Linden Branch of the Guyana National Co-operative Bank, but what I want to find out is whether the \$30,000 is for the continuation of the work which has already been started and which has cost \$750,000. I want to know whether the voted sum of \$750,000 has been used for the construction of this branch. Could the hon. Minister tell us, because I can find nowhere in this page where this item has been previously voted for.

Mr. Sutton: Item 7, Agro-Industrial Development, under Division VIII – Ministry of Economic Development. I notice \$256,000 is being applied for as an additional provision in connection with the Agro-Industrial investment which had an original allocation of \$600,000. In view of the situation which exists – and we are told that some difficulties have arisen in connection with the enterprise known as Global-Agri – may I ask whether these sums, \$256,000

and \$600,000, represent capital expenditure connected with this project in any way, and whether the \$256,000 which is now applied for, bearing in mind it is for 1970, was spent in connection with that particular enterprise? If so, could it be pin-pointed on which particular enterprise it was necessary for it to be spent?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I think the time is long overdue for the Government, to use Guyanese language, to make a clean breast of the Kibilibiri project. Of course, I do not want to argue about the pronunciation because the Estimate has one spelling and the Supplementary has another, but both the Minister and I know what we are speaking about. It is our view that the Government should tell this House to what extent exactly is it involved financially in that project. The original provision in the Estimate was \$220,000 and the Government is coming now to ask for more than that amount. Originally, the Government asked for \$220,000 without explaining to this honourable House the true position of this project.

The Opposition is not saying for one moment that it is against Government involvement in any project for the production of corn, because, as I pointed out in the Budget Debate, we are importing large amounts of corn and we can produce our own in this country. But it is my view and the view of the Opposition that the input we into this project is far too high for the output we will have.

I am not fascinated by the publication which states that the Minister of Agriculture went to look at this project, or the Prime Minister went to look at this project. I myself had a look at his project and I know about it: 750 acres under corn, soya beans, sorghum, etc. making a total of 1,000 acres. Mr. Speaker, that project, at the moment, is far away from answering the problem of the shortage of corn. The Government today is importing corn in Guyana when we can produce our own.

It is true that the hon. Minister of Agriculture, who was then the hon. Minister of Finance, told Mr. Stanley Green, "Leave within 72 hours or I will put you on the plane myself!" and that

with his departure we have had new directors appointed? But, Mr. Speaker, on that occasion I had cause to call for a public enquiry into the whole Global-Agri affair.

The position of this Opposition has not changed on this question. The Opposition is with those who are involved in the project at the moment to make it a success. Let me make this point clear: we wish those Guyanese who are there at the moment trying to do something with the project every success. Let me also say that the Government cannot escape its responsibility to this House and to the nation so far as the project is concerned. It must tell us exactly what has happened, to what extent the Government was involved, how much money was spent, how much money was squandered, who stole, who did not, whose head was rolled and whose head is still to be rolled.

The Government must tell us; the Government owes this nation a duty so far as this scandalous Global-Agri project is concerned and I would like, without staring much longer on this item, to call on the Government in the same breath to go deeper into the production of corn. It is true that there is a new Minister of Agriculture, but if he looks into the 1969 Report of the Ministry of Agriculture, he will see to what extent we are importing corn from abroad. Global-Agri is no boon or anything to boast about. It is far from what is required in this country at the moment.

Therefore the Government has the responsibility first and foremost to tell us more about this project. It is not impossible for the Government to present to this House a White Paper on this project giving every possible detail so that it can, indeed, redeem itself from the accusations that are being made so far as the project is concerned.

As is said, I am not here to say if the Government has really escaped its responsibility by the removal of one person. I am not here to say that. The Government must tell us, so that we can be satisfied that something positive and tangible is being done to ensure that in future the taxpayers of this country will not have to shoulder a heavy financial burden caused by mismanagement and mishandling of the project. Let the Minister tell us this afternoon to what financial extent the Government is involved, how much the whole project cost and how much the Government expects to get from it.

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, I am sorry the hon. and learned Member Mr. Derek Jagan is not in his seat to hear the reply to the rather rash question which he asked. The hon. member is by profession a lawyer and not an incompetent one. He knows as well as I do that the first rule in quoting from a document is to go to the original source. Therefore, I found it very difficult to understand how he could talk about what appears in the 1970 Estimates without looking at the 1970 Estimates.

If the hon. member will look at page 41 of the Estimates for 1970 he will see that under subhead 4 the very item which he says does not appear in the Estimates in fact appears. Having pointed that out, I do not think that I should pursue the matter any further.

With respect to the second question asked by him, as to whether this sum of \$750,000 has in fact been spent, the answer is, yes. The Guyana National Co-operative Bank has within the short space of one year grown very rapidly. In fact it has grown far more rapidly than we had expected. Even now it has become necessary to expand its physical accommodation both in Georgetown and at Linden. This sum of \$750,000 has been expended on the expansion work both in Georgetown and at Linden and the work is progressing satisfactorily.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member spoke with much emphasis on what was known last year as Global-Agri but is now more correctly named Kibilibiri Land Development Project.

As a preface to what I want to say, I should remind him that when the rice industry started in this country many years ago only a few acres were planted but a week or so ago we opened a packaging plant, the equipment for which is to the value of \$1.5 million. That is for the packaging plant alone. If we are really to diversify agriculture, then we must be given some meaningful point from which to start. This is what has happened at Kibilibiri.

As far as the money that has been used on this project is concerned, there is evidence of expenditure on the project on the project itself. There are different types of combines there; there are tractors of different types; there are bonds in preparation for what we are doing. There is a wharf; there is drying equipment for the product. There is a work-shop located there. We have fertilisers; we have equipment for spreading the fertilizer; we have equipment for spraying, for planting and for reaping. We on this side of the House are satisfied that the sum of about \$2 million, which has been spent on assets and equipment, has been properly utilized in the diversification of agriculture in this country.

And so, when we come to this House for a supplementary provision, we do so without heads bowed, because, as I have always said, words do not mean much; deed matter. I understand there is a pilot who is giving free trips to all hon. Members who would like to go and see what is happening in this area. Hon. Members are free to go. My hon. Friend went in the early stage. I am certain that if he goes now he will really have a lesson.

What is this project doing? This project is giving to our Guyanese people new skills. Of course, in the beginning we had a difficult period. That, too, is very important as far as this Government is concerned. When people are carrying them for a ride, some Government have no guts; they dare not put a spot to it as happened in the case of the road to Bartica with the Del Conte people. No matter what was going on, the Government of the day did not dare to say anything; it had to take its licks.

This Government, because it is standing clean and fair, was able, when the project was going wrong, to stop it, to chase away the man who was involved and to put our own Guyanese people to carry it on. That is the difference between the P.N.C. in government and the P.P.P. in government.

This small amount is very small indeed compared to what is happening in Kibilibiri. I do not believe, as I have said, too much is words. I have with me evidence of what is going on there. Some of the best production is taking place there. The production is better than in some of the places where this type of work has been going on for many years.

I should like to show hon. Members one of the products at Kibilibiri. This is sorghum. I notice that it is strange to many of the hon. Members. I am going to give them a free lesson. This is one of the best types that will be found anywhere that sorghum is grown and the production is high. What is sorghum used for? Instead of importing millions of pounds of corn, we can now substitute sorghum grown in Guyana for some of that corn. People in Guyana for the first time will have a chance to see sorghum produced, not in experimental quantities, not in quantities of two and three pounds. A vast area is now under sorghum and in another few weeks this will be reaped. I hope that my friends will take a good look so when they see it they will know that it is sorghum used for stockfeed. In some places it is even used for flour to feed human beings. This is very good.

4.15 p.m.

As I have mentioned already, we import large quantities of peanuts. These peanuts are very tasty. They were reaped by machine not by hand. A lot of money has been spent on machinery to reap peanuts. Just look, without any selection or grading, just picked up at random, peanuts grown by Guyanese people on the soil of Guyana. All right, what is this? This is confusion to them now. I will pass this around and ask these Guyanese Parliamentarians on the opposite side if they recognise what it is. None of them will know. This is soya bean used for

the making of edible oil. Do you know we subsidise our consumers in this country to the tune of some \$1 million in dibble oil? Nobody will regret spending money to grow a crop like this that many years ago our bosses told us could not have grown in Guyana. Go to Kibilibiri and you will see soya bean grown in large quantities and being reaped by machines. [Mr. Hamid: "That is Robert's brainchild. Tell us what you are doing."] *[Interruption]* What excuse are you making now?

The Chairman: Order, order.

Dr. Reid: O course we all know this is corn. We import some 12 million pounds of this stuff. The biggest attempt ever made in Guyana is going on at Kibilibiri. You may say that I played a special trick on you so I have brought ears of corn for you to see. I did not open it: at random they have selected these ears and I want you to see the difference between the corn you know and the one at Kibilibiri. Look at this. People who know about corn will think of this as a full ear of corn. It takes special skill and know-how, the right type of cultivation so that when they grow they will bear like this and we can make a profit.

Mr. Chairman, with that type of graphic demonstration I doubt whether my friends will have anything to say. [Mr. Hamid: "Look Reid is shaking his head."] Even if Mr. Jordan takes a bow he is a member of the People's National Congress in Government. The small sums that we come for is just an indication that the work has to progress. We expect within another couple of months to put almost double acreage under cultivation. But what is of importance to all of us is to go up there to see all the skills that our Guyanese people are acquiring because they have been given this type of responsibility.

It is not only a question of removing the forests, but it is developing people and when we see them operating these big machines, some of them seeing these machines for the first time, it is really heartening. Today, we do not have to wait on the sun to do the drying where the produce

would get mouldy and spoil. There are dryers. It is a small sum requested. I am certain that my friends will be educated if they go up to Kibilibiri now.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, very briefly, so far as we are concerned we said at the very outset that we were with the farmers who are trying to correct the errors made by of the Government in this project. What we are trying to get from the Minister is with respect to the fraud and misspending of the Guyanese money. He pointed to certain equipment but the Minister must not lose sight of the fact that the gentleman who was allowed a free hand with the Guyanese money was able to import machinery and collect commission which commission never reached Guyana but in fact, was banked in America for him. I refer to the man who was kicked out.

What I am warning the Government about is, in future, when the Government has such a project Guyanese officers must be associated with it. This Government brought an American from Wisconsin to advise on drainage and irrigation when we have got people here to advise the Government. Only a few days ago, Mr. S.S. Naraine was taken to the project – at least he was asked to – when he should have been taken at the very beginning. There is a big drainage problem in the area. At one stage it was felt that there was no need for drainage and irrigation there; but subsequently, the Government was advised that money had to be spent. What the Government has done now is correct, but the Government paid very dear for it and this is our objection. The Government involved expatriates first, allow them free spending and when the project failed, and when it was realized that our money had not been properly spent, then it called in a Guyanese. This should have been done at the beginning.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, not that I want to speak again, but just to correct some of the errors. Guyanese were involved in the project from the very beginning. The Board of Directors was a board made up of all Guyanese except for one person. They were involved from the very beginning. The hon. Member spoke about drainage and irrigation. If the hon. Member knows the area he would not talk about drainage at all because there is no need for drainage in that area.

If we were to follow our seasons we can grow these crops without the expensive irrigation that some people talk about.

When the hon. member talks about commission he ought to be reminded that many people work as agents and earn commission; some people make their living through this. But one would have thought that he would not have mentioned that. When members of the Government were involved in the rice industry they made arrangement to buy bags from Cuba and they received the commission for those bags. Fortunately for us we have the machines and Mr. Green has the commission. But in those days commission was paid; the bags came, they never were used, and they all had to be thrown away. So there, my friends, do not tease me too much or else I will tell you more. *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: Hon. Members, this completes our consideration of the supplementary Estimates. I will now put the motion

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried

Assembly resumed

Mr. Hoyte: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has considered Financial Paper No. 1 of 1971 and passed it as printed.

I now moved that this Assembly doth agree with the Committee's Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HON. MEMBER MRS. R.P. SAHOYE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I am sure you wish me on your behalf, though belated it may be, to extend congratulations to the hon. Member Mrs. Sahoye on her marriage. I wish the couple a long and happy marriage and a very fruitful one.

The Minister of Trade (Leader of the House) (Mr. Ramsaroop): I do not particularly relish the opportunity to speak in this House. In fact, I distinctly spurn the opportunity to say anything, but I wish to rise with alacrity on this occasion to endorse the fine sentiments which you, sir, have expressed upon the recently contracted marriage of Mrs. Sahoye.

In the hustings of trade union and political circles, Mrs. Sahoye has acquired the reputation of being a fireball. I do not see fire in her personality. With her, I associate a certain depth of warmth which inspires and instills confidence, and if she takes this quality entirely, and no other, into her marriage, it will be a success.

Added to this quality, I observe she is possessed of other fine qualities, tolerance and charm, and with the qualities I mention, I am certain she has many fruitful and prosperous years ahead of her in her new youth. Personally and on behalf of the Members of this House, I wish to extend to her our warm and generous congratulations upon her entering into this new estate.

I see a little release in these newspapers that we might be losing her in a short while. I hope this is not a mischievous emanation from the Press. As I said before, I do not like to make speeches but I think it would be more befitting to celebrate this occasion with a little liquid. May I extend to her all the best wishes of this House on her recent marriage.

Mr. Sahoye: I thank members of the Government for offering congratulations on my marriage to Dr. Shury. I must say that the hon. Member referred to an item in the newspapers about my quitting this House. This just goes to prove the maliciousness of some journalists.

One would feel, since the hon. member said that marriage might give warmth, that the Press, which continuously attacked me when I was Philomena Sahoye, would come off my back now that I am Mrs. Shury. It is regrettable that in Guyana the Press finds itself delving into people's personal business without any clarification by the persons involved. This is a happy occasion for me and I would like the Press to know that I am very happy.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Friday, 2nd April, 1971, at 2 p.m."

[The Minister of Trade (Leader of the House).]

Adjourned accordingly at 4.30 p.m.
