

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

13TH Sitting

Tuesday, 25TH August, 2015

The Assembly convened at 9.39 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATS OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2015

“WHEREAS the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for any financial year should be laid before the National Assembly;

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2015 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 10th August, 2015.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2015, of a total sum of one hundred and eighty-one billion, six hundred and ninety-two million and twenty thousand dollars (\$181,692,020,000), excluding thirty-nine billion, three hundred and eighty-six million, five hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$39,386,585,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.” *[Minister of Finance]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly will resolve itself into the Committee of Supply to continue consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2015.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Before we launch into this, I, at this time, would simply remind Members that there are some unfinished matters from yesterday in relation to the constitutional offices. We would endeavour to treat with that before the day is much older. In the meantime, we will proceed and we are now at consideration of the Estimates for the Ministry of Housing and Water.

Agency: 45 Ministry of Housing and Water

Current Expenditure

Programme: 451 Housing and Water - \$263,257,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I have noticed that there has been an increase by two in 2015. Could you please state the positions of these employees, their salaries and their job descriptions?

Minister of Communities [Mr. Bulkan]: The two new employees are a Typist and an Expenditure Planning & Management Analyst (EPMA). The salary, in the case of the EPMA, is \$107,485 and, in the case of the Typist, it is just about \$46,000 monthly.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could you please state the top five paid and the bottom five paid contracted employees?

Mr. Bulkan: These are for the former Ministry of Housing and it was for the period earlier in the year. The top five employees are: the Permanent Secretary, a Housing Economist, Engineers, of which there are several, and the EPMA. Would the Hon. Member wish for me to relate the salaries here or could I provide it?

Mr. Dharamlall: Moving to line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: could the Hon. Minister state how many vehicles fuel and lubricants would be provided for?

Mr. Bulkan: It is the fleet for the former Ministry of Housing and it is about 11 vehicles.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state whether any of those vehicles were procured after 17th May, 2015?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is no.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Services: could the Hon. Minister indicate to us how many vehicles are serviceable and how many are unserviceable, if any, their allocation, to whom they are allocated, and to which department?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that all of the vehicles are serviceable. None are unserviceable. They all belong to the Ministry of Housing's fleet and they are for use by the Ministry of Housing staff. Actually, three of those vehicles were assigned to the former Minister; one is for the Permanent Secretary (PS) and the administration personnel in the Ministry.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state whether any of those vehicles are used in the Hinterland regions?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is no.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6271 – Telephone Charges: could the Hon. Minister state how many telephone lines there are? If there are cell phones, how many? To who were they assigned? Is the Hon. Minister aware if those phones were bugged or not?

Mr. Bulkan: I would be more than happy to provide that information, but given that all of those details relate to the Hon. Member's Colleague, the former Minister, I am not so sure that he would want all of those details to be revealed.

Mr. Hamilton: The consideration is for up to August, Minister, so you cannot say that.

Mr. Bulkan: There are no new cell phones, if that is the question being asked, that are being paid for under this heading.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to draw your attention back to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: as it relates to the actual expenditure, if I am to be guided, this is for the Ministry of Housing and Water for eight months - January to August. Actual expenditure is \$33,115,000 as against a budgeted expenditure of \$40,550,000. It would appear to me that, at this rate, there would be need for additional funding to finance staff in this category for the rest of the year. Could you please indicate what the reason for the increase is?

Mr. Bulkan: I believe that the Hon. Member mixed up his figures because the actual figure for 2014 was \$40 million and the budgeted sum for January to August is \$33 million. The remainder of the expenditure would come under the Ministry of Communities from September to the end of the year.

Bishop Edghill: While the Hon. Member seems to want to make statements, I have asked: what is responsible for the increase? It is because if one looks at the amount to be spent for the next four months, which he says will come under the Ministry of Communities, there is only \$7 million for four months, based upon the figures. How would the rest be financed?

Mr. Bulkan: Any increases for this year in the budgeted sum, would be increases that were awarded in 2014.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister, it is noted in line item 6111 – Administrative – that the staff increased by two, but the sum decreased by \$7 million. Could you advise?

Mr. Bulkan: For the figures that I am looking at, there is no staff increase. It is the same in 2015 as it were in 2014.

Mr. Hamilton: It is line item 6111.

Mr. Bulkan: We are looking at page 235. It remains the same, Hon. Member.

Mr. Hamilton: No, we are looking at pages 234 and 235. In line item 6111, there is an increase of two staff. You indicated the two staff earlier.

Mr. Bulkan: Hon. Member, the increase in the new staff was at line item 6116.

Mr. Hamilton: I am dealing with 6116 and I am saying that there is an increase in two staff, but the budgeted sum has decreased by \$7 million. Could you advise?

Mr. Bulkan: This question was answered already. These allocations are from January to August, 2015. So, the budgeted sum under this Ministry would, by definition, be less than that for last year.

9.54 a.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, going back to line item 6271, could the Hon. Minister state whether he has a government issued cell phone? Could he please indicate to me, as I had asked before, if he is aware that phones are bugged in the Ministry of Housing and Water and the Ministry of Communities?

Minister of Governance [Mr. Trotman]: Mr. Chairman, a question is meant to pertain to a line item. To ask a Minister whether he is aware that a phone, which he uses, is bugged does not arise out of scrutinisation of the Estimates. One may ask: What is the quantum of the Minister's bill at the end of the month? What is it anticipated to be? To ask whether a phone is bugged - I believe that is the word for wiretapping - does not, with the greatest of respect, arise from consideration of Estimates.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw that aspect of the question.

Mr. Hamilton: At line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, it is noted that the sum has decreased by \$200 million. Could the Minister advise?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes, the observation is correct but, under the new Ministry of Communities, there is a further allocation of \$212 million which would bring the figure back to \$400 million. These are all subsidies to Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI).

Mr. Chand: Under line item 6281, Security Service, is the amount for both housing and water? I notice the number has reduced significantly. Could the Minister advise on that?

Mr. Bulkan: This security service is only for housing. Again, the explanation has been proffered before. It is that we are only dealing with this allocation from January to August.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister, as a follow-up, tell us which security service is involved and when it was contracted?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the name of the security service is Federal Management Systems Inc. It was initially contracted in 2013. I am further advised there is a new tender process for the provision of the service which actually closes today.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister tell us how this money will be distributed or how it is being distributed?

Mr. Bulkan: It is subsidy for GWI.

Bishop Edghill: Just a clarification. I heard the Minister said subsidies for GWI. Is this subsidy specifically to the senior citizens programme, who enjoyed subsidies at GWI or is this just an allocation to GWI?

Mr. Bulkan: It is not for the pensioners but it is a general subsidy to the corporation.

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water – \$263,257,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 451 – Housing and Water – \$2,059,371,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you please provide a status update on project 1302000, Community Infrastructure Improvement Project?

Mr. Bulkan: It is a multi-year activity and it continues.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Member provide to the Assembly, maybe it is later on today, a definitive status on the project, please?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for both infrastructure works in communities in nine of the regions as well as payment for wages and salaries for community enhancement workers similarly in nine regions. As I said, it is an ongoing programme. Formerly this programme was managed from the centre by the Ministry but consistent with the new strategic vision of the Ministry of Communities. The direct management of this programme will now be entrusted to the respective local democratic organs for the supervision of those workers.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you say whether the allocation for community workers in terms of numbers to regions has been done already?

Mr. Bulkan: After the budget is approved then there will be an expansion in the numbers of community workers. Some further information for the Hon. Member, I think he might be aware that this programme had started some years ago and was first administered by the Ministry of Finance then it was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture. Last year its responsibility was handed to the Ministry of Housing and Water. As I said, consistent with the new strategic vision, direct management of the activities will be a responsibility of the local democratic organs.

Mr. Dharamlall: Consistent with the strategic vision on this same project, could the Hon. Minister say what are the criteria used to select and place these workers within the region?

Whilst the Hon. Minister is putting together his answer, could he also state, as part of the answer, how many workers are currently on the payroll, and by region?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that currently the programme caters for the payment of wages for about 500 workers and following the approval of this budget it is expected that there will be a further 500 workers, a total of 1,000 workers will be paid under this allocation. The regions, which are beneficiaries under this programme, are Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. These are all - if I may use the word inherited - the beneficiary Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) which are inherited.

Mr. G. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister, under project 1402500, Community Roads Improvement Project, say how much of the allocation will be used for institutional strengthening and what would be the various components of the institutional strengthening programme, and if each item can be cost?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that none of this provision caters for any institutional strengthening. The payments are entirely for funding of works and there is a lot of retention payments. None of it is for institutional strengthening.

Mr. G. Persaud: The legend is misleading, never mind.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state, under project 1402500, if any payment certificates were honoured since 17th May? If there were payment certificates, what was the quantum of funds paid?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised the answer is yes. If it is okay with the Hon. Member, this information can be provided later today.

Bishop Edghill: I have a question for the Minister, but before I would like to address something that he said under project 1302000, that programme was under the Ministry of Finance, then under the Ministry of Agriculture, then under the Ministry of Housing and Water. I think the Minister should have said to this Assembly that it is a programme of a similar nature and not the same programme, because this is a different programme.

Project 1402500: This is a project in the legend, as the Hon. Member Ganga Persaud indicated, that includes institutional strengthening. This programme attracts foreign funding from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). I am seeking to enquire from the Minister if the aspect of institutional strengthening is completed. It has been dropped or it has put on the back burner.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is the middle of those three activities. The institutional strengthening component has been completed.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project 1900900, Infrastructure Development and Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate to this Assembly the status of those activities?

Mr. Bulkan: Those activities are civil works, which are ongoing, and are at varying stages of completion. This, of course, refers to the various government-sponsored housing programmes. I can, if the Hon. Member is so desirous, provide the specifics in writing, later on today.

10.09 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Project 1302000, Community Infrastructure Improvement Project: Could the Hon. Member say what are the specific areas that would benefit from intervention this year and whether the areas, which were selected this year, is in keeping with the three-year overall programme?

Under project 1900900, Infrastructure Development and Building, could the Hon. Member say whether provision has been made for the completion of infrastructure work at Cummings Lodge, where allocations were made and a commitment was made in the allocation letter that such infrastructure would have been completed?

Mr. Bulkan: This programme is a multi-year programme. I am advised that the Cummings Lodge project is a new one, so no activities have started in the Cummings Lodge area under this programme.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, with full and complete respect to the Hon. Minister, I can circulate, at your mercy, a letter granted to allottees sometime around April or May, which allocated house lots to persons with the condition that subsequent to the allocation infrastructure works would have been completed. Look at the 2014 subvention and the 2014 programme and the Minister will see in the description of capital works that it also included the expansion of houses along the East Coast. It is not new. It had always been contemplated in the context of that profile.

Mr. Bulkan: the Hon. Member referred to either April or May and it would have been helpful if he was a bit more specific. It is not ordinarily the case that house lots are awarded in areas where the basic infrastructure is not already developed, namely roads, drainage and culverts. This is not the case in that area that is being referred to.

Mr. Ali: There are a number of approaches to the allocations of lots and the development of housing. One of the approaches, which was discussed in the Budget 2014, is to have a time lag between allocation, infrastructure and for the allottees to have also that time lag to get loans, and so on, to prepare themselves for construction. It can be a fresh approach. I just want to know what the position will be of those persons who paid for the allocation in the Cummings Lodge area.

Mr. Bulkan: None of these proposed allocations is for any works in that area and there has been no civil works in that area so far for this year.

Mr. Ali: Is it contemplated by the Hon. Minister that works will commence in those areas and if so could he state when? My second question: Is any other provision made under the Central Housing Planning Authority (CHPA) to cater for this work?

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to assure the Hon. Member that provision would be made in Budget 2016 for that area that he is seeking information on. As I said, there is no provision in the Budget 2015 for any civil works in that particular area. It will be addressed in the Budget 2016.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I did not know that we needed ground rules here. I thought everyone was exhausted after last night. Could we then agree to focus on our energies in getting these Estimates through?

Programme: 451- Housing and Water - \$2,059,371,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 42 Ministry of Communities

Current Expenditure

Programme: 421- Sustainable Communities Management - \$164,887,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Based on the consolidated figures of contracted employees, line item 6116, could the Hon. Minister please provide a breakdown to this Assembly?

Mr. Bulkan: It is actually, as said, a consolidation and 33 of these employees would have been formerly housed under the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and 22 under the Ministry of Housing and Water. There is actually no new employee for the total of 55.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state whether any contracted employees have been dismissed or terminated since the 17th May, 2015?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is no. It is not under this heading.

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister indicate, having read the profile for what this programme entails, if Community Development Councils (CDCs) are catered for under this programme?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is that there is no specific allocation under this heading for CDCs. Of course, as it relates to CDCs, there are persons living in those communities and the Ministry has a responsibility to address the conditions of persons in all communities.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, I have one more question.

Mr. Chairman: You have one more question.

Mr. Croal: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Minister indicated that there was no new contracted employee under line item 6116. If a summation is done of the three programmes under the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development prior and the Ministry of Housing and Water prior,

from January to August, it would have summed to 53 employees and under the merger there are now 55. Could you indicate the two new employees?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member is correct. I did indicate earlier that they were two new employees and I had given the designation, the typist and the Expenditure Planning Management Unit (EPMU) analyst. The Member is correct. There are two new contracted employees.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister state whether the Regional Executive Officers (REOs) are being paid from under this heading? It is whether REOs in Regions 8 and 9 have been officially engaged and are accessing resources and space of the Government legitimately at this point and time?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the question is yes. This allocation does cater for the payment of REOs. In relation to payment for REOs in the two regions named, there has been no payment as yet to the REOs in those two regions. Yes, the appointments made in those two regions are of a temporary nature.

Bishop Edghill: It is a follow-up question on line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency. Perhaps, Sir, for the tidying up of this whole discussion, could the Hon. Minister name the REOs who are currently appointed for all ten administrative regions?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not sure what the thrust of the question is and perhaps I can seek some clarifications. There have been no changes to the REOs in eight of the ten regions and only two changes have been to the regions that have already been enquired so far.

Bishop Edghill: I do not think that the Hon. Member needs to know what the thrust of my question is. I am seeking information. I would like the Hon. Member to indicate to this Committee the names of all ten REOs and their date of engagement.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I need some guidance. Do I have to provide the names?

Bishop Edghill: Yes. That is the question and also the date of engagement.

10.24 a.m.

Mr. Bulkan: If it is okay with the Hon. Member, this information can be provided in writing, later today.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I will be happy if I can have that on the floor of the House now. REOs are public officers, and that are not engaged in secret. REOs are the administrative heads of regions and the people of Guyana need to know who those are persons who are engaged.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, keep the focus on the Estimates and truncate the speeches that are not calculated to help. The Minister has said that he will make the information available, later.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6302, Training (including scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of what is expected of this \$4.9 million and then there is a follow up question based on the response, a summarised breakdown.

Mr. Bulkan: The training, that is catered for under this allocation is for training to build capacity within Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs), to improve the efficiency of councils and it is also to enhance the capacity of councillors and the staff, in relation to strategic planning and to be able to execute their functions more effectively. Essentially, it is training to NDCs.

Mr. Chairman: Is this your follow-up question?

Mr. Croal: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Croal: In light of there being unexpected Local Government Elections, could the Hon. Minister indicate, on the same training, what role is the Ministry expected to play, in terms of local government elections within the NDC as well as the municipalities? I did not hear, in the training, allocation for any mention of Local Government Elections.

Mr. Bulkan: In relation to the holding of Local Government Elections, the Ministry, itself, has no active role in that activity, that being the responsibility of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM). But the Ministry's targeted activities for the remainder of the year relates to institutional strengthening in our municipalities as well as other NDCs. And there is an active programme for training as well as building capacity in those local democratic organs. So, the ministry does have a programme for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister state, under line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence and line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage, the mission itinerary for the rest of the year? Under line item 6222, Field Materials and Supplies and line item 6223, Office Materials and Supplies, line item 6224, Field Materials, Print and Non-print, whether flags are going to be printed for the regions here? Why was consultation not conducted with the different regions?

Mr. Bulkan: Under line item 6261, it is, as the legend states there, it is for local travel for local government officers and personnel from the NDC as well as Ministry personnel doing outreaches among all our local democratic organs. In relation to the print and non-print material, the answer to that is no.

Mr. Nandlall: I know that the Minister is very busy and he is tasked and question was asked of the Hon. Minister earlier to name the ten Regional Executive Officers of the ten administrative regions.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you repeating that question to the Minister?

Mr. Nandlall: Yes. I would like that to be answered.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister has already said that he will make that information available.

Mr. Nandlall: Is it, Sir, that the Minister, as he sits there now, is not aware of the ten REOs? Is that what he is telling me?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, your question is misdirected. I will suggest that you abandon that question.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, with due respect, the REOs are supposed to come here today when we are dealing with the ten regions. This is not appropriate, Mr. Chairman. I do not wish to disobey you. I am saying that when the Minister deals with the ten regions, the ten REOs will be here. Why can he not say in this Assembly, at this time, who the ten REOs are?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, REOs are going to be here. Would it not be a good time to wait until they arrive?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, no Minister should be bullied into answering a question. Mr. Chairman, indeed the ten REOs are going to be here today. The Opposition has every

opportunity then to question the Minister and to get the information that it needs. We will not be bullied and harangued into answering. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: I will now put the question which is that the sum stated for Agency 42, Ministry of Communities, current expenditure, Programme 421, Sustainable Communities Management,...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I cannot hear you. Your voice is very muffled. Could you assist here on this side? Could you speak a bit louder?

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member would certainly hear me, as she is being now. Perhaps, the Speaker cannot speak above the dim. This is not a parliamentary language but “above the dim” that emanates from the chamber at certain times. Members should at least accord the Speaker the courtesy of listening to him when he is speaking, and no Member here needs to be told that. I do not understand the question the Hon. Member addressed to me just now. The fault there seems to lie within yourselves.

Ms. Teixeira: There was no disrespect to you. All I am saying is that, as a Member of the House, we cannot hear you on this side and when I said that there were Members on this side who had also agreed with me. If you speak as loud as you did just now, we can all hear you, Sir. There was no disrespect to you and it was not as if there was noise at the time. We are just asking, Sir. If we cannot hear you, we cannot get the directions from you. We do not know where you are. It is just a simple request, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: The Speaker will speak at a voice which will normally be heard across the room, assuming that the room is listening.

Programme: 421 - Sustainable Communities Management - \$164,887,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 422 – Sustainable Communities Development - \$215,736,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the subsidies and contributions to local organisations?

Mr. Bulkan: All of it is for the Guyana Water Inc. (GWI).

Programme: 422- Sustainable Communities Development - \$215,736,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 421 – Sustainable Communities Management - \$630,557,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister, under project 1902900, Project Development and Assistance, provide a breakdown of the subvention to this Assembly please?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the subvention to the municipalities as well as the 65 NDCs. The amount \$99 million is for the six municipalities and \$260 million for the 65 NDCs, which will each be receiving the sum of \$4 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please provide the breakdown as per municipality?

Mr. Bulkan: Will do Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dharamlall: Is it possible for me to ask the Hon. Minister, when? If I am allowed, could the Hon. Minister provide it now?

Mr. Bulkan: For Georgetown, it is \$24 million; New Amsterdam and Linden - \$16 million each, Anna Regina - \$15 million and for Corriverton and Rose Hall - \$14 million each, a total of \$99 million.

Mr. Croal: On the same project, could the Hon. Minister confirm that he is applying the Fiscal Transfers Act?

Mr. Bulkan: These allocations, and this subvention, are identical to what they were last year. The Fiscal Transfers Act has not been institutionalised and implemented in its entirety as yet. That will be a part of the reform and rebuilding of the local government system, which I had previously indicated in this House that will be a three-part approach.

Ms. Teixeira: The Fiscal Transfers Act was passed, assented and enacted, in accordance with the law over a year and a half ago. A follow-up question to the question asked by my Hon. Member on this side: Why is that formula, which was agreed to unanimously between both sides of the House, not applied in this budget? The Bill was passed, enacted and assented in 2014. It could not have been in the Budget 2014. Why is it not being applied in the Budget 2015?

10.39 a.m.

It has nothing to do with reforms. It has to do with compliance with the legislative statute that this House unanimously approved. The allocations under the fiscal transfers have to be applied in accordance with the formula for Municipalities and National Democratic Councils (NDCs). Therefore, why has it not been applied in the 2015 Budget?

Mr. Bulkan: I respectfully beg to disagree with the Hon. Member. The system of local government, right now, is broken. The capacity of our Councils is degraded. These Councils have been damaged and they have largely been rendered dysfunctional as a result of local government elections not being held for over 17 years. The rebuilding of the capacity of these Councils will commence once the democratic renewal has taken place and once we are able to have local government elections. Only then the process of rebuilding the capacity within these Councils would begin. But right now, the capacity of these Councils is severely damaged.

Ms. Teixeira: The Hon. Member cannot be capricious with the law. There is nothing in the Fiscal Transfers Act, which was passed in this House, which has any proviso based on whether the Municipalities and the NDCs are functioning well or not. Therefore, we are demanding that the Minister implement the Fiscal Transfers Act with the formulas that we agree to. It is law. He cannot capriciously decide that, in his opinion, he is not going to implement the laws of this country and would wait until 2016, 2017 or until God knows when.

Mr. Croal: Just to provide a clarification, I wish to correct the Hon. Minister. The Fiscal Transfers Act was first implemented in 2014. So, there is an existing formula that could be applied and the functionality of the NDCs and Municipalities has no correlation. For example, it takes into consideration the rate of collection. That does not change. It takes into consideration the geographical size and population, *et cetera*. So, it is basically taking the lump sum that is allocated in the votes, applying the formula, and getting the allocation, save and except Georgetown.

Members of the Government: Why did you not do it?

Mr. Croal: It was applied in 2014.

Bishop Edghill: Project code 3600300 – Solid Waste Disposal Programme: according to the Legend, this project provides for institutional strengthening, public awareness, construction and operation of Haags Bosch, waste collection and treatment of disposal provision for the

Lusignan site. As far as I am aware, this Programme was a foreign funded programme. The question to the Hon. Minister is: how are the operations of Haags Bosch currently being paid for and what rate per ton is currently being paid? If Guyana is in arrears, I would like to know how much is owed and what plans are being made to cover those arrears.

Mr. Bulkan: Those questions are outside of the scope of the budgetary allocations being proposed here. Briefly, if I can provide some clarity to the Hon. Member, I would say that, yes, this is a foreign-funded programme under the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). However, the disbursements under this project were ceased earlier this year as a result of non-compliance by the contractor with the activities at Haags Bosch. No payments were made in relation to that particular facility since about the middle of last year. The contractor has submitted invoices for the payment of an increased amount per tonnage but the Government and the Administration are disputing those figures as a result of the non-compliance. The matter is currently before the court.

Mr. Ali: Project Code 1302200 – Community Infrastructure Improvement Project: could the Hon. Minister state what percentage of this allocation is going towards consultancy services for design and/or supervision?

Mr. Bulkan: Have we moved from Programme 421 to Programme 422? It is just for clarification.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up question on project code 3600300. I heard the Hon. Minister. Is he declaring to this Committee that, as of today's date, the operations of Haags Bosch are not financed, the contractor has not been paid and there is uncertainty as it relates to what is taking place at Haags Bosch because there is no financing for this programme even in this Budget? Solid waste management is a serious issue in Guyana so I would like the matter to be clarified.

Mr. Bulkan: The programme continues and the activities continue at that particular landfill site. In fact, it has been operated as a dumpsite and not a landfill site. However, as I said, this matter is currently before the court and I believe that I am constrained in offering any further clarification.

Bishop Edghill: Which particular matter is before the court? Has the Government been sued for payment or are there other extraneous issues that relate to payment? We are dealing with the figures. There is no budgetary allocation under this subhead for the payment of operations

at Haags Bosch. My question is: how is the Government going to pay for Haags Bosch if there are no budgetary allocations, whether it is payment to operator who is there or whether a new operator is put in place? If there is need for a new operator or if there is need for a force account operation, how is the Government going to pay for Haags Bosch if there is no budgetary allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member is correct. There are no allocations proposed in this budget before us. However, as I said, the activities continue at that particular site. The proposed allocations are for a number of other activities, which the Hon. Member has already related and outlined in the preamble to his question.

Bishop Edghill: Final question on this particular project code. Are we to expect a catastrophe at any time if the operator just pulls out of Haags Bosch, there is no operator in place and there is no financing available to engage a new operator or even a force account operation? Could we expect Haags Bosch to just blow and become a national disaster at any time?

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to assure the Hon. Member that contingency arrangements are contemplated and will be in place in any such eventuality, should the existing contractor decide to terminate his activities or vacate the site which actually is a hope and expectation of the Administration

Programme 421 – Sustainable Communities Management - \$630,557,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I seek your guidance on a matter? This Schedule states that we are supposed to meet from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. - 2/ ½ hours - to deal with the Ministries listed at agencies 45, 42, and 13. After the break, consideration of the regions' budget should begin. I notice that there is a compression of time. Has that been a decision of the House? Are we changing the allocation of time? I just want to make sure because I know my Members on this side of the House are anxious to ask questions on these issues, particularly those under the capital expenditure.

Programme 422 – Sustainable Communities Development - \$3,653,924,000

Mr. Ali: Under project code 1302200 - Community Infrastructure Improvement Project, could the Hon. Minister state what percentage of this allocation is going towards consultancy

services, whether it is design and supervision or design and/or supervision? Secondly, what percentage of this allocation has already been awarded and what is the progress of works under this head? Thirdly, what was the process of awarding the contract? If the contracts were not awarded, where and when are these projects going to be tendered?

Mr. Bulkan: As regards the award of contracts for capital works under this Programme, namely for the construction of roads, bridges and culverts, these tenders have already been advertised and I am advised that the tenders actually closed today. It is an open tender process. The target areas, as I have said previously, are in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. I can provide the complete list to the Hon. Member, if he is so desirous, with the description of the works and the nature of the activities in all of the various communities. Of the allocated sum being proposed, the provision for capital works is \$258 million.

Mr. Ali: I am asking about consultancy.

Mr. Bulkan: There is no consultancy *per se*. There is provision for the payment of the supervision for the Community Enhancement Workers but there is no payment for consultancy contemplated under the Programme.

Mr. Ali: Project code 1405300 – Community Roads Improvement Project: could the Hon. Member state whether these projects have already been awarded, what percentage of this allocation is going to go towards the payment of consultancy services or a Consultant and when is that Consultant going to be engaged?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the proposed allocation is for an extension to this programme is to cater for works in the Kaneville community. A Consultant was engaged under the Project and I am further advised that that Consultant was engaged as way back as 2012.

10.54 a.m.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Member state what provisions are made to ensure the continuity of this project under this new head?

Mr. Bulkan: For the benefit of the Hon. Member, it is not a new head.

Mr. Ali: It is a new head under the new Ministry.

Mr. Bulkan: It is a continuation of a...

Mr. Ali: It is the continuity of the project, but it is a new heading in the Ministry.

Mr. Bulkan: This Project comes to an end this year and, as part of its strategic review, the Ministry will address the effectiveness of this Project in order to make a determination as to its continuation and the way forward.

Mr. Ali: With full and complete respect for the Hon. Minister, every project has a gestation period. If this project is to continue next year, the budgetary cycle would commence very shortly and we should know by now whether the Government intends to continue this project or if it is going to stop this important project that focuses on community development and community life.

Mr. Bulkan: I note the comments of the Hon. Member. I believe that the Hon. Member is aware that this is a Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) funded project, which comes to an end this year, and there is no application currently in the system for the extension of this particular project.

Mr. Ali: I would like to advise the Hon. Member that I am fully aware that there are three applications for the continuation of this programme. One is from the Chinese grant resources, another is a request to the CDB for additional resources for the continuation of the project, and there is a third request under the savings under the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for funds to be utilised for the continued extension of this project. We also made, continuously, budgetary allocation under local...

Ms. Wade: Who is “we”?

Mr. Ali: Well, when we were in Government. We also made budgetary allocation for this Project under local resources, so there is room. If the Government is going to continue the project, it could be financed from local resources.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I am appealing to you. This particular Ministry, under Programme 422, has about 10 capital projects. We have Members on this side who wish to raise issues on them. We have two and half hours allocated to this area and the two and a half hours have not been exhausted. Sir, I am appealing to you for us to use our prerogative as the Opposition to ask questions of the Minister on the other side.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, please proceed.

Mr. Neendkumar: I love Guyana and I love Georgetown. At project code 1903300-Georgetown Restoration Programme, I see a \$300 million provision for the restoration of Georgetown. I would like to know when this would start and I would like to know if the Hon. Minister could provide us with the copy of the programme for this restoration work.

Mr. Bulkan: It is anticipated that the works would start immediately upon approval of this budget. The activities to be financed under this allocation have already been identified and we would be pleased to share these details with the Hon. Member.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like if the Hon. Minister could provide us with each activity for the restoration and the cost.

Mr. Bulkan: That is noted.

Mr. Ali: At project code 1903100 - Infrastructure Development and Buildings, the description in the Legend states:

“Completion of infrastructure in new and existing areas from September 2015”.

It is at a cost of \$499 million. Could the Hon. Minister state, in addition to this, what resources are allocated from the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) funds to complete on-going works in the various schemes? And what is the sum total of that fund as of the end of May, 2015?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that that information is not available as I speak, but I can undertake to provide it by tomorrow.

Mr. Ali: With full and complete respect to the Hon. Member, the information is available in the annual report which was tabled in this National Assembly and the tabling of that report is up-to-date.

If I may help, the total fund in the CHPA is more than \$8 billion. There are enough resources to complete the infrastructure outlay in existing communities. My question is: when does the Government anticipate it will fully complete the infrastructure outlay, which is part of this programme, on the East Bank?

Mr. Bulkan: I believe that the information that the Hon. Member referred to in the annual report is historical and it is for the period up to the end of 2014. The information being sought now is for works up to the half of 2015.

Mr. Ali: I asked a specific question in relation to the infrastructure outlay on the East Bank. I asked about the timeline. Could the people expect the completion of the infrastructure in three or in five years? What is the programme?

Mr. Croal: Project code 1903200- Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) Projects: could the Hon Minister provide some more information on this community driven intervention? How are these projects going to be derived and what is the methodology, *et cetera*?

Mr. Bulkan: This programme is meant to provide micro financing in depressed communities. It is to provide assistance for entrepreneurial activities in various economic activities in the communities. It has to do with agriculture; small business such as tailoring; and providing consultancy services as part of support services to would-be entrepreneurs in communities in various parts of the country.

Mr. Ali: Project code 1903200- SLED Project: the Hon. Minister just informed the Committee that resources would be allocated to depressed communities. What methodology was utilised to identify depressed communities and which communities were identified, in the first phase, as depressed communities? I purpose this question on the fact that a Needs Committee was established by the then Opposition Leader, Desmond Hoyte, and President Jagdeo and it was a joint political arrangement. All of the political parties sat together with technicians and identified the depressed communities. I was privileged to be a part of that Committee.

Mr. Bulkan: This is a new initiative. It is a new programme and certain communities have been identified. I am advised that the communities under that programme, which the Hon. Member referred to, have been taken into account and would be considered. There are a number of co-operative societies that have been targeted and they form part of the consultative group to decide on funding under this programme.

Mr. Ali: With full respect to the Hon. Member, I think my question has been avoided. Firstly, I want to know the methodology used in the selection of the depressed communities, and the names of the communities that have been identified. This is in the public interest. We must be able to identify which communities were selected and the method of selection so that we can go there and ensure that the people are benefitting from the resources that were allocated.

Mr. Bulkan: Some of the communities that have been identified include: Henrietta, Parika, Perth, Vergenoegen, Farm, and Ann's Grove.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask for clarification? Minster Allicock, in the House a few days ago, talked about Youth Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Programme (YEAP) being renamed the Hinterland and Youth Service Programme. Is YEAP, which renaming took place in the Toshaos Conference, now SLED under your budget project code 1903200? Is it going to address the issues of the Amerindian communities and the entrepreneurial skills training programme? If that is so, why such paltry figure of \$115 million to address all of these training programmes?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that question is no. This is a separate programme to the one that the Hon. Member asked about. I do not think that the other one is SLED. That one is for activities in the Amerindian villages and it would be administered through the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2802300 - Linden Water Supply: I see \$65 million allocated for the upgrading of distribution network in Linden from September, 2015. Project code 2802500- Water Supply Rehabilitation - Linden: 68,831,000 is allocated. Is this a duplication or could we have specifics for both of these programmes?

Mr. Bulkan: They are both related. One is locally funded programme and one is funded under the IDB. You are correct.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project codes 1903300 – Georgetown Restoration Programme and project code 1903200 – Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) Project: taking the first one - Georgetown Restoration Programme, could the Hon. Minister state what the disbursement process is? Would there be an advance? Would a lump sum be given? Would interim payments be made? Would payment be made at the end? Would the Georgetown Mayor and City Council subcontract some of the activities to be executed? Would the subcontracting of those activities occur according to the Procurement Act?

The SLED project: I come from Region 5. I would like to know, because I would like to reassure my people, what selection criteria were used. I want to be able to say, in my discussions with them, whether they would be able to access this type of support.

11.09 a.m.

Mr. Bulkan: With regards to the Georgetown Restoration Programme, the national procurement tender process would apply in relation to all of the activities to be funded and there will be oversight at the level of the Central Government, both by the Ministry of Communities and the Ministry of Finance, in relation to disbursement under this programme.

With regards to the SLED Project, as the Hon. Member would appreciate, the proposed allocation is a very minuscule amount and it could only cater for very few communities, in actual fact, but any community that is desirous of seeking support under this programme is welcome to make contact with the Ministry.

Mr. Dharamlall: Just a follow-up question on the SLED Project, If, indeed the resources are minuscule, as the Hon. Minister said, and areas have already been identified, how are representatives of communities to proceed to the Ministry and seek support under this project? Secondly, I have a follow-up on the Georgetown Restoration Programme. Are vehicles considered as part of the procurement to be executed under this project?

Mr. Bulkan: With regards to the question on SLED, the proposed allocation is only for activities for the remaining four months of this year. This programme will continue next year and would be catered for under the 2016 budget. With regards to any vehicles under the Georgetown Restoration Programme, I did undertake to provide the details for the activities to be funded and it is contemplated that it would cater for the acquisition of a minibus and one pick-up under this Programme.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up on SLED, as part of the national unity movement that we are working towards, I would like to enquire from the Hon. Minister, since I have not been provided with any clear criteria, whether one of the criteria would be about race related issues.

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to assure the Hon. Member that the Administration does not put on those glasses and that is not a determining criterion. I would like to assure him that this Administration is committed to building national unity in a genuine and a meaningful manner.

Mr. Dharamlall: Since the Hon. Minister is so clear that racial consideration is not part of the criteria, the Hon. Minister is, by extension, indicating that there are criteria. So, could the Hon. Minister please provide for us the general criteria on the SLED project?

Mr. Bulkan: It is to provide support in communities identified as the most marginalised among us.

Mr. Ali: Project code 2802500 – Water Supply Rehabilitation – Linden: could the Hon. Minister state when this project was awarded and when works commenced?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that this project was awarded in 2012. It has been completed and it is currently in the defects liability period.

Mr. Ali. The Hon. Minister may want to look at the Legend. What I see there is provision for water distribution and treatment plants, transmission networks and institutional strengthening. I do not see anything about retention payment. You may have some conflicting information that you may want to address.

Mr. Bulkan: I note the observation.

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not want to belabour this issue but it is very close to me. Project code 1903200 – Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) Projects: could the Hon. Minister define for us marginalisation, which he indicated is one of the criteria? What exactly does the Hon. Minister mean by marginalisation and why is it that some communities are chosen above others? If marginalisation is one of the criteria, what were the other criteria used to select those communities?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not sure that I actually used the word marginalisation. What I meant to say is that it is for provision for intervention and support to the most needy among us.

Mr. Dharamlall: The Hon. Minister did say marginalisation. Could he please proceed and answer my question?

Mr. Damon: I wish to have a follow-up question to my Colleague's. When the Opposition Members spoke during the budget debate, many of them talked about the new role that Members of Parliament (MP) would have to play. As a Member of Parliament living in Region 6, I would like the Hon. Minister to tell me some of those depressed communities in Region 6. This is so that when I get back to Region 6, I will go and tell the people that they would be assisted by the Government. Could the Hon. Member tell me what criteria was used to select those communities?

Mr. Bulkan: Under the programme, there are provisions for consultancies and an assessment and evaluation would be undertaken to determine which communities ought to be beneficiaries as the project continues in 2016.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under Project code 2802700 – Water Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Programme, could the Hon. Minister state whether he is confident that the activities would be executed before the end of the year and that payment would be final before the end of the year? What expected expenditure issues does Ministry expect to be confronted with, noting the over \$949 allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that tenders had already been invited. The closing date for the tenders is actually today, 25th August, 2015, and the bulk of the allocation under consideration is actually for the mobilisation fee. The proposed allocation will be awarded at the time of the award of the contract.

Mr. Damon: Just two minor follow-up questions, based on the response from the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Minister just said that there would be consultation. I want to know if there would be public consultation to identify these communities. A sum was budgeted and the number of communities that would be identified is not known. How would this money be disbursed?

He said that consultation would be done for the communities to be identified. What kind of consultation would it be? Would it be public consultation nationally? How the money would be disbursed based on the number of communities selected?

Mr. Bulkan: That would be for 2016 and going forward. It is not for the allocation in the 2015 budget.

Mr. Ali: Project code 2802700 – Water Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Programme: could the Hon. Minister state what percentage of the population will now benefit from treated water with the completion of these water treatment plants? Secondly, how would this help in relation to the turnaround plan and the breakeven target of 2016.

Mr. Bulkan: As the Hon. Member is aware, this Programme caters for the construction of three new water treatment plants. With regards to the breakeven targets for next year, in the actual fact, the prorogation of the National Assembly has severely impacted and impinged on

the timely execution of this project and it will have an impact on the breakeven target for 2016.

Mr. Ali: With full respect to the Hon. Minister, if three new water treatment plants are being built, what would be the new target in relation to the percentage of our population having access to treated water? Regardless of what, there must have been some adjustment in the turnaround plan to have the breakeven position. If the breakeven position has been modified, then I could understand that. You could state how has it been modified and when we could expect the breakeven.

Mr. Bulkan: Following the completion of this project, the target for the coverage for the treated water would be in the vicinity of 70%. With regards to the revised targets for the breakeven plan, that would be subject to a strategic review later on.

Mr. Ali: I thank the Hon. Member for that answer. The 70% was conceptualised in 2011 in terms of treated water coverage. What plans are the Government putting in place to cover the additional 30% and when does the Government expect to do this.

Mr. Bulkan: It would be a step-by-step approach. I think, firstly, we have to concentrate on getting this project off of the ground and further coverage would also be part and parcel of this strategic review that had alluded to.

Mr. Ali: I thank the Hon. Minister but may I refer him to the 5-year Strategic Plan of the Guyana Water Incorporation (GWI) that was discussed and approved by the Board? It outlines clearly when there would be 80%, 90% and 100% coverage in terms of treated water. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. If the Hon. Minister likes, I could present him with a copy of that Plan.

Mr. Dharamlall: I have an observation. The almost \$1 billion under project code 2802700 includes support from IDB and European Union (EU). We know that those procedures are very onerous. Within this period of four months, does the Hon. Minister believe that disbursement would be executed? Hon. Minister, I am not questioning the competency of your staff.

11.24 a.m.

The other part of the question is related to procurement. This is almost \$1 billion. Stated in his party's Manifesto is the need for a Public Procurement Commission (PPC). Could the

Hon. Minister state why he is not awaiting the Procurement Commission but instead contracting out over \$1 billion in works?

Mr. Bulkan: I did provide an answer to the very question posed as to the confidence of the Ministry to execute this programme in a timely manner and to ensure that disbursement of the sum being allocated and provided for takes place before the end of this year. As I said, tenders have already been invited and those tenders will close today. In keeping with the desire of the IDB and the EU to ensure that there is no further slippage of this programme, there will be oversight by both the IDB and the EU over the award of this particular contract.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state whether Cabinet will be providing a no objection to the tender awards?

Mr. Bulkan: I believe that it is expected that that will obtain.

Mr. Ali: Project code 1903300 – Georgetown Restoration Programme: the Hon. Minister, in his previous light, made a number of public pronouncements in relation to Central Government spending resources in Georgetown and not transferring those resources directly to the City Council. Is it that the Hon. Minister does not have confidence in the City Council to execute this programme? What is the rationale for not transferring this directly to the City Council for implementation, as you previously advocated?

Mr. Bulkan: The activities to be funded under this programme will be entirely identified by the City Council and the role of the Central Government will merely be oversight. This programme will not be executed by the Central Government. The projects and activities to be funded will be those identified by the Municipality.

Mr. Ali: I am very happy for that answer. Under the same project code, is the Hon. Minister saying that the equipment, the minibuses and other assets that would be acquired under this programme would go to the City Council and would be the property of the City Council?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that in the case of the vehicles, because of the duty-free acquisition, the ownership would reside with the Central Government until the expiration of the period, following which ownership will be transferred to the City Council.

Mr. Ali: Would the vehicle, equipment and all other assets acquired be transferred for the exclusive use of the City Council or would it be held in any way, shape or form under the Ministry?

Mr. Bulkan: It will be entirely under the control of the City Council.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, with your indulgence, I am not speaking about the control. Would the physical asset be transferred to the City Council? It could be transferred even if there is a duty-free concession held in the name of the Ministry.

Mr. Bulkan: Eventually, ownership will be transferred following the expiration of the period that is required by law under duty-free acquisition. The vehicles in question will be entirely at the disposal of the City Council and not Central Government.

Mr. Ali: Being at the disposal of the City Council is far different from being utilised completely by the City Council. If the Minister is saying that his Ministry's role is merely oversight then I do not expect the asset acquired to be linked to the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are making a speech now. You asked a question and you got an answer. It may not be the one that you wished but that is the one you got.

Mr. Croal: Under the Project code 1903300 – Georgetown Restoration Programme, could the Hon. Minister give a commitment or a defining statement that none of the recent activities of the Georgetown clean-up exercise, which has been on-going, is committed from this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: This budgetary allocation is to fund new activities following the approval of this proposal.

Mr. Chairman: I will allow two more questions under this head.

Mr. Croal: Project code 2802600 – Urban Sewerage and Water: could the Hon. Minister state, with the expenditure provided here, what the impact within in the precinct of South Georgetown, Sophia, *et cetera* would be? Would that mean, at least at a first level, that there would be a constant water flow?

Mr. Bulkan: The Legend does refer to sewerage and water but the budgetary allocation is to fund activities entirely under the sewerage programme.

The impact of this programme is to allow for improved services to consumers and customers in Georgetown.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 1903300 – Georgetown Restoration Project: could the Hon. Minister please state what level of consultation was done with the residents of Georgetown?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there have been consultations by the City Council with communities in Georgetown. Those consultations are expected to continue on an on-going basis.

Mr. Dharamlall: A follow-up. Since the Ministry of Communities is the budget agency responsible for this line item, I would like to advise the Hon. Minister to receive a copy of the consultation report from the City Council and make it available to the residents of Georgetown.

Programme: 422 – Sustainable Communities Development - \$3,653,924,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 13 Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Current Expenditure

Programme: 131 – Main Office - \$72,963,000

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister indicate who the two additional persons under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees are?

Mr. Bulkan: Those would be one vehicle driver and one radio operator.

Mr. Croal: Under this line item, could the Minister indicate whether there has been any new employee from May, 2015 to present?

Mr. Bulkan: No.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings or building that are to be rented?

Mr. Bulkan: The Ministry has been renting a building that is located at Better Hope. It is to house local government officers from outlying regions when they have to be in Georgetown. This arrangement has been in place for a number of years.

Programme: 131 – Main Office - \$72,963,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$30,668,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6111 – Administrative: could the Hon. Minister indicate who the two additional employees are?

Mr. Bulkan: They are two internal auditors.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: could the Hon. Minister indicate those other infrastructure that would be maintained?

11.39 a.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman and Hon. Member, these are for works for the fence and the water trestle in the Ministry's compound in Kingston.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: it would appear that the workforce has been reduced by two. Could the Hon. Member indicate the names and designations of the two employees who have left the service?

Mr. Bulkan: One is due to the resignation of a driver and the other was for non-renewal of the contract of an Expenditure Planning and Managing Analyst (EPMA).

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration – \$30,668,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development – \$124,200,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: I undertake so to do.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6211: could the Hon. Minister state whether the two temporary Regional Executive Officers (REOs) who are designated in Regions 8 and 9 are being paid from this subhead and how much they are being paid?

Mr. Bulkan: An answer was previously offered to the very question.

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not think that the question on how much they are being paid was ever answered. I would be grateful if that information could be provided to the Committee.

Mr. Bulkan: I said that they are not being paid.

Mr. Dharamlall: If they are not being paid, how are they being remunerated, accessing Government resources and conducting activities on behalf of the Government?

Mr. Bulkan: They have been appointed but they have not been paid as yet.

Bishop Edghill: I am happy to hear the Minister say that they have been appointed under this same line item. Even if they have not been paid, could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee the contracted sum on which they have been retained and under what terms and conditions? Even if they have not been paid, if there is an appointment then there must be a contract. I think that it is a fair question because the Government has come to this Committee for approval for a budget. If the Government has come for approval, at minimum, we should have answers to the questions.

Mr. Bulkan: The basic salary of the REO under consideration for Region 9 is \$273,000 and, under the contractual terms of employment, there is the standard gratuity and vacation allowance. In the case of the REO of Region 8, the salary is slightly lower. It is \$252,000 and the other benefits are similar.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state what the period of engagement of the REOs of Regions 8 and 9 is?

Mr. Bulkan: It is one year.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would just like to make an observation. A temporary engagement is not one year. In fact, the REOs are permanently employed as per contract.

Bishop Edghill: I think I saw advertisements for the filling of vacancies of REOs, which closed in July, 2015, in a national newspaper. We now have two REOs who are on a one-year contract before the close of the period of application, which is clearly a prejudice to the outcome of the process. If an appointment has been made before the process is completed, there is a situation that needs to be explained to this honourable Committee.

Finally, I would appreciate if the Hon. Minister would inform this honourable Committee when we could anticipate the filling of vacancies or the renewal of engagements with REOs countrywide in keeping with that advertisement that was made.

Mr. Bulkan: The two appointments that the Hon. Member referred to were made prior to the advertisements that he alluded to. With regards to the second part of the question, I am not in a position to provide an answer at this stage.

Bishop Edghill: If there were no vacancies, why was there an advertisement? There were no vacancies because appointments were made with one year contracts, so the advertising of vacancies did not arise because there was a vacancy or vacancies. There was none. Why was there an advertisement and what was the intended outcome?

Mr. Bulkan: I did not say that there are no vacancies, but under the existing contractual employment, a number of these contracts will expire within a short period of time - by January of next year - and so the Ministry is trying to obtain a database of suitably qualified persons for consideration for filling those vacancies when the time arises.

Mr. Dharamlall: In addition to the appointment of REOs for Regions 8 and 9, there was the removal of REOs for Regions 3 and 4. For clarity, is the Hon. Minister saying that for those REOs that are coming off in January, 2016, an advertisement process is being undertaken in July, 2015? I just want to be clear on that.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development – \$124,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, it is now approaching noon and we are scheduled to have our first break at 12.00 p.m. I would suggest that this is a good time for us to have a suspension and we will return at 1.00 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 11.51 a.m.

Sitting resumed at 1.06 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 71 Region 1: Barima/Waini

Current Expenditure

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$155,600,000

Mr. Croal: Before I start, Mr. Chairman, maybe it would be useful for us to know the name of the REO for Region 1.

Mr. Bulkan: He is Mr. Nigel Fisher and he is to my immediate left.

1.10 p.m.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6115 – Semi-skilled Operatives and Unskilled: there was a reduction by three staff. Could you make available the designations of those staff and state what impact the absence of staff is having on the region?

Mr. Bulkan: It was the retirement of one cook and one labourer, and, sadly, the death of one caretaker. It is hardly expected to have a significant impact on the operation of the region.

Mr. Croal: Is the region making efforts to have replacements?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is yes.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: there has been an increase by 100% and I think this is probably good news. Could we, therefore, be told where this maintenance would be undertaken?

Mr. Bulkan: Even though the budgetary allocation suggests a significant increase and, therefore, increased activities in the region, this figure is attributable to the fact that there has been a delinking of activities that were previously funded under public infrastructure. Whilst it reflects as a significantly higher budgetary allocation here, it does not actually translate into twice the amount of physical activities.

Mr. Croal: Where is the maintenance for?

Mr. Bulkan: Some of the main areas would be the REO quarters; general repairs for the regional conference hall and similar activities to the regional administration building - repairs to the ceiling, internal walls and floor; the regional guest house and the annexe would have repairs to the floors, ceiling, installation of a new toilet and trestle; and the Amerindian Hostel at Mabaruma would have repairs to the kitchen, plumbing, replacement of the veranda, guttering works and repairs to the toilet.

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Member of Parliament for Region 1 might be interested to hear this question. Has any provisions been made for the guest house at Port Kaituma?

Mr. Bulkan: There are no provisions in the 2015 Budget, but, I am advised, that it is one of the submissions for the 2016 allocations.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6211 – Expenses specific to the Agency: there has been an increase in allocation. Could the Hon. Minister give an outline of the expenses the allocation would cover?

Mr. Bulkan: The increase in these allocations is as a result of activities relating to the holding of the Toshaos elections, as well as the payment of stipends to Deputy Toshaos, which is a new feature in this Budget.

Mr. Croal: Does this cater for the Community Development Council (CDC) Chairpersons?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is yes. It does cater for the payment of CDC heads, which formerly enjoyed payment of such stipends. I am also advised that there would be no new additions. The only CDC heads who are receiving stipends are those who formerly enjoyed it.

Mr. Croal: How many statutory meetings are catered for under this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: There would be two more statutory meetings for the remainder of this year.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: With respect to the stipend for the CDC Chairpersons, I am aware that no CDC chairperson receives stipend. I am aware, that community council Toshaos, who are not yet titled Amerindian villages, receive stipend but not the CDC chairpersons. Could I get some clarification on that? Would the CDC Chairpersons, this time around, be receiving a stipend? This has been a long demand and request by those chairpersons who have quite a lot of responsibility on their hands but, they were not catered for and neither did the Amerindian Act cater for them.

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to assume that the Hon. Member actually has the correct information. But, I am advised, that some of the CDC heads do receive such a stipend. I note that the Hon. Member spoke of community councils that are not yet titled Amerindian villages and I would undertake to examine, in more detail, if indeed it is erroneously referred to as the CDC and there is a mix up with the community councils. But, I am equally surprised that the former Minister, who would have been in a position to effect the redress that she is

now seeking, now seeks to place it as a priority item. But, if indeed, the CDC heads are deserving of a stipend, as do the Toshaos of Amerindian village councils enjoy, then this is something that would be given careful consideration.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate what portion of the allocation under line item 6211 goes towards payment of Toshaos and chairperson's stipend?

Mr. Bulkan: The actual percentage is not available right now. The computations would have to be done. The Toshaos' stipends are \$30,000 monthly and the deputies' are \$15,000 monthly. So, the figures would be computed and the percentage of the total allocation would be given at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Dharamlall: The reason I asked the question is that for a figure of over \$33 million to have been arrived at, the Budget was supposed to have already catered for an estimate of the Toshaos' stipend as well as that for the RDC Councillors, since those stipends were not changed. I would be grateful for the Hon. Minister to provide that to us. How soon could that be provided?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member is asking for a percentage. We know the quantum.

Mr. Dharamlall: Okay, I thank you for the quantum. I will do the percentage.

Mr. Bulkan: It is \$30,000 for the Toshaos and \$15,000 for the Deputy Toshaos.

Mr. Dharamlall: How many Toshaos, Deputy Toshaos and Chairpersons of community councils are there in Region 1?

Mr. Bulkan: I will undertake to provide this information to the Hon. Member before the closing of the session.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I wish to put this question after the next speaker.

Mr. Croal: Just as a final follow-up to line item 6211. Line item 6211 and the expenses therein are managed by the RDCs. By and large, this is required for the RDCs to carry out their business. Allocated there is the stipend for the councillors that have been identified. The question I ask, therefore, is: if there is an allocation of \$33 million, there must have available the allocation for the RDC statutory meetings, the allocation for the RDC Councillors, and the allocation for the Toshaos. We are not interested, at this point in time, in the percentage, but in a breakdown into those three categories.

Mr. Bulkan: The previous question was about the percentage. Nonetheless, I note what is required now is a breakdown for the stipends for the RDC councillors, as well as the provision for the statutory meetings. This would be provided before the end of the sitting.

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$155,600,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 712 – Public Works – \$219,798,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281 – Security Services: I noticed that the allocation has more than doubled. Could the Hon. Minister provide information with on whether it a new contractual security service to justify the increase, who the contract has been awarded to and when it would mature?

Mr. Bulkan: It is not a new contract. It is a one year contract that commenced in November of last year and the increased amounts cater for the higher payments from \$150 to \$275.

Mr. Croal: Are there any new locations under this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is no.

1.25 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants, the budgeted expenditure for 2015 is \$91,194,000, and under Vehicles Spares and Service, line item 6264, the budgeted estimate for 2015 is \$15,465,000. Could the Hon. Minister please provide the number of vehicles that are available in the region, the types of vehicles that are available in the region, and to whom they are assigned to warrant the \$91,194,000?

Could the Hon. Minister also provide an explanation of this \$20 million increase from 2014 in Fuel and Lubricants? Does the Hon. Minister not think subjectively that the \$15 million, under line item 6264, noting the amount of fuel and lubricants consumed under line item 6231, may be very low?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not sure if the Hon. Members would want me to read out all of the equipment that comprises the fleet, but the total is about a dozen items. Does the Member want me to read them out or should I provide them?

Mr. Dharamlall: Is it one dozen, 12 vehicles, the pieces of equipment that use the fuel and lubricants?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes. It is about 12 vehicles total.

Mr. Dharamlall: With the reduced cost of fuel, is there a typo with this \$91,194,000?

Mr. Bulkan: These budgets would have been prepared before the announcement of the reduced cost of fuel.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House if provision has been made for utilisation of the mobile asphalt plant which has been acquired for the improvement of roads in regional areas in this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in possession of information to answer that question definitively, but I know that the equipment being referred to is under the care of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to let us know what building is being rented and for what purpose it is rented?

Mr. Bulkan: The information I have in front of me is that it is to cater for the relocation of a civil engineer to the Matakai subregion.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I must put the question now. I notice that we are going past our allocation of time for this item and there are still two other line items under this heading.

Programme: 712 - Public Works - \$219,798,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$946,938,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister identify those bridges?

Mr. Bulkan: Those bridges would be in a number of locations namely St. Dominic's Primary School in Aruka, Black Water Primary School in Barima, lower Kaituma Primary, St. Cyprian Primary in Barima, Unity Square Primary in Barima, Sacred Heart Primary Aruka, Katchikamo Primary in Waini, St Mary's Primary in Aruka and St. Anselm's Primary in Barima.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please state under line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, what will warrant a \$5 million increase over 2014, noting that the price of fuel was also reduced?

Mr. Bulkan: There was one new acquisition, namely a school bus, in addition to three 15 horsepower (h.p.) engines that are used to transport schoolchildren. All these expenses would already have been incurred in this year.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6292, Dietary, there are two questions. First, could the Hon. Minister justify the increase? Second, because there are a number of schools in the Barima River that do not currently benefit from the school feeding programme, I am interested in knowing if this would be part of the expansion of the programme.

Mr. Bulkan: This provision is for hot meals to the three dorms. The increased budgetary allocations are related to a higher intake in those dorms.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$946,938,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 714 – Health Services - \$469,901,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister indicate why there is a \$22,253,000 increase in the estimate for fuel? What does that increase entail?

Mr. Bulkan: One of the significant contributory factors would be the fact that there is a greater number of health personnel in the region, namely 14 doctors. This heading caters for transportation for them to be able to come out to receive their credits. Part of the increased allocations also had to do with increased monitoring and activities related to the outbreak of the chikungunya disease earlier in the year.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate or provide to us a breakdown of the line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, noting that the Hon. Minister said 14 additional doctors would be doing monitoring? I would love to have a copy of the monitoring plan, Mr. Chairman. How many vehicles or boats and engines, motor bikes and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) would be using this approximately \$57 million?

Mr. Bulkan: There is a list at hand and it would be provided to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Dharamlall: Final question on this line item 6231. What type of procurement process will be pursued in execution of this \$57 million in fuel and lubricant?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the acquisition of fuel and lubricants is publicly advertised. It is an open and transparent process.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: There is an increase of \$41 million. The Hon. Minister of Health in his budget presentation would have made mention of the regions now being allocated the sum for the procurement of drugs and medical supplies. My question, through the Chairman is, one, would the region be allowed to conduct this procurement or would this still be done through the central Ministry of Health?

Secondly, is the allocation provided here adequate for the Region or are we expecting some more input from the central Ministry?

Mr. Bulkan: It is a feature that will reoccur throughout all of the 10 regions. The Hon. Member is correct that formerly the allocation was provided for under the Ministry of Health but it is now under the regional allocation. The Ministry of Health will continue, however, to be responsible for the procurement, but the regional administration will have a greater say in prioritising what drugs and medication are needed on a priority basis, region specific.

With regard to the need for any further allocations, I have to say that, as we speak, there is no guarantee as to if this amount will indeed be sufficient or if there would be need to have further allocations later in the year.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: The Hon. Minister just gave us an explanation that there is an increased allocation and the central Ministry will still be procuring the drugs for the regions. Specially, I would like the Minister to answer. Does this allocation satisfy all of the needs of the region or are these only for specific items? Is this going to be part of the central vote for procurement of drugs but only it is allocated to the region or is this additional allocation to deal with specific items?

1.40 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you Hon. Member. Mr. Chairman, in addition to this allocation, I am advised that the Ministry of Health, will also be procuring additional drugs to be provided to each region.

Programme: 714 - Health Services - \$469,901,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$3,300,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Project 2601400, Power Supply: Would the Hon. Minister explain to us the scope of work for which this \$20 million would be used?

Mr. Bulkan: We have moved from Programme 711 to Programme 721, Public Works. Are we saying that Programme 711 has been completed?

Mr. Chairman: We have just moved to Programme 711, Capital Expenditure, Regional Administration and Finance. That is the item that we are now considering.

Mr. Bulkan: In that case the question is related to Programme 712.

Mr. G. Persaud: That is correct. You can move to Programme 711 and then I will take Programme 712.

Programme: 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$3,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 712 - Public Works - \$30,861,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Project 2601400, Power Supply: Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown as to what this \$20 million allocation would be used for? Mr. Chairman, with your permission, could I ask on project 2401500, Land and Water Transport, "Purchase of Vehicle"? What vehicle and which department is it intended to go?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer to the first question is that on it is an upgrade and extension of the distribution network at Wauna and Sugar Hill. It is occasion by the fact that the existing network is old and the extension will cater for approximately 30 additional households in the Sugar Hill area. The total amount of households to benefit from this intervention is expected to be 265 and it covers a three-mile radius.

The vehicle to be acquired, under the second question, for \$3.2 million, is one ATV.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please state what would be an average cost per kilowatt of electricity in the three areas under this project, noting that they are primarily Amerindian people and whether that rate is going to be lower than in Linden?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the provision of electricity supply in this area is a community initiative and the supply of electricity is managed by the community. I do not have the figures of what exactly is the tariff. It is a programme that is managed entirely by the community, as I have understood.

Mr. Croal: Project 2401500, the procurement of an ATV, in which subregion of the Public Works department this is expected to be stationed?

Project 2601400, Power Supply: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what part of the electoral promise to the people of Mabaruma was there increased power supply for hours? Has any of this been catered for? I am asking that under the project of power supply.

Mr. Bulkan: The first question actually took us, again, into Programme 713 and the Hon. Member moved back to the programme now under discussion, which is Programme 712. You said 500, if I heard you correctly Hon. Member.

Where is the ATV to be used? It is in the Matakai subregion. I am not in a position to answer the second question.

Mr. Dharamlall: The purposes of the Hon. Minister on project 2401500, Land and Water Transport, noting the purchase of a new vehicle... Is the Hon. Minister aware that the entire fuel and lubricants consumption under this budget is more than \$40 million as compared to 2014, in Region 1 that is across the programmes?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I think we are going back to the current expenditure which has already been addressed.

Programme: 712 - Public Works - \$30,861,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 713 -Education Delivery - \$71,850,000

Mr. Croal: Project 1202600, Buildings – Education, as part of the profile, indicates provision for septic tanks, trestles and electrical works at Port Kaituma dormitory. Could the

Hon. Minister indicate whether this will be the completion of a current expansion undertaking at the Port Kaituma dormitory for a number of years?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is yes - completion.

Mr. G. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister share with us where would wells be provided under project 1902600, Infrastructural Development?

Mr. Bulkan: As stated in the project profile, reference 303, it is as stated there, for wells at North West and Port Kaituma secondary schools.

Programme: 713 - Education Delivery - \$71,850,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 714 - Health Services - \$80,086,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister share with us the list of items and cost per items which will be procured under project 2502800, Furniture and Equipment - Health, \$20 million?

Mr. Bulkan: The list is actually quite lengthy. It includes 23 items and the estimated cost for each. It is as stated in the project profile and I will undertake to share with the Member a copy of this list.

Ms. Teixeira: Project 2401500, Land and Water Transport, \$24.5 million, “purchase of ambulance, vehicles, boats and outboard engines”: Could the Minister say which communities will benefit from these services? As I believe, the region is very big. Is the ambulance being put in a subregion or the administrative headquarters? The other vehicles, boats and engines, how will this benefit the delivery of health services in Region 1?

Mr. Bulkan: Well overall it is for improved health delivery in the region and in the case of the ambulance it will be for use of the Mabaruma Regional Hospital. The boat and 200 horsepower outboard engine will be based at the Kumaka District Hospital, as would be the Double Cab pickup, both of those being at the Moruka sub district.

1.55 p.m.

Programme: 714 – Health Services - \$80,086,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 72 Region 2: Pomerook/Supenaam

Current Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$160,995,000

Mr. Damon: Under line item 6111, Administrative, I have seen here that there is an increase. Could the Hon. Minister state what the increase is for?

Mr. Bulkan: I believe you are referring to the increase in the number of personnel by two. One is a Senior Personnel Officer and the other is a Senior Registry Supervisor.

Mr. Damon: I have a follow-up question, Mr. Chairman. How long have these employees been employed?

Mr. Bulkan: Both of these appointments were made earlier in the year. One was in January, 2015 and the other was in February, 2015.

Mr. Damon: Under Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, I am seeing here, staffing details, that there are 36, increased by three. Could you explain that, Hon. Minister?

Mr. Bulkan: One is an Electrician Technician. The second addition is an Administrative Assistant and the third is a Cleaner. The first of these appointments was effective in July of last year and the other two were done in January, 2015 and the other May, 2015.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: I am seeing \$66,000. I am aware that the procurement of drugs is usually done by Region 2, how come there is this small amount?

Mr. Bulkan: It is not for the health programme *per se* but for the administrative staff. It is just for minor medication.

Mr. Damon: I am seeing here, line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, that there is a decrease. Is it a case that some vehicles or boats are made to be redundant?

Mr. Bulkan: I noted the observation and it is indeed correct. Some portions of the fleet were taken from here to Ministry of Public Works. It is not that the actual allocations are reduced but some of them are reflected under the Public Works programme.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6281, Security Services: I have seen a great increase here. Could you explain, Hon. Minister, how did this increase come?

Mr. Bulkan: I note the Hon. Member saying that it is a significant increase. The figures actually do not justify such an interpretation. It is a modest increase but it is as a result as higher rates being paid to the guards.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6284, Other: I see you have the sum of \$1,606,000. It is a whole host of increase. Could you explain that?

Mr. Bulkan: There were two main components relating to that allocation. One is for activities related to the Clean up My Country Programme, last year, and another is for payment for public advertisements, namely to the New Guyana Company, and there is Pinnacle Communication which I think is a local media outlet.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister state whether the region is monitoring the security providers to ensure that the security guards are paid on time and are paid at least the minimum wage?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised and assured that at the moment both of those conditions are in place.

Mr. Seeraj: Line items 6114 and 6115, Clerical and Office Supplies and Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: They have been reduced by three and one in staffing details. Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, has been increased by three. Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is now a policy of his Ministry to reduce staff in these categories and increase contracted workers?

Mr. Bulkan: These positions are all different positions and in the case of new appointments they would come under the regulations, which is GS1 and 2. In the case of line item 6116, Contracted Employees, that question was already put and answered.

Mr. Seeraj: It is a follow-up. I am asking the Hon. Minister, Sir, that if it is now a policy because there have been reductions in two categories but there has not been any filling of those vacancies. There seem to be increases in contracted workers. I am just asking the Minister whether there are removals of clerical and semi-skilled workers from the fixed establishment, if they are being replaced by contracted workers.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is no. That is not the policy.

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$160,995,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$249,442,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, \$95.5 million has been allocated. Could the Hon. Member say which are the communities and farming areas that will benefit from this expenditure on drainage and irrigation, in which, as it is known, Region 2 is a critical agricultural region, particularly rice. I will appreciate, for the knowledge of the public, let us hear what the areas are that will benefit.

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation actually caters for activities across the entire region and not any particular communities.

Ms. Teixeira: As it relates to drainage and irrigation works, canals, *kokers* and things as those, if you can give us an idea of where those will be done [*inaudible*]...

Mr. Bulkan: The list is actually quite exhaustive. It will probably take too much time for me to read it out but, as I said, it is across the entire region. I will be happy to share this list: Good Hope, Three Friends, Mainstay, Henrietta, Bounty Hall, Devonshire Castle, Annandale, Mariah's Lodge, Onderneeming, Anna Regina, Walton Hall, Somerset and Berks, Better Hope, Capoey, Abram Zuil. These are some of the areas.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: In 2014, there was an allocation of \$483,000. In 2015, there is a straight-line allocation again of \$483,000, same as 2014. Is the Minister contemplating having to travel, in relation to Local Government Elections, going to Region 2 on outreaches? Why is there a straight-line increase from 2014 and 2015? Is it a figure that was just plugged in?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is actually for the agriculture programme and the activities described by the Hon. Member could come under admin. However, I noted that the figure, Hon. Member, which you are quoting, does not correspond to the figure here in these Estimates. You are quoting a figure of \$483,000. It differs.

Mr. Ali: The figure is \$540,000. However, it is for agricultural purposes, in the presentation of the budget, we talked about expanding agriculture, agriculture diversification. Are we

going to spend additional resources in expanding agriculture in Region 2 or we expect it to remain static?

Mr. Bulkan: This is the allocation under this programme in these Estimates.

Mr. Dharamlall: With the improved roads and drainage and irrigation works in line items 6251, Maintenance of Roads, and 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, could the Hon. Minister state whether the rice section in Region 2, which that region depends on so much, productivity and efficient would be increased and what would be the associated increases in the price of paddy?

2.10 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Improvements to drainage and irrigation (D&I) works are improvements to the infrastructure and farmers would benefit from it. So it would have an impact on a farmer's yield and productivity, but, of course, as you would know Hon. Member, it is not the sole determinant. The key to increase in productivity actually lies in the hands of the farmer, but the interventions, as far as improved D&I works are concerned, is an obligation and responsibility of the central Government. Thereafter, it will be in the hands of the individual farmer.

Mr. Damon: A follow-question under that same line item 6253, can the Minister say, which are the villages in Region 2 that will be benefitting from this large sum of money?

Mr. Bulkan: I have already undertaken to provide a list of all of the villages and communities that will be serviced under this Programme.

Programme: 722 –Agriculture - \$249,442,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$94,090,000

Mr. Ali: Line item 6264 - Vehicles Spares and Service: The Hon. Member, in answering a question previously put to him, said that certain assets, including vehicles and a motor boat, were transferred to the Public Works head. Therefore, expenses related to those assets would have been attributed to the Public Works head. However, there is a reduction under Vehicles Spares and Service under this Public Works head, from \$5.519 million in 2014 to \$4.120 million in 2015. There is some inconsistency here.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that major overhaul activities were undertaken late last year and that would account for a reduction in the allocations under that heading, line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister informed us that vehicles and boat that were under a previous allocation were transferred to Public Works. For that reason, we had a reduction under that allocation because the cost would be accommodated under Public Works, but that is not reflected here; the programme that the Minister has here for Public Works is even less than the substantive programme for Public Works last year.

Mr. Bulkan: With all due respect, it might be a case that we are proceeding on parallel tracks. Whilst indeed the vehicles could be assigned to a different programme, it does not necessarily mean at the same time that repairs need to be effected to it. In addition, I am advised that the maintenance of the vehicles assigned to the Regional Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, which were formerly catered for under Public Works, are now under line item 6211.

Mr. Chairman: Sir, you are allowed a very short question, go ahead.

Mr. Ali: If the specific item is now looked at, fuel and lubricant, there was a decrease in the previous allocation of almost \$4 million and we were told that that decrease was because of the transfer for fuel and lubricant. But the increase for fuel and lubricant under Public Works is only \$500,000. Is the Hon. Minister saying to us that these vehicles he attributed to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would be starved of fuel or in some way, the travelling requirement of these two vehicles will be constrained?

Mr. Bulkan: I do not think it is contemplated that the Regional Chairman and Vice-Chairman would allow for or agree to a reduction in their activities, but I am also advised that provision is also made under line item 6211, programme 1 – Regional Administration and Finance, for the funding of these activities.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will now put the question...

Question put...

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, with due respect, I have noticed that the Opposition is being restricted to at least three questions under each of these issues. I do not think and I submit that this is not in the interest of the country. I know that you have your decisions to make but

I believe that in the interest of good governance, the Opposition should be allowed to ask as many questions that it would like to. I have at least two questions which I wanted to ask, but I have notice that under this head only two questions have been allowed.

Speaker hits gavel on desk.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, under Standing Order 40(a), it appears to me that the presentation by the Hon. Member Clement Rohee seriously borders on contempt of Parliament. I believe that he is attacking the integrity of the Speaker. I believe that the Speaker is doing a very good job. We urge you to continue to do a good job, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members please. I think the Speaker is not concerned about views on his integrity. He does not believe that he has to give proof of that, so the question does not arise. Let us deal with the facts.

I think the Hon. Member who spoke last was dealing in hyperbole. He could not be representing the facts as they appeared there on my left. Let us not start picking and counting. I think the Speaker has been extremely lenient. I think the fact that it is impossible to accommodate every question that every Member would wish to ask. One Member stood up and asked eight questions; I made eight dots here, for every time he got up. Now multiply that by 10 and see what you get and then determine how quickly we will finish with what we have to do.

So let us be reasonable. Let us not get carried away because we may not have our question heard. I am not asking for comments on what I am saying. I am simply stating, and I will always stick to the facts. Let us do that; let us count the number of times. Members on the left side of the Speaker know how many times I have yielded to a request, even when I am ready to put the question. Let us not make this into something it is not. It does not serve us well.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, with due respect...

Mr. Chairman: Madam, I have not given you the floor yet.

Ms. Teixeira: I thought you had finished, sorry Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Even when Members take the microphone and start talking without asking the Speaker for the floor, I have not interfered, I have not interrupted. I have allowed the free

flow. I think that passes for intervention. Let us be clear about what we are saying and let us be sure that when we are speaking in those terms, what we say cannot be questioned. I hope that this settles that.

Hon. Minister Trotman you have the floor.

Mr. Trotman: May it please you Mr. Chairman. I wish to, without belabouring the point, refer to Standing Order 74 which says that the Business Sub-Committee shall, apart from numbering the days over which we will consider the Estimates, set the times.

Mr. Chairman, we were informed that this Committee had met and had determined the times. The times were worked out for this National Assembly to work from 9.30 a.m. until 11.00 at nights. So to hear that we have an unlimited time to ask questions is incorrect. It has never been the case. We have always set time limits. It will make no sense that we just ask questions forever.

Ms. Teixeira: I have been in this House for 23 years and I have sat through 20-odd budget debates. It is always recognised that this period of the budget estimates is the domain of the Opposition. Their domain is to be able to scrutinise the budget. We made it clear that we felt the seven days were necessary. We compromised on the three days, even though despite what the Hon. Member Minister Trotman said about time allocations and time constraints. All of that was abandoned for us to go to after 3.am. We have come returned and most Members of the House on both sides have had not gotten much sleep. For the regions and the regional democratic councils (RDCs), it normally takes two days minimum to deal with the 10 RDCs.

2.25 p.m.

We have been put down to half of an hour. All Speakers of this House have used some discretion, and I am not saying that you have not, but when there are a lot of questions piling up and there are issues that have to be addressed, there is some leniency given. There are other times we come to other regions or issues and there is nothing much to ask about.

On these regions, there are critical areas of the budget, some of which the Government have made changes to, like the procurement of health and drugs by the regions and this has not been done before. We have questions to ask; what else is going to happen. So, I am asking - the half of an hour- we started at 1o'clock, we are now into Region 2 and I assume that if the Government is so insistent on the three days and us not going pass the three days, then I

guess that we will have to go until 3 o'clock tomorrow morning and 3 o'clock the next morning because we have to do what we are supposed to do in this House. We are supposed to ask these questions.

Mr. Chairman, I am appealing to you, please do not take this concern that we are having, that we, in some cases, on the case that we were dealing with, that there are additional questions. If the Minister is not answering them adequately, we are going to keep asking until he gives us some answers as best as he can.

We have been on that side of the House before. So Mr. Chairman, I am asking you to please give us some flexibility. If you are going to stick to the half of an hour on everything, then I do not know what we are going to ask in this House. We have to have some dialogue across to floor in order to get the answers that the public needs. It is not for us; it is also for the public that is listening to this.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. I would make two observations. Members must grant the Speaker the courtesy of silence when he is addressing the National Assembly. It has been a feature, unfortunately, for both sides not to always remember that. I hope that we can do better. I must tell the Hon. Member who spoke that the opposition's domain, as it has been put, must be subject to some rules and limitations. If you have 65 or 63 Members and you have everyone speak, it is not possible to contain what we have to do, whether we have seven days or 70 days. Sometimes works expand the time available for its completion.

So, I think that the Speaker will continue, as he has been doing, to be lenient with requests, to accommodate requests, even at the last minute. There have been Members for whom I have put issues here and there has been no comment until I say I would put the question and then somebody gets up and indicates that he or she wishes to speak. We have to all work diligently and together. That is what we have to do.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you very much. On...

Mr. Chairman: Were you speaking on the item?

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman, for the purpose of our record...

Mr. Chairman: I am asking whether you were speaking on your item.

Mr. Seeraj: I am speaking on a comment made by the Hon. Minister of Governance. I am a Member of the Business Sub-Committee. The meeting that we had, for the purpose of the record, I wish to state that there was not an agreement. The matter, in terms of the amount of days, was put to a vote. We had asked for seven days and we have come down to five, then four days, with additional hours. Then what was put to us was three days with additional hours and the matter went for the vote. I thought that I would mention that for the record.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I thank you but I must ask was the matter resolved? As a Member of Parliament, who thought that he might put this matter, is it strange that if the matter is resolved by a vote and a certain outcome has eventuated, that it would apply to all? I just want to be sure that you are saying that it does not. You are not? Do you wish to speak?

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman, I am just saying that the way it was put forward, it would appear to those who were not there that this matter had total agreement. I am just saying that the matter was put for a vote; we were not in agreement and that is why it was put for a vote.

Mr. Chairman: My question was, and I need to understand where we are going with this, is it the case that because the matter was decided by a vote, it does not apply to the Members who may not have been on the winning side of that vote? That would be an incredible new philosophy that you are asking the Speaker to take note of. We will not revisit this matter and I would ask Members to leave it there. I would be guided by the Business Sub-Committee's report and I will use my judgement in relation to giving the floor and allowing time for speaking.

Mr. Dharamlall: Can I proceed? At line item 6251- Maintenance of Roads and line item 6254 Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses: could the Hon. Minister state whether the Mainstay road is part of this programme and whether any work is considered for Dredge Creek and along the banks of the Pomeroon River?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, for clarification, are we now dealing with Programme: 724 - Educational Delivery?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, did we move from Programme: 723?

Mr. Chairman: We are listening to your presentation on Programme: 723. Is that was you was presenting?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Dharamlall: My question still stands Hon. Minister. May I repeat to the Hon. Minister under line item 6251 - Maintenance of Roads, is the Mainstay Road considered under the 2015 programme and under the line item 6251- Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses, whether Dredge Creek and along the embankment of the Pomeroon river, whether any river defenses work would be done there?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there is no major intervention being contemplated in this allocation for works to the Mainstay road, but that is the subject of regular and routine grading maintenance exercise. The answer to the second part of the question on Dredge Creek, is no.

Mr. Rohee: At line item 6252 - Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the information, and not necessarily the list of the number of bridges that are envisaged to be maintained there? Apart from that, could the Minister give us the names of the first five bridges that are to be fixed and to name exactly where those bridges are?

Mr. Bulkan: It does not reach the number five. This allocation caters for the maintenance of four wooden bridges located at Cotton Field, Henrietta, David James Scheme and Charity.

Mr. Rohee: At line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the nature of this other infrastructure is and if they are priorities and where?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation caters for repairs to the living quarters at the RDC compound in Oondeerneeming; that would be general repairs to the chain link fence. It is also for general repairs to the chain link fence at the Cotton Field Compound, which is another RDC building, as well as for the purchasing of materials for routine maintenance works undertaken by the RDC.

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$94,090,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$1,469,257,000

Ms. Teixeira: At line item 6292 – Dietary: This has increased by almost \$22 million under the education programme for the RDC. Could you say if this will include the school feeding programme in the Region or is it only for the dormitories in the Region?

At line item 6255 - Maintenance and Other Infrastructure: There has been an increase from \$17.5 million to \$20.5 million, could the Minister give us an indication of what facilities will be maintained under this? Will this include maintenance or works on playgrounds or sports grounds in the communities in Region 2?

At line item 6242- Maintenance of Buildings: There is an increase from \$38 million to \$47 million, could you give us an indication of the number of schools and/or buildings that will be taken care of under this Budget so that, again, we can know which schools are being is taken care of?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the first question which is dietary, the answer is no, it does not cater for general school feeding, but only for the provision of meals to the four dorms.

At line item 6255- Maintenance and Other Infrastructure: The allocation caters for the funding of works; fences at three buildings namely - the Department of Education which is at Cotton Field Secondary School; the Education Officer quarters, also at Cotton Field Secondary School; the Regional Education Officer (REDO) and the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) quarters at the Anna Regina Multilateral School compound; land filling at the Cotton Field Secondary School, upgrade to the walk way on the 8th of May Secondary School at Dartmouth, Essequibo; similar walkway at the Sparta Primary School; repairs to the fence of the Riverstown Nursery School; it is for solitary upgrade to a playfield that is at the Anna Regina Secondary School; it also caters for repairs to the fence at the Friendship Secondary School and at the Aurora Secondary School and dorms.

2. 40 p.m.

In answer to the question at line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, these are buildings at various locations in the region at Wakapau, J.C. Chandisingh Secondary School and Mabel Sandy's Primary School and that is also in Wakapau; the 8th of May Secondary School; Ulele Primary School Primary in the Upper Pomeroun; Liberty Primary School, also in the Pomeroun River; and there are about six other schools, entailing various repair activities.

Mr. Damon: Hon. Minister, I want to know, under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, the Hon. Minister have mentioned some buildings there, but what about the Charity Secondary School. Are there any moneys in your budget for the maintenance of the Charity Secondary School? Then there are several other schools up and down the river, Hon. Minister, you have only mentioned about two schools in that area. Are there any reservations for those other schools?

As I am on my feet, let me continue. Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: These bridges that you would be maintaining, Minister, you had mentioned some before, but now, where are these bridges situated? There are bridges in Castle, Anna Regina and elsewhere that need to be maintained in that region. Were there any reservations made there for those bridges?

Mr. Bulkan: I would take the second question first. In relations to the bridges that were identified for repairs under this allocation, there were only four bridges and they do not include a number of the areas identified by the Hon. Member. In relations to the repairs to the Charity Secondary School, I was actually wrong a moment ago, there were not only a further six buildings that will be subject to repairs and maintenance under this programme, but it is actually considerably more, one of them being works to the roof, as well as other repairs to the Charity Secondary School, including repairs to the doors and windows. The list is quite long, but I can certainly provide the Hon. Members with a copy of this list.

Mr. Seeraj: Hon. Minister, Staffing Details, I have notice overall there have been a reduction of five, but under line item 6116 – contracted workers have been increased by nine. If it is not a policy, is it the practice that you are increasing contracted workers at the expense of the other categories.

Mr. Bulkan: Whilst it is not an existing policy, the evidence will infer that it seems to be a current practice.

Mr. Damon: Let me ask the Hon. Minister, under line item 6302 – Training (Including Scholarships), can the Minister say in which direction these moneys that he has allocated here will be spent. Is it a case where these moneys will be spent for children going to the Government Technical Institute (GTI), University of Guyana (UG) or the Cyril Potter College?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr Chairman, most of the sums allocated for the training here are actually internal, within the region. It caters for the training of teachers to be better equipped to be able to discharge their responsibilities to the children, both at the primary and the secondary level.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: I have seen here that this figure has jumped to \$21 million. We know that the Wartsila Operations Guyana Inc. is not really moving as it used to in the PPP time. Hon. Minister, what caused you to increase these electricity costs? Have you built more buildings?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation actually allows for increased electricity use to a number of the educational institutions, and in particular, a number of labs in the region

Mr. Dharamlall: Going to line item 6292 – Dietary, could the Hon. Minister confirm that this increase, and in more students going to school, is an attestation of the sound policies of the previous Government. Whilst the Hon. Minister is searching for his answer, I would like to, on behalf of the People Progressive Party Members of Parliament, also commend and congratulate the outstanding students of Region 2 in their recent Caribbean Examination Council (CSEC).

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer to the previous question is that there is both an increase in the intake, as well as an increased cost for provision for the service.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, are you saying that it is not as a result of the sound policies of the education system?

Mr. Bulkan: I did not offer a comment on that Hon. Member.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$1,469,257,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$598,315,000

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: \$87.914 million, the Hon. Member, when we were looking at Region 1, pointed out the new policy of the Government is that the allocations will be made in the Region for the procurement of drugs and medical supplies. This is a rather large amount, and having had some experience in the health sector,

the big challenge will be not only purchasing and transporting, but also storage under the appropriate conditions so that one does not lose the efficacy of the drugs and so on.

I know that the Suddie Hospital has had a reasonable good storage bond, but I have concern about this large quantity of drugs being purchased. It is not about the figure I am challenging, it is about the capacity and the mechanisms we put in place to ensure the procurement cycle and the storage and the movement of the drugs – the cooling chambers, proper chronicling - have that in the decision of the Government, included facilities or what you call physical inputs to be able to make sure proper storage, cooling, dusk free, *et cetera*, to make sure the efficacy of the drugs is maintain.

Mr. Bulkan: I thank the Hon. Member for the observation, it is indeed very valid. The last thing the Administration would want to be guilty of, whether at the level of the central or the regional Administration, is that in the acquisition of supplies for any of the programmes for any of the regions, that as a result of negligence or improper storages that the intended beneficiaries do not benefit from the expenditure of these hard earned tax dollars. So I thank the Hon. Member for the observation and for the caution.

Dr. Anthony: Under the same line item, can the Minister provide us with a list of the drugs to be procured and the quantities.

Mr. Bulkan: There is not a specific list; they are indicative items and the procurement, as I said earlier, will be done *via* the Ministry of Public Health.

Mr. Hamilton: Hon. Minister, my first question is, is it the new policy that the regions would be buying drugs and medical supplies for themselves and not the Ministry of Public Health anymore.

Mr. Bulkan: No, Hon. Member, I did say earlier that, whilst the allocation is provided for under the regional allocation, formally it was under the Ministry of Health. So now, it is just reflected under a different programme, but the activity will continue to be procured by the Ministry of Public Health.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, for the information of the House, drugs and medical supplies, as I know it, that are normally purchased for the regions are purchased *via* the regional health services, Ministry of Health. In the past, regions were allowed a minimal sum to be able to buy emergency drug supplies. This is a quantum shift. I am not aware that Region 2 or any

region has the necessary storage capacity - bond storage - to deal with drug supplies to the tune of \$89 million.

I want to get it clear what you are saying. Are you saying that the regional health services will still be responsible for the purchasing of drugs and medical supplies for the regions, but just via this accounting formula, bookkeeping so that you have extrapolated and placed the sums in the regional budget under this line item?

2.55 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: The sourcing, the procurement and the purchasing of all of the drugs would be done by the Ministry of Health in bulk in order to be able to enjoy better prices as a result of the economies of scale and a more efficient method of procurement. However, the region will be able to draw down, if you will, to this value for their usage and needs in relation to drugs.

Mr. Hamilton: A sum of \$89 million is placed in the Region 2 budget. When the Regional Health Services (RHS) is ready to buy drugs, the money would be warranted out of the region and back to RHS, the RHS would do the bulk purchase, and then the value of the drugs would be transferred to the region. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Bulkan: That is correct, Hon. Member.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up question: would the Minister agree that the warranting of the resources back to Ministry of Health is a form of contract splitting? If one purchasing is done for all the regions, then there would be economies of scale and then better pricing would be gotten. The fact that the purchase is being decentralised by being split in every region is a backdoor way of achieving contract splitting.

Mr. Bulkan: The purchase is not decentralised; it is consolidated. The individual needs of the respective regions are consolidated by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry would make the bulk purchase to be able to enjoy better prices based on greater volume.

Mr. Dharamlall: Having served in the Government previously, I am aware that the Chairman of the National Procurement and Tender and Administration Board (NPTAB) issues an approved award based on source of funding. What source of funding, Hon. Minister, would the Ministry of Health, which you seem to be speaking on behalf of, use for this consolidated procurement?

Mr. Bulkan: The source of funding would be the allocation that is reflected under this Programme. The region would be able to receive drugs via the Ministry of Health to this value.

Mr. Dharamlall: A follow up question: would all ten regions have their allocation on the award?

Mr. Bulkan: That is correct.

Ms. Teixeira: This is a critical issue. If one looks at the allocation under the Ministry of Health's, which we have not come to as yet, under the same line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies – the Ministry of Health's allocation for drugs has declined from \$1.9 billion to \$1.5 billion. Therefore, it appears as if the bookkeeping arrangement that is being introduced for the 10 regions where the allocation falls under the Ministry of Health...The Ministry has a reduction of \$400 million in the allocation for the purchase of drugs and then the regions are given certain amounts. How did the RDC come up with \$87.9 million for the health needs of the region?

There is a drug formulary that guides the health departments in terms of the appropriate drugs for primary, secondary and tertiary care. I am very concerned that this \$89 million - in this case it is for Region 2 - is not the correct amount. The actual amount for Region 2 might be, hypothetically, \$200 million. You are saying that the region will write a warrant to the value of \$89 million to the Ministry of Health, which is a bookkeeping arrangement, and the Ministry of Health would give the drugs that are requested. Is the Minister saying that if there is a fallout or lack of planning, there will be an addition from either the Ministry of Finance or from the Ministry of Health? It is cumbersome. I am saying, for whatever it is worth, that the purchase of drugs and the... there are idiosyncrasies in the health sector. There are, for example, doctors working in the regions who may prefer a certain drug to another but the one they prefer may be more expensive. Therefore, the drug formulary is what works as a guide.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it would be helpful if you put the question you wish to the Hon. Minister. It would help to speedily move this process along.

Mr. Bulkan: I will try to proffer an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Has the Hon. Member asked you a question?

Dr. Anthony: The morbidity pattern for every region is different. In the budget speech, the expansion of primary healthcare was spoken about. At each level, there is a set of fixed services that are offered. Therefore, the question is: are the drugs in mind going to cover the needs of Region 2?

About two weeks ago, I saw in one of the newspapers that blood collected from Region 2 was spoilt. Is there anywhere in this head or another head an allocation for a refrigerator to be purchased to rectify this and prevent such spoilage in the future? What would be done to address such problem? It is a critical problem in the region.

Mr. Bulkan: The drug requirements for each region will not be determined centrally by the Ministry of Health but it would be informed by the needs of the individual and respective RDCs. The Ministry of Health would consolidate all of the separate requests and would make a bulk purchase to be able to benefit from the economies of scale or bulk purchases.

With regards to the storage of medication and the blood bank, I am no medical expert but the storage of drugs and blood require careful management. The Hon. Member is saying that there is a problem.

Bishop Edghill: I do not plan to detain the Committee but I just want to be helpful. Table 9 in our Estimates under line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies, indicates to us that the aggregated total that will be spent in drugs and medical supplies for the year 2015 is \$5,496,240,000 as compared to \$5,204,103,000 as the revised expenditure in 2014.

There has been significant investment in a Materials Management Unit (MMU), which was funded and which had international interventions from our foreign partners to ensure the integrity of the drugs procured and its proper storage and that there is a distribution network in place. The issue of the procurement of drugs in *Budget 2015*....

An Hon. Member: What is the question?

Bishop Edghill: I am allowed to speak in this Committee like everybody else.

The question that I am putting to the Committee – and the Minister of Finance could answer, if he so requires, to help the Minister of Communities is: is there an abandonment of the central procurement of drugs and medical supplies in Guyana and would we continue to follow the tendering processes to ensure that one gets value for money and ensure the adequate storage of drugs in Guyana?

[The Minister of Finance rose.]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I have not given you the floor. I think the Hon. Minister of Communities may want to respond to the observation made by the last speaker.

Mr. Bulkan: There is no abandonment of the process. What is envisaged here is a system that would allow for cheaper prices to be obtained through bulk purchases.

The new procedure being contemplated is one driven by the need for efficiency. It does not allow for drugs to be improperly stored if purchased in greater bulk. That ought to satisfy the Hon. Member.

Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]: A while back, we started programme budgeting in the governmental system as a means of not only improving budgeting but as a means of making it more efficient and more effective. Over time, the efforts that we have made have been eroded with costing and cost centres being emasculated and everything being pushed back to the centre. It happened with drugs and water, with the payment of rates, with roads and everything else. So, effectively, the entire programme budgeting that was started is now back to line items.

Not a single person in this House, over the last day and a half or so, has actually asked about a programme. Everything is about a line item. We are coming to the House with programmes, but Members are just interested in line items.

This is an effort to restart the process of project budgeting. A complaint was made by several Regional Health Officers, during the budget discussions, that they do not see drugs from the central Ministry, or that the drugs that are sent are the wrong kinds, in the wrong amounts, and are expired, *et cetera*.

3.10 p.m.

They have asked that we go back to programme budgeting where they have the money budgeted for them. They would give the Ministry of Health a list of the various drugs that they need, and then they would warrant to the Ministry of Health so that the drugs could be bought in bulk. When it is bought in bulk, it could be distributed in accordance with what they said their requirements in the region are.

A second point I would like to raise is that the Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, who likes to quote laws, would recognise that, in some of these regions, there are regional authorities. These regional authorities have legal standing and, therefore, they have a legal mandate to draw up their budgets and to spend their moneys in accordance with approved budgets. They can do that and they can ask the Ministry of Health, with the experience and whatever else that they have, such as the warehouse capacity, to purchase the drugs on their behalf. I do not see anything wrong with that. That is what we are trying to do. We are trying to make certain that cost centres are established in all of the regions so that we can make better accounting of where expenditures are going and what we are getting for it.

Ms. Manickchand: Minister, I would be grateful if you could tell me two things: (1) is it that Region 2 is going to be limited to the amount provided in this line item? (2) Are you, as the Minister responsible for the region, of the view that Region 2 has storage capacity for this amount of drugs, although it is not yet known what it will be? Different drugs will require different storage. Malaria drugs, if malaria is rampant in Region 2 - I am not saying that it is; it is just hypothetical - may need storage in a warm place, whereas vaccines may need storage in a freezer. Do you believe that the region has identified the storage that is required and has that storage capacity for these drugs?

Mr. Bulkan: Hon. Member, the allocation under consideration would have arrived as a result of a determination made by the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) of Region 2 as to what the region's drug needs is. As a result of that, the allocation in question was arrived at. I am not certain that it is contemplated that the entire purchase would be acquired at once and would be expected to be stored in the region all at the same time, but that the region has the ability, having identified what its drugs needs are, having been procured by the Ministry of Health, to be able to draw down between now and the end of the year.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, if I may add to the discussion, I think we are mixing up the aspect of procurement and the aspect of logistics management. The previous Government would have invested heavily in a bond in Diamond to allow large scale storage of drugs and medical supply. The complaints that are coming from the Regional Executive Officer (REO) about not getting drugs on a timely basis, is one that has to do with logistics managements. The aspect about procurement and where the resources would be allocated, with all due respect Hon. Minister of Finance, should not be mixed with logistics management.

The resources are being put in the region but yet it is going to be controlled by the central Ministry. Then the regions are going to be required to warrant the money back to the Central Ministry.

Programme: 725 – Health Services- \$598,315,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$1,000,000

Ms. Teixeira: My concern with Programme 721 is that there has been a decline from \$6 million in 2014 to \$1 million for furniture and equipment. There is no allocation for buildings in Region 2. Could the Minister explain why there has been a \$5 million reduction in the capital budget under Programme 721?

Mr. Bulkan: There is no provision for buildings under this programme.

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$1,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$72,540,000

Mr. Ali: Project code 1300700 - Miscellaneous Drainage and Irrigation Works: could the Hon. Minister state why a policy decision was made to reduce the expenditure for agriculture in Region 2 by more than 50% or more than \$80 million when compared to 2014? Secondly, is this not counterproductive to the budget's position of agricultural expansion and diversification?

Mr. Bulkan: If indeed there is a policy decision, it would have been one that was imposed on this Administration as a result of the prorogation and the fact that no capital expenditure could have been contemplated in the absence of an approved budget. Therefore, the activities to be funded are only four months for this year. Expenditure for four months cannot be compared with expenditure for 12 months. The proposed expenditure caters for activities for the remaining four months of this year, following the approval of the Appropriations Act.

Mr. Ali: With full respect to the Hon. Minister, it cannot be contemplated that an issue of agriculture and drainage and irrigation is a four-month programme. There are many available options to you, including multi-year project, a roll over programme, as the Minister would

have outlined, in programme budgeting. So the excuse of time should not have arisen. If your Government's policy position is agricultural diversification and expansion, then the Government has to design its programme and budget to fit within that policy. My question is, therefore, still valid. Why is it that you are running counterproductive to the policy announcement of the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Bulkan: That is an opinion, the validity of which I do not subscribe to.

Mr. Damon: Project code 1300700 - Miscellaneous Drainage and Irrigation Works: I have seen that the amount of money that Region 2 got last year has been cut in half, as I mentioned in my budget speech. Is it not true, Hon. Minister, that there are several dams in New Road, Maria's Delight, Devonshire Castle, Danielstown, Sparta and Pomerook and Supernaam that farmers usually use to transport the paddy? It would have been better if these moneys were included in the budget so that we could have all-weather roads or loam roads so that farmers could bring out their paddy. This is the programme that has started. Why has the Government cut it out? The REO knows that this is a programme that has started.

Mr. Bulkan: The comment and observation made by the Hon. Member would better be directed at his Colleagues. The fact remains that, had this budget been prepared and presented at the beginning of this year, a lot of those activities that the Hon. Member has just identified would have been included in this Budget and more would have been funded.

3.25 p.m.

A lot more of the residents, including the farmers in Region 2, would have benefited from a more meaningful budget - a budget that caters for 12 months of expenditure as opposed to a budget that merely caters for four months of expenditure.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Under project code 1300700 - Miscellaneous, Drainage and Irrigation Works, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what part of this budget is reflected for the Amerindian villages in Region 2 in the riverain areas. When we talk about agriculture, we should not leave out the Amerindian villages. I am speaking, specifically, about villages in riverain areas.

Mr. Bulkan: The activities to be funded under this allocation do not include any of the Amerindian communities in riverain areas that the Hon. Member has spoken about and identified needs for.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under project code 1300700, for this \$72,540,000, I would like to get a list of the trenches that would be cleaned and prepared and the dams to be prepared. The crop is coming on now, and the farmers are in a real predicament to get to go to the backdam. Combines and tractors cannot go, so I would like a list of the names.

Mr. Bulkan: Again, I am constrained to point out that the predicament that the farmers find themselves in is because they are victims to the very prorogation that has prevented effective capital works from being executed in the region. To answer the questions posed by the Hon. Member, the expenditure caters for the construction of access dam and, as listed in the project profile, reference 314, includes places such as Walton Hall, Zorg en Vlygt, and Better Hope; construction of tail walls at Warousi, Maria's Delight and at two other areas; there would be the construction of culverts and irrigation regulators at various locations on the Essequibo Coast; as well as the rehabilitation of the regulator at Queenstown.

Mr. Damon: Finally for me, under the same project code 1300700, it is a known fact that the Hon. Minister is aware that we have problems with a lot of our sea sluices there because of accretion and siltation. I cannot understand the cutting of this allocation. The people of Essequibo will never understand this. You know that the sea sluices are in dire straits there. We need to see how we can get groins and so on there to get the accretion on the right hand side so that we can have the channels protect. Why are you are all cutting the budget? It is nonsense.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$72,540,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$62,670,000

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Project code 1400500 – Roads: I wish to ask the Hon. Minister if this allocation under upgrading of community roads is applicable to the Mainstay community road, as was promised during the campaign season by the now Government. Thank you.

Mr. Bulkan: I have already spoken on the question of the Mainstay road but, in the interest of time, if the Hon. Member is agreeable, I can provide a list of the roads and activities that will receive funding under this particular allocation.

Mr. Damon: Project code 1100300 – Bridges: there is a reduction here again. There is a bridge at the back of Lima Sands where they supply trenches. That bridge, I know, badly needs to be repaired. I am wondering if any moneys are allocated for repairing that bridge.

Before I sit, let me also talk about project code 1400500 - Roads. I would like to know if allocation for roads are in these Estimates for New Road, Somerset and Berks, Charity, Anna Regina, Hampton Court, Sparta, Pomona, and Huis t' Dieren. I want to know if any of those roads in those villages will be built.

Mr. Bulkan: regarding the first question, the bridges identified at Lima Sands would not receive any attention or be the subject of any funding under this allocation as far as capital works is concerned, but I have no doubt that, were the RDC to make representation and to identify that particular bridge to be a priority for funding in the next budget, that it will receive such favourable consideration.

With regards to the roads identified by the Hon. Member, again, in the interest of time, I have committed to providing the answer to his Colleague, Mrs. Pearson, and a similar list can be made available to him for him to be able to examine. But it does show that one of the areas in the New Road will receive attention under this allocation.

Programme: 723 – Public Works – \$62,670,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$75,140,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 2401600 – Land and Water Transport: according to the Legend, there would be the purchase of a boat and outboard engine: Could the Hon. Minister state where this boat and engine will go, if it will be bought or if it has already been bought?

Mr. Bulkan: It has not been bought but it would be bought. It will be based at Charity and it is for use in the Lower Pomeroon, Charity and down river.

Mr. Damon: Under Education Delivery, I have seen that there would be the construction of bridges, construction and extension of school, living quarters, dormitory and sanitary blocks. I want to know if any moneys would be made available to upgrade the Essequibo Technical Institute (ETI), which I know needs some repairs. The dorms at Anna Regina need some repairs also. Even the Anna Regina Multilateral School needs some repairs. Are provisions made to do some repairs to those buildings?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for capital works and the nature of the activities listed by the Hon. Member would be funded under current or recurrent funding. The activities to be funded under this allocation include the construction of Aurora Primary School and living quarters at Mashabo Primary School, construction of sanitary blocks at Friendship and Mashabo primary schools and extension of dormitory at Wakapau Secondary School.

Mr. Damon: What about one of our top schools, Abrams Zuil Secondary? Is there anything slated in the Budget to do repairs there?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the activities as just described have been proposed for consideration in the 2016 budget.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$75,140,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$69,990,000

Dr. Anthony: Project code 2601600 – Furniture and Equipment – Health: could the Hon. Minister state what furniture and equipment would be bought, the quantities and the health facilities where there will be located?

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the funding of some 24 items. In the interest of time I will ask the Hon. Member if he will be agreeable to be furnished with a complete list. Most of it is at the Suddie Hospital. There are two microscopes for the lab at Charity. All of the other items are for use at the Suddie Hospital, across various departments, dental and medical.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project 1100300, Bridges, “rehabilitation of bridges” costs \$8.9 million at Bara Cara Health Post. Is that right?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes Hon. Member.

Mr. Damon: Hon. Minister, project 1202700, Building – Health, “Construction and rehabilitation of living quarters, trestle and sanitary facilities”. Hon. Minister, could you say where these works will be done? I am aware that there are several health centres in Region 2 that need trestles and repairing. I want to know if the Minister can furnish me with a list of where these moneys will be spent, on which health centres and trestles.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I just have a follow-up, Sir, to the question by the Hon. Member Mr. Damon, to the Minister, through the Chairman? I am concerned that the total capital budget for Programme 725, Health Services, has declined from \$84.6 million to \$69.9 million, so too under project 1202700, Buildings – Health, from \$42 million to \$28 million and project 2401600 from \$11 million to \$4 million for the purchase of boats. Could the Hon. Member say, under the issue of land and water transport, if the boat and the engines being bought are going to be used to service Amerindian villages in the Supenaam area, Upper and Lower Pomeroun and also the lake district, Mainstay and other areas, as access to health services is critical with land and water transportation?

Mr. Bulkan: On the project asked by Hon. Member Damon, all of the works are at one location, that being the Suddie complex, different parts of that compound. The observation made by the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira, I believe, has already been dealt with, that is the reason for the reduced allocations under the capital programme.

With regard to the boats and engines, it is intended and envisaged for use, yes, there are actually four boats and three engines to be used in Abrams Creek, Malborough and Yariyarima and those are in the Pomeroun River as well as to transport health personnel such as nurses, midwives, community health workers in the very named areas, as well as Friendship which is also in the Pomeroun River.

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$69,990,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Current expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$166,215,000

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, would the Minister advise on this massive increase of \$1 million on line item 6264 with respect to spares and service to vehicles. I am aware that there is a dearth of vehicles in that region and so many times the members of the Works Committee would complain of difficulties in monitoring the progress on roads, bridges under construction, and revetment works. Is there an increase in the vehicular fleet? What accounts for the increase? Would there be improvement in having more vehicles available for the advancement of work in the region?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the fleet of vehicles has been increased from three to four. That is the total amount of vehicles in the fleet under this Programme 731.

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, could the Minister advise, line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, on the massive increase in allocation and what is meant by “Other Infrastructure”?

Mr. Bulkan: The massive increase is actually a sum of \$2.5 million, if my math is correct. The activities being catered for are corrective works which have been done the administration sub-offices.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support: I noted that while all the other line items under employment had an increase or a decrease based on the numbers, in line item 6114 the allocation remains the same from 2014 to 2015. Could the Hon. Minister give us some guidance on that situation?

Mr. Bulkan: There has been no movement of the staff and under the proposed allocation, similarly, there is no movement. The figure remains the same as it was last year.

Mr. G. Persaud: I thought that the increase in wages and salaries would have been reflected so it would have had that variance.

Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print: Could the Hon. Minister say to us why there is a reduction on that line item in relation to what was revised in 2014 and if that sum under print and non-print would be adequate to take the region through its business to the 31st December?

Mr. Bulkan: The proposed allocations in 2015 is actually the same as the proposed allocations in 2014, even though there was a spike in expenditure in 2014. I would assume that the spike, which was obtained last year, would not reoccur. It is envisaged that this allocation would be sufficient to fund the activities, some of them being purchase of books for use by the regional administration as well as advertisements in the various media.

Mr. G. Persaud: Here again, Mr. Chairman, I thought if there was an allocation in a given year and beyond that allocation was spent such an adjustment would have been made in a new year, but it is a different economics I am guided through by the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, on line item 6116, the number of contracted employees is increased by two. Would the Minister advice on the designation of the two persons and their salaries?

Mr. Bulkan: The new additions are two Accounts Clerks.

Mr. Chand: ...and their salary.

Mr. Bulkan: That information is not available at hand but it can be provided to the Hon. Member at a later stage.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: I see a hefty amount of \$4.5 million when the Minister said that there are only three to four vehicles in this department. Four point five million dollars is a lot of money for fuel and lubricants.

Mr. Bulkan: In addition to the vehicles, the allocation caters to the lighting plant and generator at the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) office.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$166,215,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.55 p.m.

Programme: 732 - Agriculture - \$244,082,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operative and Unskilled: Would the Hon. Minister give us an explanation as to the reduction in the number of employees and if any effort, whatsoever, is being made to fill those vacant positions?

Mr. Bulkan: Whilst indeed there has been a reduction in staff under that line item, there has also been an increase under line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I am advised that some of the persons chose to be hired under line item 6116, following their retirement, they have been rehired as contract employees.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials: Again, there has been a reduction in the 2014 allocation and under line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges, here, again, another reduction in the 2015 allocation. Could the Hon. Minister please give us an explanation?

Mr. Bulkan: I would say that there has been a consistency in the reduction of the allocation for Print and Non-Print Material, so it should not necessarily be seen as an anomaly, given that there is some level of consistency. In the case of line item 6253, unless the Hon. Member is looking at some different figures, the figures, which I am looking at, actually show an increase by some \$6 million and not a decrease, Hon. Member.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: I agree with the Hon. Minister that there is some level of consistency in the declining of allocation for certain regions, especially when it comes to fuel and lubricants. I am wondering whether there is any political consideration in these reductions. In Region 3, there is a reduction in fuel and lubricants. Why is it that there this reduction and what are the considerations that inform such reductions?

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to assure the Hon. Member that there was no political consideration in the reduction of this allocation. It was actually due to the fact that there was a very healthy balance of fuel that was purchased and stored at the end of 2014 which was utilised in 2015.

Mr. Ali: Would the Hon. Minister say then that the claim of abuse of fuel by the previous Government in regions for political purposes is one that has no bearing with the healthy balance that he would have had?

Mr. Bulkan: The deduction does not follow and it is not logical.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: As I have pointed to the Hon. Minister earlier that there was a reduction from the 2014 revised. The Minister sorted to mix that up with line item 6253. I maintain line item 6252, that reduction. I also recognised that under line item 6272, Electricity Charges, there is a reduction on the 2014 expenditure and similarly under line item 6273, Water Charges. Could the Hon. Minister say that Region 3 has done very well in terms of electricity conservation and also similarly with water? Or is there a different rate in the region now?

Mr. Bulkan: As it was in the case of the fuel purchases where there was a balance carried forward in 2015, the same obtained in the case of the electricity and the water charges where there were pre-payments in 2014 which would have been discounted for or allowance made in the 2015 allocations.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that agriculture is the most essential economic activity in Region 3, because a very large percentage of the region depends on agriculture?

Would the Hon. Minister agree with me too that this provision would be inadequate, given the increase production of rice and the further expansion of rice in that region which would require additional resources, in terms of drainage and irrigation? Is there a nexus between the growth in production, expansion and budgetary allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: I think it is commonly accepted that no budget can cater for or allow for the funding of all of the activities that are necessary in relation to infrastructural upgrade or other forms of spending. However, I do agree with the Hon. Member that agriculture is very important an investment in the infrastructure and the drainage and irrigation (D&I) network will always be to the benefit of our farmers and persons engaged in farming. I think it is equally accepted that no single budget can cater for the needs of all of the areas.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$244,082,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 733 - Public Works - \$78,857,000

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, could the Minister advise on the reduction of the allocation under line item 6112, Senior Technical?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the staff reduction was due to the dismissal of a mechanic in the region. I am informed that that was a result of prolong absence.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item, 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister say to us why this reduction of \$3 million plus from the meagre allocation in Region 3, this year. Mr. Chairman, with your approval, under line item 6281, Security Services, there is a similar reduction in allocation for 2014 expenditure. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

Mr. Bulkan: Whilst the Hon. Member has referred to the allocations as meagre, it ought to be noted that last year's allocation was also meagre and therefore the reduction, as a percentage, is quite marginal. In relation to the security services, yes, the figure is less in 2015 than it was in last year, but it is actually by an infinitesimal sum.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, \$24 million: Could the Hon. Minister say what the items are as classified as other infrastructure under this head?

Mr. Bulkan: Hon. Member, the figure that I am looking at does not correspond.

Mr. Ali: I am sorry. I have gone ahead of you.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under the same line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, West Demerara and the Essequibo Islands are predominately for agriculture. I would like to let the Minister know that while it was budgeted in 2014 for \$15 million it had spent \$14,999,000 which is only dollar short and it was good planning by the Regional Executive Officer (REO) at that time. Here he is only giving them \$ 11,760,000 and it is not fair. Could you give us a reason for it?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the majority of roads in Region 3 are actually maintained by the Ministry of Public Works under its allocations and it is not under the regional administration.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw to your attention to the point that I am speaking under the head of Public Works. I would like to say that if the Minister looks at the legend, the farm to market road in Vreed-en-Hoop to Windsor Forest, Hague back, and Meten-Meer-Zorg of all the areas, the roads are in a bad position for the farmers to reap their rice. I am concerned about it.

Programme: 733 - Public Works - \$78,857,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 734 - Education Delivery - \$2,013,088,000

Mr. Ali: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, \$24 million: Could the Hon. Minister say to us what constitutes other infrastructure under this line item?

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: These are essentially schools, and it is for maintenance works, including repairs to fences, land filling, sanitary blocks, and gates at some 20 schools across the region.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, and with full respect to the Hon. Member, line item 6242 states "Maintenance of Buildings". I would want to believe that a school is a building.

Would you say that there is some difficulty here, in terms of the classification of this expenditure? Should the school be classified under the maintenance of buildings, here, under education delivery?

Mr. Bulkan: I did say that it was for maintenance works - the fences, land filling and gates, as opposed to the school buildings proper - for line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure.

Mr. Ali: I hear the Hon. Minister but I also heard you say schools, in his earlier answer. We can all stand corrected. We have here, Mr. Chairman, line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence, an increase close to 100%. What is driving this increase and is any of this related to extended work in terms of supervision?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is, as suggested by the Hon. Member, increased supervision.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: Would the Hon. Minister share with us which building is being rented, for what purpose and who will occupy it? Maintenance of Building, line item 6242, there is a reduction from \$43,600,000. Is the reduction communicating that all the school buildings in Region 3 are well taken care of?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the first question, the allocation caters for rental to house volunteer teachers in Leguan as well as to house St. John's Secondary schoolchildren at the Den Amstel Community Centre. In regard to the second question, I do not think that one can assume what the Hon. Member is saying that the allocation definitively addresses the need for maintenance to all of the buildings. It would not be safe to assume that.

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is one additional contracted employee and the allocation is far more than double. Is there an explanation?

Mr. Bulkan: Is that line item 6116, Hon. Member?

Mr. Chand: Yes.

Mr. Bulkan: Whilst it is indeed only an addition of one employee, it actually doubles the amount of employees.

Mr. Chand: As I said, the allocation, it is more than double.

Mr. Bulkan: Yes. But the number of employees is similarly doubled.

Mr. Chand: You did not answer me.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$2,013,088,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$899,026,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Would the Hon. Minister say to us why was the \$10,000,000 allocation in 2014 reduced to \$5,900,000 in 2015? Here, again, I ask the question: Is this a signal that infrastructure maintenance was so high in Region 3? We can afford to cut from our maintenance programme in the region.

Mr. Bulkan: I thank the Hon. Member for his observation. The information, which I have before me, does not give a reason why the budgetary allocation has been reduced but it rather provides an explanation as to what is the activity or are the activities to be funded under this allocation.

Mr. G. Persaud: Earlier the Hon. Minister of Finance in the House spoke about the need for programme budgeting. I can then, as we are on the fifth programme in Region 3, say that across all 5 programmes, so far, Mr. Chairman, we would have found that there were reductions to a number of line items in each of the programmes, and that is unfortunate.

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, I see the large allocation for Drugs and Medical Supplies, line item 6221. The storage facilities in Region 3, West Demerara, are they adequate in keeping our drugs safe and in good order? I have followed from the previous answer that there will be a drawdown as it may be needed but probably there are some facilities there. The Minister may want to advise us.

Mr. Bulkan: This question was exhaustively addressed already in an earlier region and it is the same situation which is obtained and applied.

Mr. Chand: I was asking about the facilities to store them in the region.

Mr. Bulkan: One of the answers, which were offered, was that it is not necessarily the case that all of the purchases will be made and are expected to be stored in the region.

Dr. Mahadeo: On the same line item, would the Hon. Minister please tell me who determines the figure as to the amount of drugs that the region would need and how much of this will be left within the region to go to the Regional Tender Board, so that it can buy emergency supplies as necessary?

Mr. Bulkan: As earlier explained, when there was an exhaustive discussion on this matter, the respective regions are the ones that identify what are their drug needs. It is then rationalised at the level of the Ministry of Health which consolidates all of the individual requests from the ten regions and effects a bulk purchase. The regions then have the ability to draw down, in accordance with their drug needs to the value of what the respective allocations are for each of the regions. The needs would have been identified by the regions. The sourcing and procurement would have been done by the Ministry of Health. I would imagine that a lot of the storage also may be done by the Ministry of Health but the regions draw down in accordance with their respective needs as and when they need it.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, through you, it is just to clarify. Would the regions not have any money that they can spend through their tender board, in cases of emergencies? I have been in the health system and working in the public health system for the last 26 years and I know that there will be instances when the Ministry of Health will not be able to supply the drugs based on the supplies that it is getting from their suppliers. I am asking: Would any such contingency – let us call it contingency - be left within the regions, so that they can buy locally?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position to answer the Hon. Member, definitively, safe and except to say that in the cases of emergencies I would hope that as a country, and in the management of our regions, that there is, indeed, the ability to be able to respond to emergency situations.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Minister tell us how much of this money has been spent already for 2015?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that it is a very negligible sum out of the entire allocation, for a sum of \$3,000,000.

Mr. Neendkumar: Would you agree with me, Minister, that it is impossible for you to spend this amount of money for the rest of this year? It is virtually impossible.

Mr. Bulkan: I do not agree with the contention.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6292, Dietary, has increased by \$3,000,000. Could the Hon. Member just indicate whether this is the provision for dietary for inpatients at the various district hospitals and the regional hospitals in Region 3? Would this include dietary in the islands, as well? Could the Minister please advise us?

Mr. Bulkan: The increase, which the Hon. Member refers to, was against the original budgetary allocation in last year but the actual amount, which was spent, is the same as is being budgeted for this year. In that sense, there has not been an increase over what was spent under that heading in the two years. It is for dietary supplies at the West Demerara Regional Hospital, the Leonora Diagnostic Centre as well as Wakenaam and Leguan hospitals.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Are any provisions made for maintenance of health facilities in the Essequibo Islands, not just Wakenaam and Leguan?

Mr. Bulkan: There is provision for maintenance Fort Island, other than Wakenaam and Leguan.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Minister, through the Chairman, line item 6282, Equipment Maintenance, \$12,000,000: I know this question may be unfair to ask you, but I would not be able to ask it later on. Will the region be doing its own equipment maintenance or will it be done through the Ministry of Public Health by a central contractor?

4.25 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the equipment to be maintained is not necessarily health equipment, but rather equipment such as air conditioners (a/cs), generators and computers – non medical equipment.

Dr. Mahadeo: Just a follow-up question: who will be maintaining the health equipment?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member might be in a better position to either contradict or educate me, but my understanding is that it is the Ministry of Health that responsible for health equipment.

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$899,026,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members we have just completed Current Expenditure for Region 3, five lines. I am inclined to treat with Capital Expenditure which is also five lines on Region 3

before we take our break. If Members share that inclination, we may proceed. Thank you very much.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$3,500,000

Mr. G. Persaud: At the programme level, the allocation of \$8.1 million has been reduced to \$3.5 million for Budget 2015. We noted that for project code 2503200 - Furniture and Equipment – Administration, the allocation for 2014 was \$7 million and for 2015 it is \$2 million and this was for Regional Administration. Could the Hon. Minister say what are the items that would be purchased with this \$2 million and at the same time, say who will benefit from the newly acquired furniture and/or equipment?

Mr. Bulkan: The beneficiary locations are the Regional Democratic Council's (RDC's) Head Office at Vreed-En-Hoop; the Leguan Sub-Office; and the Office at Farm on the East Bank of Demerara. The furniture and equipment range from desktop computers, filing cabinets, a/c units, refrigerators, office desks, chairs, tables and brush cutters. Those are the items to be acquired. The direct beneficiaries would be the staff and they vary in the RDC office, the engineering department, the personnel office and across the offices that have been identified.

With regards to the observation made by the Hon. Member as to the reduced allocation in 2015, a comparison could be made with the 2013 allocation, which was not much in excess of the 2015 allocation. While indeed last year's expenditure was considerably greater, I believe that this phenomenon has already been addressed. I am not sure if the Hon. Member would require an explanation again because I believe it has been already addressed and dealt with.

Mr. Chand: Project code 1208700 – Buildings – Administration: Provision for security grills- are the grills to be used on the house that the Regional Chairman once resided in. Please advise me because I understand that house is left unattended, it is getting from a bad to worse state and it is being vandalised.

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for provision of security grills for the Regional Administration building.

Mr. Chand: Is there any comment on the Regional Chairman's house that is left unattended and is being vandalised?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the information relayed by the Hon. Member is not necessarily correct. There is security at that location and the question of vandalism is not an accepted fact.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$3,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$30,110,000

Mr. Ali: Project code 1300800 - Agricultural Development - D&I – \$25,110,000, there is a reduction in the budgetary allocation of almost 125% when compared to 2014. Given the fact that this is a predominantly agricultural region, would the Minister agree that this would significantly impact the production and output levels in 2015?

Despite the reduction in the profile, reference 330, volume 3, it states:

- “1. The Construction of control structures at Hague Backdam and Patentia Housing Scheme.
2. Construction of revetments at Noitgedacht and Den Amstel.
3. Construction of huts for koker operators at Versailles, Salem and Nismes.”

The benefit of the project is “Improved agricultural production”.

Could the Hon. Minister tell us what target is he looking at in terms of improved production and what level of production could we hold him accountable to in the execution of this programme, in terms of agricultural production in the areas outlined and identified?

Mr. Bulkan: I continue to be, at this time, in the full-time employ of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. I am not engaged in private farming activities in Region 3 at this time, so the allocation provides for improved infrastructure, namely, D&I work in Region 3, which is expected to have an impact on increased productivity in the Region.

The question was previously asked in relation to one of the two regions that we had dealt with earlier this afternoon, it is the obligation and responsibility of the central Government to provide an enabling environment and to improve the level of the infrastructure. I am in no position to offer any guarantees as to any percentage increases in the productivity in any specific farming activity.

Mr. Ali: Through you and with full and complete respect to the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you asking for a supplementary? What are you asking about?

Mr. Ali: I am asking for a supplementary.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Ali: I wish to refer him again to volume 3, which details the expenditure in the profile, reference 330, “Benefits of project - Improved agricultural production”.

If one is designing the budget, there must be some calculation to show that this investment would give us this improved production. What led you to the assumption, belief or factual position that you will have increased and improved production, as a result of this investment and what is the level you are targeting, Minister?

Mr. Bulkan: I would venture to suggest that the answer is self-evident. If there are improvements to the infrastructure, then it offers an opportunity to persons engaged in farming to be able to take advantage of those improved facilities and to be able to realise the benefits that are stated here, namely, improved agricultural production.

Mr. Ali: Supplementary: As the Hon. Minister mentioned, farmers would benefit. Could I make it much simpler? Could the Hon. Minister tell me how many farmers would benefit from these interventions in the various areas?

Mr. Bulkan: I cannot offer a number.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you really ought to allow some of your other Colleagues to ask questions, but proceed.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, as the geographic representative of this region, I must ask these questions. The Hon. Minister is saying that he cannot give a number. Can he give us an assurance that he will give us the number of farmers that will benefit from this intervention and expenditure?

Mr. Bulkan: I can undertake to provide the Hon. Member with some indicative figures.

Mr. Chand: Project code 2401700 – Land and Water Transport – Purchase of vehicle: Could the Minister describe the vehicles, is it that... I think that we are jumping, sorry about that...

4.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Member withdrawing his question?

Mr. Chan: I need to be guided. Am I at the right head because you were at project code – 1300800, we are still under “Agriculture”? I am correct. In terms of vehicle, could the Minister describe the vehicle and what it would be used for? Is it a brand new vehicle and is there a sum of money set aside that is adequate?

Mr. Bulkan: The vehicle is a double-cab pick-up. The allocation is not sufficient for a brand new vehicle; but I believe that one could acquire a pre-owned vehicle that is in very good condition. It is for use by the Agriculture Department in the RDC.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$30,110,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 733 – Public Works - \$45,405,000

Mr. Neendkumar: At project code – 1100400 - Bridges: In 2014, \$28,989,000 was allotted and here we are seeing a mere \$500,400,000. If one looks at the legend this money was not to be spent in this predominantly agricultural region. Could the Minister offer an explanation for the reduction and where in the legend is the money being spent?

Mr. Bulkan: All of the allocations that are under consideration in this Budget would be informed by general budgetary constraints.

Mr. Neendkumar: This is an indictment to the farmers. In respect to project code 1400600-Roads, in 2014, we had \$47,499,000 and in 2015, we just have a mere \$23,985,000. Could the Minister tell us why there is a deduction? As I said before, there are no allocations for places like Windsor Forest, Meten-Meer-Zorg and the Farm and Parika areas. Why is it that these areas are not getting allocations for the farmers’ road? I am concern about it.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I note the comments made by the Hon. Member.

Mr. Neendkumar: In respect to project code 1901300 - Land Development, in 2014, we had \$19,999,000 and in 2015 we have a mere \$8,010,000. Why is it that we have this poor number for Land Development in Region 3? Is this fair to the people of Region 3?

Mr. Bulkan: That is a subjective observation.

Mr. Neendkumar: Can you answer it? The figures are here. This is your Government bringing this Budget to us. The people of Region 3, I am quite certain that they are listening and we have to explain this to them. Can the Hon. Minister tell us why is there no allocation for Land and Water Transport in this Budget for Region 3?

Mr. Bulkan: In the absence of any allocation there can be no valid question.

Mr. Nandlall: I would like to revisit the question under project code 1901300 - Land Development - Upgrading of housing scheme, my Comrade, the Hon. Neendkumar asked a question, but I do not think that it was answered. I would like to know...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am inquiring of you whether it was a question related to the item we are now treating.

Mr. Nandlall: Yes Sir. There is a marked decrease in the budgetary allocation from last year to this year in relation to upgrading of housing scheme. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what inspire this decrease in budgetary allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: The activities to be funded under this programme in this Budget would have been arrived at out of discussions and consultations with the RDC. The point has been made earlier, I am not too sure if the Hon. Member was present, when it was discussed that the effects of prorogation have had an impact on the ability to fund capital projects in the absence of an Appropriation Act.

Mr. Nandlall: A follow-up question: The Hon. Member has cited two reasons; one being that he held discussions with the RDC and as a result of those discussions there is a decline. Is the Hon. Member saying that the RDC advised him not to reduce the budgetary allocation from last year to this year?

Mr. Bulkan: The point was also made in answer to other questions.

Mr. Nandlall: It is a yes and no answer. Did they advise you?

Mr. Bulkan: That there are budgetary constraints. This Budget cannot address all of the needs in all the areas. So, my definition, there is bound to be contraction, if you will.

Programme: 733 – Public Works - \$45,405,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$57,860,000

Ms. Manickchand: At project code 1203000 - Buildings - Education: I see an allocation projected for \$31,460,000, would the Hon. Member, through you Mr. Chairman, be kind enough to tell us which schools are expected to be constructed, rehabilitation and/or extended?

Mr. Bulkan: The schools are located at La Parfaite Harmonie, Wakenaam, Leguan, and Canal Nos. 1 and 2.

Ms. Manickchand: At project code 2401700 - Land and Water Transport: I see the description under the legend saying “Purchase of a boat and outboard engine”, could the Hon. Member, through you Mr. Chairman, tell us where and what for?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation is to fund the purchase of a boat and engine to be used in the Department in the Essequibo River and it is to be used to transport supplies, such as teaching materials, food stuff, and other general supplies to schools in the Essequibo River.

Ms. Manickchand: This is the last question for me except, that I need a follow-up. At project code 2503300 - Furniture and Equipment – Education, there are purchases of furniture and equipment for schools at a cost of \$21 million. Could the Hon. Member kindly tell us two things: firstly, what would be purchased with this \$21 million and secondly, does the Hon. Member believe that this would be enough to furnish nursery, primary, and secondary schools for the number of children who are there?

Mr. Bulkan: The items to be acquired under this allocation are generally furniture, desks, benches, chairs, tables, cupboards, chalkboards, stools, and book racks. They are for many schools across the Region. For the other part of the question, I would not want to hazard an answer, even though I might have a suspicion, but I am unable to offer a definitive answer.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$57,860,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.55 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$65,900,000

Mr. Chand: Could the Minister advise on the reduction on project code 1203100 – Buildings – Health. There is a drastic reduction on the sum allocated. Could the Minister give us some details, especially with respect to Health Facilities, moneys that would be spent in that area?

Mr. Bulkan: The sum caters for the rehabilitation and extension of buildings that are located at the West Demerara Regional Hospital, that is the Tuberculosis In-Patient Facility, as well as an extension to the Dental Building at the same facility; it caters for an extension at the Versailles Health Centre to accommodate two additional rooms, and for the inclusion of an exit door; it caters for the rehabilitation of the living quarters of the western part of Hogg Island; and the construction of revetment at lands adjacent to the Upper Bonasika Health Post.

With regards to the reduction, again, whilst it might not have been said, the ability of the RDC has been severely tasked, insofar as, to allow them to be effectively and efficiently execute on capital programmes and capital works, in a compressed frame of time. If this Appropriation's Act only becomes law, at this late hour, then all the activities namely: inviting tenders, doing the evaluations, the award of tenders and the mobilisation, are for short periods of time. So that would account for the reduced budgetary allocations and the point has been made many times already this afternoon, that it has had a deleterious impact on the provision of capital projects in all of our 10 regions.

Mr. Nandlall: Project code 2401700 – Land and Water Transport: Ten million dollars have allocated to purchase vehicles. I have looked at volume 3, the agency number and the requisite reference number and there is an absence of how many vehicles. So I would like to know how many vehicles are we purchasing and to what department or agency would they be assigned?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the purchase of one minibus and one 4X4 double-cab pick-up, at the cost of \$5 million each. That is the budgetary allocation. It is to be based at the West Demerara Regional Hospital and it is to be able to provide transportation to enable a more effective medical outreach programme across Region 3.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, are these vehicles new vehicles or reconditioned, if I may ask?

Mr. Bulkan: No. The point was made earlier that for the sum of \$5 million it is not expected that we could get a new pick-up. I am not too familiar with the prices of minibuses, perhaps one could get, but I am not sure... These would be reconditioned vehicles Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you Hon. Minister, but I thought the principle was that we go for new vehicles. If I remember rightly, over the campaign period there was all this talk about going for new vehicles, giving up the old ones because of the pollution and whatever else. So are we going to make a policy? Plus, new vehicles would give us longer life and better service.

Mr. Bulkan: The observation is valid. There would be efficiencies in the case of new vehicles, but I am not so sure that at this stage there is an iron rule in relation to the purchase of only new equipment, but it would of course be both advisable and desirable, if a new vehicle could be acquired as opposed to second hand one.

Mr. Chand: Project code 2503100 – Equipment – Health – Purchase of equipment, could we be provided with a list of the equipment that the Minister hope to purchase. I say this because I am advised otherwise from my relations with some of the councillors.

Mr. Bulkan: Of course, it is possible. I think that is the purpose of why we are here, to account to the public for the expenditure of public moneys. The list is actually quite long, there are over 30 items and I would certainly provide the Hon. Member with the list of the items to be acquired.

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, I think the Minister did mention that the region is large.

Mr. Bulkan: No the list.

Mr. Chand: I am talking about something else now. Could he advise us on when we will have a confirmed Regional Executive officer (REO) in Region 3?

Mr. Bulkan: I would say sooner rather than later, Hon. Member.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$65,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have completed our consideration of Region 3. I think it is an appropriate time for us to take the suspension. When we return, we will commence consideration of Region 4 and beyond, and perhaps the items which were part of our consideration yesterday can be taken, assuming that everyone is in a position to be part of it. Thank you.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 5.04 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.00 p.m.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 74 – Region 4 – Demerara/Mahaica

Current expenditure

Programmed: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$154,795,000

Ms. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister state, at line item 6231 –Fuel and Lubricants, how many vehicles will this amount service - that is additional of \$2,167,000and if there are new ones.

Mr. Bulkan: The provision is for three vehicles in addition to fuel for generators.

Mr. Neendkumar: Staffing Details: I see that in 2014, we had 25 contracted workers and in 2015, 28, could the Minister please give me the names of the three persons, their positions and their salaries.

Mr. Bulkan: The three new additions are all Accounts Clerk II. I do not have the salaries with me, but I could provide this at a later stage.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: I see you have a total here of \$5,990,000, could you tell me where these buildings are?

Mr. Bulkan: These are Regional Administration buildings located at Paradise, Timehri, as well as Triumph.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6281 – Security Services: I see you have a substantial amount here of \$33,533,000, could you tell me who are the security services, when were they employed and when will the contracts be terminated?

Mr. Bulkan: The provider is Homesafe Security. It is a one year contract that was entered into in August of last year. It is for security for the RDC buildings, including the REO and the Regional Chairman and the Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how they would be handling line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies, for this region.

6.05 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is not for the needs of the region but it is for a first aid kit for the administrative staff.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: could the Hon. Minister state the other infrastructure that has been identified for maintenance?

Mr. Bulkan: They are the same buildings at Triumph, Timehri and Paradise that were identified earlier.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281 – Security Services: could the Hon. Minister indicate the plan for renewal of the contractual services for security? This is because he would have indicated that it is for a year and, based on the timeline, the contracts would expire sometime this month.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that public tenders have been advertised and invited.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6311- Rates and Taxes: could the Hon. Minister help us to understand this expenditure?

Mr. Bulkan: I would have thought that the former Minister would have been familiar with the fact that there is a monthly subvention to the Cane Grove area because of the area not being rateable.

Programme: 741 –Regional Administration and Finance - \$154,795,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$262,548,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There were 29 in 2014 and now there are 43. Could the Hon. Minister provide the names of the top six employees, their salaries and their designations?

Mr. Bulkan: Is the Hon. Member talking about the new employees or is he talking about all employees under the entire category?

Mr. Neendkumar: I am talking about the new employees.

Mr. Bulkan: They are all sluice attendants who were sent over from the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA).

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, there is an additional sum of \$15,528,000. Could the Minister identify the projects for the additional sums?

Mr. Bulkan: This is to provide for an upgraded Drainage and Irrigation (D&I) Programme; desilting and rehabilitation of drainage canals throughout the 15 NDCs in Region 4; and it is also for the maintenance of the compounds of the pumping stations. It is for the D&I work in the 15 NDCs.

Mr. Seeraj: Under Staffing Details, I notice that there are six less under the regular establishment and 14 more contracted workers. Is it that the practice in this region is to promote more contracted workers?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is, as previously explained, there is no such policy. In the case of the additional contracted employees, they are all sluice attendants who were transferred from the NDIA to under this programme.

The reduction under line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – are all due to persons retiring.

Mr. Seeraj: I did not say that it was a policy. I asked if it is the practice, because the Minister, in a previous response, did state that it was not a policy but that it was by practice. That is why I asked whether in this region it is also the practice to replace workers who are on the fixed establishment with contracted workers.

It is stated clearly that there are six less workers on the fixed establishment and 14 more contracted workers.

Mr. Bulkan: An answer has already been given.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6231- Fuel and Lubricants: could the Hon. Minister please provide us with the number of vehicles and equipment that would benefit from the \$18 million allocation?

Line item 6311 – Rates and Taxes: could the Hon. Minister explain this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: Fuel and Lubricants: the allocation is for the drainage pumps in the region. There are five in totals, one of them being a new John Deere pump that was acquired within the last two years.

Similarly, I would have thought that the Hon. Member would have been familiar with that provision. It is for payment for the East Demerara Water Conservancy (EDWC).

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: could the Hon. Minister identify the areas and say how much money would be spent in those areas?

Mr. Bulkan: In the interest of time, if the Hon. Member is agreeable, I have a list of all of the areas and I can certainly provide this to him.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Minister state the location of the five pumps which he alluded to under Fuel and Lubricants?

Mr. Bulkan: These would be at Triumph, Buxton, Cane Grove, Huntley and Melanie.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$262,548,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$116,081,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Staffing Details: it is noted that there has been a reduction in the staff but there is an increase in total wages and salaries allocation from \$18,725,000 to \$20,646,000. Could the Hon. Minister guide us as to how the increase was arrived at with a reduction of staff from 23 to 19?

Mr. Bulkan: The reason is because the reduced employees were paid at a lower scale – labourers and a driver – and the new employee is a skilled person – an engineer.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6251- Maintenance of Roads: I see that \$29 million is allocated. Could the Minister identify the roads to be maintained and state how much money would be spent on each road?

Mr. Bulkan: There are nine roads to be funded under this allocation and, again, in the interest of time, I can provide the list to the Hon. Member.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Neendkumar: Minister, I really want to know if the agricultural section like the Cane Grove road and Mahaica, where the roads are pretty bad to go into the rice farming area, would be concentrated on.

In respect to line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges, I would like to know where these bridges are and how much would be spent to repair each one of them.

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to assure the Hon. Member that the activities are, indeed, in agricultural areas and, again, I would provide a list of the bridges that will be repaired under this allocation.

Mr. Neendkumar: In respect of line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, could the Minister tell us what these infrastructures are and how much would be spent on each one of them?

Mr. Bulkan: The majority of the allocation is for maintenance and repairs to the RDC's Sub Office at Timehri. It is also for roads and bridges in the compound of the RDC in Timehri.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6264 – Vehicle spares and Services: there is a total of \$4,500,000. Could the Hon. Minister tell me how many vehicles are there?

Mr. Bulkan: There are three vehicles.

Mr. G. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister state, under line item 6272 – Electricity Charges, which building will benefit from this allocation of \$14 million and who are the occupants if there are quarters?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for all of the RDC buildings. In addition to those, it includes an allocation for electricity for the Regional Executive Officer (REO), the Regional Chairman and of the RDC buildings.

Mr. G. Persaud: I asked that question because I note that under Programme 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – there is a sum of \$2,715,000 allocated for electricity charges and under Programme 742, there is a sum of \$30 million for electricity charges. Under Public Works, I thought that non-office buildings would have been dealt with.

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his observation. Indeed, he is correct and I would like to correct the answer that I gave earlier. The allocation for electricity charges under Public Works is for the pumps.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$116,081,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$2,815,403,000

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Building, there is an increase of \$9 million. Could the Hon. Minister identify how many buildings and which building will benefit from this increase?

Mr. Bulkan: I do not have the list of exactly which schools will be repaired but there are actually 122 schools in the region. Many of them are in dire need of repairs and a list identifying which schools will benefit from this allocation could and would be provided to the Hon. Member.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, there is an increase of \$17,000,999. Could the Hon. Minister identify the projects relevant to this increase?

Mr. Bulkan: Similarly, as with the previous question, a list will be provided but, in this instance, the allocation is to allow for rehabilitation of sanitary blocks, fences, water trestles and guard huts, all of which are in need of repair.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6281 – Security Services: could the Hon. Minister state whether this budgetary provision caters for security of schools? If it does, could the Hon. Minister identify the schools which would benefit from this budgetary provision?

Mr. Bulkan: The observation is correct. It is for the provision of security services to all of the schools. I am advised that the secondary schools enjoy 24-hours security services but the other schools only enjoy 12-hours security service.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6284 – Other: could the Hon. Minister state what activities are catered for under this budgetary allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for payment to sweeper cleaners, supervisors, invigilators and work study students.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I would the Hon. Minister to give us a list of the places that would be maintained and a list of the infrastructural works that would be done. Since he is saying that works are badly needed, I would like to know how much money will be spent on each infrastructural work.

Mr. Bulkan: An undertaken was already given to provide this information.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies, I that there is a substantial amount of \$29 million. Could the Hon. Minister state what it is for?

Mr. Bulkan: This is customary annual grant that is given to the schools across the region.

Mr. G. Persaud: Would the Hon. Minister help us to understand line item 6111 – Administrative. There is a reduction in staff - 319 as against 314 - and there is an increase in emoluments - \$539 million as against \$555 million. Could the Hon. Minister help us to understand that?

Mr. Bulkan: The increase is due to both the increase in public servants salaries as well as increase pay as a result of teachers upgrading their status.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: would the Hon. Minister help us to understand the allocation?

Line item 6302 – Training (including scholarship): allocation increased from \$1.7 million to \$7,059,000. Could the Hon. Minister help us to understand what the training is, what the target group will be and who will conduct these training?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the second question is that there is a new pilot programme to provide additional training to head teachers for them to better discharge their mandates.

In the case of the rental of the building, it is for a building in Plaisance, the Dorcas Club, to accommodate a nursery school.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281 – Security Services: there has been a reduction in the allocation for security charges. Could the Minister explain this in light of some of the schools getting 12 hours instead of 24 hours security?

While the Minister did give some of the expenses to be catered for under line item – Other, could he state what the increased allocation is intended for?

Mr. Bulkan: I regret that I am not in a position to offer an answer to the first question of why the budgetary allocation is less in 2015, but I will endeavour to seek a proper explanation and offer that to the Hon. Member at a later stage.

Mr. Bulkan: Regarding the second question, does the Hon. Member mean the actual amount of increase for each category?

Mr. Croal: No, just for line item 6284.

Mr. Bulkan: I had mentioned earlier that it is for payments to sweeper cleaners, supervisors, invigilators and work study students.

Mr. Croal: Am I to assume that some more invigilators *et cetera* would be recruited? I understand the nature of the expense but I am just trying to understand the reason for the increase.

Mr. Bulkan: There was an increase in the pay rates for one of these categories, which actually has a high number of persons.

Mr. G. Persaud: Hon. Minister, sorry for taking you back to line item 6281 – Security Services: could you assure this Committee, Hon. Minister, that every nursery, primary and secondary school has the benefit of paid security? Secondly, are these schools benefitting from 24/7 security? If not, what hours of security are offered to these schools?

Mr. Bulkan: Perhaps, the Hon. Member was not paying attention when I offered an explanation. The secondary schools enjoy 24/7 security and the primary schools only 12 hours.

6.35 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you Minister for your comment. I am sorry that I did not hear that part. Maybe, we are all tired, too, so you did not hear my enquiry about whether the nursery schools are benefitting from security as well.

Mr. Bulkan: All of the schools are provided with security services.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$2,815,403,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$559,732,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Staffing Details, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see that there is an increase of six. Could the Hon. Minister tell me who these six people are, and what their salaries and designations are?

Mr. Bulkan: These six new additions are two midwives, one medex, one medical officer, a health centre attendant and one porter. These employees are to be based at Diamond and the C.C. Nicholson Hospital. I regret, but I do not have the pay rates at this time.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell us why the salary increases for these contracted workers from \$48.9 million to \$62.6 million?

Mr. Bulkan: Five persons have been reemployed on contract and, in addition, there are 15 new persons who have been appointed.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: there is a substantial increase of \$224,781,000. Even though commendable, could the Hon. Minister state who will manage these items?

Mr. Bulkan: We have already identified this subject and I believe we have dealt with it extensively in the three regions that we have already considered for today. The point was made that the same applies in all 10 of the regions. Whereas, formerly, the allocation was done under the Ministry of Health, it is now reflected under the Regional Administration.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants, there is an increase of \$5,216,000. Could the Hon. Minister state how many vehicles will cover this amount?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision caters for a fleet, a total of six, and in the fleet are two new ambulances and two new buses.

Ms. Persaud: Under the same line item, could the Hon. Minister state where they will be located and serviced?

Mr. Bulkan: These would be at Diamond and C.C. Nicholson Hospital.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under staffing details, line item 6116, I notice that there are 145 persons were employed and now there are 156, but the total wages and salaries have moved from \$124 million to \$143 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us why there is this increase?

Mr. Bulkan: In the main, it is as a result of higher categories of employees comprising the bulk of the new employees.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: I see that \$20 million has been budgeted. Could the Minister give us a list of the buildings and how much would be spent on each building for maintenance?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the health centres across the region, as well as the two hospitals. With regards to the individual amounts, I can certainly provide this information to the Hon. Member in writing.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I see that \$18 million is budgeted. Could the Minister give us a list of these areas where infrastructure work will be done and tell us the cost for each one?

Mr. Bulkan: This provision is also targeted for the health centres across the region.

Programme: 745 – Health Services - \$559,732,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now deal with capital expenditure.

Capital Expenditure:

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$19,000,000

Ms. Persaud: Project code 2404700 – Land and Water Transport: there is a budgeted amount of \$14 million for the purchase of vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister state how many vehicles, what is their purpose and where they will be located?

Mr. Bulkan: These are for two 4x4, one pickup and one double cap vehicle. One is to be based at the main RDC office and the other one at the Timehri Sub Office.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell us who would be using the vehicle and for what purpose?

Mr. Bulkan: These are to be used by the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman. In the case of the Regional Chairman, the vehicle assigned is actually 17 years old.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2506800 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration: Could the Minister tell us what are some of the furniture that will be purchased for this \$5 million and where these furniture will be going?

Mr. Bulkan: All of the furniture and equipment is to be used and located at the main RDC office. It includes computers, printers, photocopiers, filing cabinet, air conditioner, a refrigerator, a board room table, and chairs.

Mr. Croal: Just as a follow up project code 2404700 – Land and Water Transport, I just want to enquire which departments are located and are functioning from the Sub Office at Timehri.

Mr. Bulkan: That office is being reconfigured to be able to deal with all of the five programmes covered by the RDC, and it will have a full complement of staff.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$19,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$9,293,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1701200 – Agricultural Development: I see a mere \$9.2 million for construction of revetments. Could the Hon. Minister tell us where the revetments would be constructed and the cost for each?

Mr. Bulkan: The \$6 million is for revetment works at Buzz-a-Bee Dam in Craig and \$2.9 million is for a place called ‘Busy’ behind the Enmore Police Station.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like to enquire of the Hon. Minister whether the Cane Grove area and Mahaica area, where there are some very bad dams for the people going to reap their crops to use and even on the East Bank of Demerara, at place like Covent Garden and so on, would there be any type of work under any other item where there would be money to help these farmers?

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: These are not catered for under the allocations in front of us.

Mr. Neendkumar: I honestly cannot see how we can spend \$9 million only in the agriculture sector in Region 4. It is just impossible.

Ms. Wade: What is the line item?

Mr. Neendkumar: It is project 1701200, Agriculture Development. I am asking the Hon. Minister to tell me why we are not getting more allocation for agriculture development in Region 4. Last year we spent \$38 million.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$9,293,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$48,150,000

Ms. Persaud: Project 1100500, Bridges, the budgeted amount of \$14,400,000 is listed for the construction and rehabilitation of bridges. Could the Hon. Minister state how many bridges and where they will be located?

Mr. Bulkan: It caters for five bridges. The locations are Clonbrook, Herstelling, Bachelor's Adventure, Farm and Paradise. It might be interesting for the Hon. Member to learn that the bridge at Clonbrook is to provide access to the doctor's quarters that was actually constructed two years ago, and for which there was no bridge for anyone to access that building. This deficiency would be remedied with the construction under this allocation.

Ms. G. Persaud: Project 1400700, Roads, the amount budgeted of \$33,750,000 is stated for the rehabilitation of community roads. Could the Hon. Minister say where these community roads are and how many will be rehabilitated?

Mr. Bulkan: These are for road rehabilitation works in Montrose, two places in Kaneville, Cane Grove and Bare Root. It is actually for two places in Kaneville – Love Bird Drive as well as Kiskadee Drive

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like to know under the same project, "Roads", if there is any money put aside for the farming areas in Mahaica and East Coast and the East Bank like Coven Garden, Coverden and Laluni and so on.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman I have already identified the areas funded under this allocation.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$48,150,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$130,200,000

Ms. Persaud: Project 1203300 Buildings – Education: The amount of \$97,000,000 is allocated for the construction and extension of schools and sanitary blocks. Could the Hon. Minister state which schools will benefit from this amount?

Mr. Bulkan: The schools, if I can refer to capital profile 347, will be Golden Grove Secondary, nursery schools in Eastville and Golden Grove as well as Peter's Hall; construction of sanitary blocks at Chateau Margot, Annandale North and Enterprise Nursery Schools, Montrose and Annandale Primary Schools as well as St. Cuthbert's Secondary. The allocation also makes provision for the construction of tarmacs at Craig, Kurukururu and Timehri Primary Schools. There is an extension at the Kurukururu Primary School.

Ms. Selman: A follow-up Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister provide an estimated breakdown of how the budgetary provision would be spent on the projects he has identified in addition to how much would be spent on the other projects which would include construction of tarmacs at Craig and Timehri Primary Schools, and the others?

Mr. Bulkan: In the interest of time, I have a list outlining the respective cost for each of the activities which includes the two tarmacs that have been listed and I will provide this to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 2404700, Land and Water Transport: I see there is \$10 million for the purchase of vehicles. Could the Minister tell me what kind of vehicles and who will be the beneficiaries?

Mr. Bulkan: There is a sub office at Friendship that will be resuscitated. The allocation is for the purchase of one minibus and one Double Cab pickup. It will increase the fleet that the education department has from its current strength of four to six. The allocation will cater, as I said, for the resuscitation of the sub office at Friendship.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 2503400, Furniture and Equipment: I see a substantial amount of money here of \$22 million. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of what will be purchased and which schools will be benefiting from it?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation is intended for practically all of the schools across the region. It is for the purchase of printers, projectors, DVD players, public address (PA) systems, desks and benches, filing cabinets, teachers' tables and chairs, water dispensers and fans. It also caters to the purchase of equipment for the Home Economics Department - 15 heavy-duty gas stoves as well as refrigerators. It caters for the purchase of 127 fire extinguishers as well.

Ms. Manickchand: Through you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, there was a policy in the previous Government to meet all the needs, furnishings wise, of students across the country

within a two-year period and then move over to meeting the needs of teachers with tables, chairs, cupboards, lockers, and so on. Could you kindly tell me, Sir, if the new Government has abandoned that programme and is now furnishing *ad hoc* and that is why we see small allocations, as the one you are addressing now, to everything under the sun? Or could you tell me if you believe the needs of students have been met, so far, because of the policy over the last two years?

Mr. Bulkan: If it is as the Hon. Member is saying there is an existing policy, I am not aware that there is an abandonment or cancellation of an existing policy. If it has been identified that priority must be given to the furnishing needs of students as opposed to teachers, as I said, I am not aware there is a reversal of that policy.

Mr. Croal: Project 2503400, Furniture and Equipment: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the procurement process for the furniture and equipment for the schools and whether this has started?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that for purchases over \$9 million the requirement is for the national tender board to be engaged, but for sums lower than that the requirement is to be addressed by the Regional Tender Board.

Mr. Croal: As a follow up, has any procurement process commenced?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the tender advertisements were placed last weekend. These have been publicly advertised for tender.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 2606300, Power Supply, \$1.2 million: It would be buying solar systems. Could the Minister tell me where these will be going?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is the Long Creek Primary School on the Linden/Soesdyke Highway.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$130,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.05 p.m.

Programme: 745 - Healthy Services - \$30,744,000

Ms. Persaud: Project 1203500 Buildings - Health: There is a budgeted amount of \$15 million for the provision of health facilities. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown as per allocation for this amount?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for repairs and extension at a number of hospitals namely Diamond Diagnostic Centre, Melanie Health Centre and Diabetic Foot Care Centre at the Grove Health Centre as well as the construction of pharmacy at the Clonbrook Health Centre.

Ms. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, as a follow-up question, I was asking for the budgetary breakdown as per project.

Mr. Bulkan: Sorry about Hon. Member. I will provide it to you in writing.

Ms. Persaud: Project 2404700, Land and Water Transport, there is the budgeted amount \$6 million for the purchase of vehicle. Could the Hon. Minister state how many vehicles and where they would be located?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the purchase of one Double Cab pickup and it for use to by the Regional Health Officer (RHO) to be based at the office of Triumph and it is to enable more effective outreaches, mobile clinics and vaccination activities.

Mr. Neendkumar: As a follow-up to the same project on land and water transport, would the entire \$6 million be spent to purchase a vehicle or would it be purchasing other items for river transport?

Mr. Bulkan: No. That would just be for one vehicle.

Mr. Neendkumar: The health section in this region would not be doing anything for that river transportation. Could I ask the Hon. Minister to please tell me?

Mr. Bulkan: There is no allocation under this programme in this budget.

Programme: 745 - Health Services - \$30,744,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 75 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751- Regional Administration and Finance- \$ 118,173,000

Mr. Gill: Line Item 6116, Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister give the names, salaries and terms of references for the two additional contracted employees under this line item? Could the Hon. Minister state when these persons were employed and whether those positions were advertised?

Mr. Bulkan: It is one Office Assistant with a salary of just under \$43,000 and one Receptionist, with a salary just over \$44,000. I am advised that both of those positions were filled this year.

Ms. Manickchand: Mr. Minister, through Mr. Chairman, I see line item 6273 – I see it repeating which is the only reason I am asking - water charges seems to be going up significantly. Does the new Government anticipate a rise in water rates? I see \$891,000 was used last year but there is a budgeted allocation of \$1,314,000 for this year.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that this allocation caters for payment to one additional building. Formerly the payment was for two buildings, the administrative and the subregion office, but now it caters for an additional building which is the Government's quarters. That accounts for the increased allocation.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister explain to this Assembly what is responsible for the increase in security under this line item from \$24.9 million to \$30.84 million? Could the Hon. Minister state where in Region 5 the additional security will be assigned?

Mr. Bulkan: The main reason for the increase in the allocations has to do with the increased rates that are paid to the guards from \$145 to \$300 an hour. The actual locations, which are provided for, include the RDC buildings at Fort Wellington, including the boardroom. There are the Indigenous hostel, the RDC compound at Mahaicony, the Regional Chairman and the Vice-Chairman's homes as well as the home of the REO.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister kindly specify which roads in Region 5 will benefit from the allocation of the \$24 million?

Mr. Bulkan: I think the Hon. Member has moved to Programme 752.

Mr. Gill: Yes.

Mr. Bulkan: We are dealing with Programme 751.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: It may have missed me. Could the Hon. Minister repeat how many Cooks are currently employed and their location?

Mr. Bulkan: I got the impression that the Hon. Member is of the opinion that I made a reference to Cooks. I did not but I am advised that they are no Cooks employed under this category.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings that have to be maintained and also the budgetary allocations for each building?

Mr. Bulkan: The buildings to be maintained are Fort Wellington, the RDC main office, the REO living quarters, the RDC boardroom, sub office at Mahaicony, and the administrative building at Fort Wellington. It is stated here that it is in urgent need of maintenance to maintain its structural integrity.

Mr. Mustapha: What is the cost for each building?

Mr. Bulkan: In the interest of time I can provide this list to the Hon. Member.

Programme: 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$118,173,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 752 - Agriculture - \$120,687,000

Mrs. Manickchand: Mr. Minister, through the Chairman, line item, 6251 has a \$24 million allocation that is projected to be budgeted for the "Maintenance of Roads" and it is quite a jump from the \$17 million of last year. Could you kindly tell this Assembly which are those roads?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for maintenance of farm to market roads at Belladrum, Bush Lot, Catherine, Esau and Jacob, Hyde Park, Abary and Champagne.

Ms. Manickchand: It is a follow-up question. Could the Minister tell me about the road at Esau and Jacob, the length of road and the kind of road is intended to be built there? To those grumbling at the back, I have constituents that I answered to and it is on their behalf that I ask these questions.

Mr. Chairman: Let us try to avoid the asides and let us try to move things along without that. I must ask Members, who are heckling and making comments, that when a Member stands to speak please desist. It will help us to move along better.

Mr. Bulkan: The provision is for maintenance of 6.5 kilometres of roads in that particular area for a budgeted cost \$3.955 million.

7.20 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: There is an allocation of \$8.6 million for maintenance of bridges. A quick outline of which bridges those would be, would be very helpful, Sir.

Mr. Bulkan: Those would be bridges in at Novar, Bath, Ross, Belladrum, Bush Lot, Shieldstown and Linchfield

Ms. Manickchand: Does that include the timber bridge at Champagne?

Mr. Bulkan: No Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Manickchand: Does that include the bridge at the Bellamy Canal at Novar Dundee?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that it is yes.

Ms. Manickchand: It does.

Mr. Bulkan: Yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Under line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, could the Hon. Member kindly define what the word "Other" means and what is included under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for maintenance to sluice doors and other control mechanisms for sluices at Ithaca, Rosignol, D'Edward, Zes Kinderen, Central Mahaicony as well as repairs to revetment in Rosignol and Shieldstown.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister kindly specify exactly where in Region 5 will benefit from the \$73,000,000 allocated for the maintenance of drainage and irrigation works?

Mr. Bulkan: Essentially, the allocation is for the maintenance to D&I infrastructure across the entire region. It is quite a long list with all of the areas and if the Hon. Member is so desirous, a list could be provided to him.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6282, Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister state what types of equipment will be maintained?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the serving of three computers, two printers, a standby generator, an air conditioning unit as well as brush cutters.

Programme: 752 - Agriculture - \$120,687,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$102,898,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6241, Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Member kindly tell us which buildings are being rented here?

Mr. Bulkan: The figures, which I am looking at, there is no allocation under that heading.

Ms. Manickchand: What did I say?

Mr. Bulkan: You said rental of buildings, line item 6241.

Ms. Manickchand: Sorry. It is “Maintenance of Roads” line item 6251, there is an allocation of \$49 million plus. Could you kindly tell us which roads would be done here?

Mr. Bulkan: These are for rehabilitation to roads in parts of Mahaicony, Blairmont branch road as well as streets, Shieldstown, Rosignol, Novar, Number 3, Harbanspurs Paradise, Airy Hall, Number 22, Bush Lot, Hopetown, Fellowship, Seafield and Catherinas Lust

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Member detail for us if that is available? If not, we can take it after. What kind of rehabilitated work is being done on the branch road, Mahaicony?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for rehabilitation to eight kilometres of road and it states Mahaicony branch road. It is for a budgeted sum of \$2.5 million and it is to repair pot holes and to grade the shoulders of the road. This is an asphalted road.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I see that there is an increase in five by five numbers of contracted employees. Did any of those employees get hired after the new Government assumed office?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the answer to that is no.

Mr. Gill: A follow-up to that question, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister advise me on the cause for the increase of the \$4 million under this line item 6116?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, essentially it is to cater for payment for the five additional employees, including their gratuity.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Member tell us which bridges will be maintained under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: These would be bridges located at Rosignol, Hopetown, Woodley Park and Number 11. Those being the wooden bridges and then there are repairs to concrete structures at Bath and Hope

Ms. Manickchand: “Maintenance of Other Infrastructure”, line item 6255: Could the Hon. Member kindly tell this Assembly what is included in this other infrastructure?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for maintenance and repairs to fences at the compound at Fort Wellington.

Programme: 753 - Public Works - \$102,898,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$1,141,009,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6112, Senior Technical: I see here a remarkable 30-person jump in the senior technical employees. Could the Hon. Member explain this increase?

Mr. Bulkan: It has to do with the appointment of 33 Assistant Masters and Mistresses.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: There has been a reduction in the semi-skilled operatives and unskilled persons employed in the region. Could the Hon. Minister tell us why?

Mr. Bulkan: It is due to a combination of dismissals as well as persons retiring. Eight Acting Teachers were let go and 13 Pupil Teachers and one Driver retired.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: Could the Hon. Minister give us the reason for the \$3,000,000 increase in electricity charges from \$5.5 million to \$8.5 million?

Mr. Bulkan: The reasons for the increases have to do with extensions to three secondary schools and four primary schools, requiring additional electricity.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could we kindly be advised which buildings these would be?

Mr. Bulkan: It is actually quite a long list of schools to be repaired. It is several pages and I will be happy to provide the Hon. Member with a copy of this.

Ms. Manickchand: Understood, Sir, I will be happy to receive it.

Line item 6292, Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister kindly advice if this would be money for our school feeding programme, where every child from nursery to Grade II receives a snack or hot meal?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer to that is no. This provision only caters for meals to students at Moraikobe on a daily basis. It caters for the dorms for approximately 41 weeks per year.

Ms. Manickchand: The Hon. Minister of Education has indicated that the new Government's policy is to expand the school feeding programme. Under education delivery, Sir, could you kindly help as to which line item that expansion would be reflected under?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not aware of that but I can seek to enquire if indeed any provision for that programme has been made in this Budget 2015 and to provide that information to the Hon. Member.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6284, Other: There is other, and quite a large allocation. Would the Hon. Member be kind enough to tell us what is included under this "Other"?

7.35 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: As was in the case of the last region we looked at, it had to do with the payment of exams supervisors, invigilators and sweeper/cleaners.

Ms. Manickchand: Line Item 6241 - Rental of Buildings: Would the Hon. Member kindly tell us what we are renting? I know it is a small sum, but what are we renting for education.

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the rental of a building for a nursery school at Perth.

Mr. Croal: Line Item 6116: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the category of the Contracted Employees?

Mr. Bulkan: I will provide this information to the Hon. Member subsequently.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships), I see \$5 million budgeted for that. Could the Hon. Minister say how many persons will be benefitting from this programme – separately, Training and also Scholarships?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgetary allocation is to enable the provision of training for teachers, with the involvement of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and for schools across the Region.

Programme 754 – Education Delivery - \$1,141,009,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$393,188,000

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us if this one additional contracted employed was hired after the new Government assumed Office?

Mr. Bulkan: That person was hired before.

Ms. Manickchand: Line Item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: There is an increase from \$2,600,000 to \$77,878,000. It is maybe under the same line item, but I did not get answers under Region 2. Does Region 5 have the capacity to store \$78 million worth of drugs?

Mr. Bulkan: The Region would have been privy to the proposed allocation and it is my expectation that the Region would have addressed the question of adequate storage of the drugs and if it is unable to store the entire amount, I venture to suggest that discussions would have taken place with the Ministry of Public Health to enable and all for the delivery of the drugs in tranches.

Ms. Manickchand: Is it anticipated that Region 5 is going to be limited to a \$78 million provision of drugs over the 2015 year?

Mr. Bulkan: I imagine that the Hon. Member was not present when a similar question was asked in relation to Region. The observation was made that whilst this is the allocation, if

indeed there is an emergency need for additional drugs, if this allocation has been exhausted, I would imagine that there will be Governmental arrangements in place to allow for such extra allocations and provision of drugs and medical supplies.

Ms. Manickchand: Just to clarify, I was present, but we are voting on this line item; we voted on whatever answers may have been given before. This requires a vote of this honourable House and I believe the scrutiny of the people of this nation, before that vote is given, if we are to be responsible. Hon. Member, what would be different...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, forgive me for interrupting. If you were addressing the Speaker, he did not hear what you said. Were you addressing the Speaker a moment ago?

Ms. Manickchand: I was Sir, but I could withdraw whatever...

Mr. Chairman: I am sure it is important enough for the Speaker to hear.

Ms. Manickchand: Yes Sir, we could get on with this. The Hon. Member was suggesting that I had not heard his previous answer to another question under some other line item or some other agency code. I was responding that each line item requires the scrutiny of the nation, if the nation so requires to scrutinise through their elected representatives, such as myself. Each line, agency and programme requires a vote, so we cannot vote for one line item in Region 3 and say oh by the way, for every line item, for the next 10 regions, this will be the stock answer. That would be approaching democracy in a rather lazy way. I believe this House is worthy of more.

The question on my mind right now is, with regards to line item 6221, if the Hon. Member can tell us, what would be different now with placing this allocation into the Region rather than having it centrally. What would be the difference that would result in benefits that the Region 5 or the Guyanese population can look forward to in procurement?

Mr. Bulkan: To the best of my understanding, the new provisions are designed to achieve two main factors: one being at the levels of the regions, that the needs in relation to the drugs supply are identified; and the needs for the respective regions, having been forwarded to the Ministry of Public Health, the rationalisation is not at level to allow for the procurement and the sourcing by the Ministry of Public Health, to benefit from more competitive pricing, as a result of economies of scale. Those are the two main considerations.

Ms. Manickchand: Right. I was asking for what would be different. That is the same way it was done prior to this allocation being made under the Region. That is, the Region's Regional Health Office (RHO) would say to the Ministry of Public Health, we want 10 malaria tablets, two Panadol tablets or three Tylenol tablets and the Ministry of Public Health would procure it. We are being told that the moneys are being placed in the regional budget, but the procurement and the process seem to be the same. I am just concerned because for me, it seems clumsy.

Whatever works that would have allowed this medication, medicine and medical services to reach the people of Region 5 quickly and timely, I would support. I am just concerned about what seems to me to be clumsy. We put it into the Region the Region warrants it back to the central Ministry.

The question that arises out of that, through you Mr. Chairman to the Hon. Member, is the new Government envisioning that this would open up the ability of more persons to offer services to supply under this head?

Mr. Bulkan: The question of procurement would be by an open competitive process. It would open it to potentially a greater number of suppliers.

Ms. Manickchand: Would a common word that has become known in local parlance be the "splitting of contracts" legally?

Mr. Bulkan: I do not think that applies, Mr. Chairman.

Ms Teixeira: I have heard the arguments for the earlier regions and I went through and added up all the allocations under all the regions, under this head, line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies, to get an idea of the total under this new system that you are bringing in. I have two major concerns, in addition to what my Colleague, Ms. Manickchand has stated.

I am concerned that, one - the allocations are inadequate for the population and the disease patterns of these regions. For example, Regions 7, 8 and 9 are all \$20 odd million. The problem is this, line item 6221, is not just drugs, it is Drugs and Medical Supplies - like gloves, gauze, reagents, syringes and a whole lot of other stuff. When we keep talking about drugs all the time, the idea is pharmaceuticals. In order to deliver the health services and the only item that basically deals with that, is line item 6221, which is all the other stuff that have to go into running health, to provide these services.

When I looked at the allocation for this Region in particular, \$77,878,000, I think it is not going to make it. It is just not enough, if you are looking at covering primary health care, secondary care, laboratory services, pharmaceuticals services, immunisation and in-patient care. This is inadequate and not just for this Region. I am saying this at this point, but I am really saying that the Government needs to really assess this thing better. I think that the Government is going to get into trouble in the regions. Therefore, the first question is, do you believe this is adequate? And secondly, under Drugs and Medical Supplies, what other supplies are included in this? How is the Government going to rectify it, if the supplies are inadequate?

Mr. Bulkan: I thank the Hon. Member for her observation. On the question of inadequacy, what I would say is that that applies to every other activity that the central Government is expected to fund or provide financing for. We have heard that in many other areas earlier today. This area or this activity is not insulated or isolated from that phenomenon. I think it has been recognised that there will always be limitations with regards to the ability of a budget to address all of the needs in any given area, in any given Region.

Ms. Teixeira: What other supplies are included under line item 6221, other than drugs, so that we could get a more accurate figure of how much of these are drugs - pharmaceuticals and how much are medical supplies because the other heads do not cater for those medical supplies.

7.50 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: May I add to that because the Hon. Member could answer us both at the same time. Ms. Teixeira, Member of Parliament, is asking for what percentage may be for medical supplies and what percentage may be for equipment? I am particularly interested because as far as I know, which I may have said in my budget presentation, slashed from the Region 5 budget was a fetal monitor, which for me it is hugely important and it is rather cheap.

Is it possible for the Hon. Member to supply a list of what was supplied? This had to have a list. For us to have a cost of \$78 million, somebody had to sit and do a list considering we have malaria, big-foot, and whatever else and projected that this is what we would need and this is the cost. Could we be provided with a list of what the RHO said is needed in Region 5

for 2015? I do not expect it to be announced in this Hon. House because it is going to be a rather long list.

I think that I would feel a little bit more comfortable. When I sit with that list with experts in that area, we feel like we are on the right track of asking for the right numbers and allocations. So, the question, is to complement Ms. Teixeira question, could we get a list of what was asked for and the costing that would take us to the \$78 million?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is yes.

Dr. Mahadeo: If I may. At line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - \$20 million and line item 6255- Maintenance of Other Infrastructure \$8 million: Could we get a list of these –the infrastructure and buildings?

At line item 6291- National and Other Events: Three hundred and forty six thousand dollars for a region the size of Region 5, I would like to know what the events are that they will cater for. They would need to think more about things like health fair, *et cetera*.

At line item 6302-Training (including Scholarships): Four hundred and twenty thousand, I would like to know if this would include the training for the geriatric care that we were talking about; the introduction of the primary mental healthcare; and things like that because \$420,000 would be grossly inadequate for that. Could I also have a list of the training that would be schedule or that you plan to have for \$420,000?

Mr. Bulkan: The list for the maintenance of infrastructure and of buildings would be provided to the Hon. Member. With regards to the allocations for National and Other Events and the training, whilst it is not a satisfactory explanation, as it might be expected by the Hon. Member, these allocations are actually consistent with allocations over the past three years. So, it does not envisage an increase in the number of activities, but I guess this could be considered. As to the nature of the actual training, some of the activities that it caters for are food handlers training, labelling of food borne diseases, surveillance training, vector-borne disease training, vaccine management training, breastfeeding training, and reproductive health training.

Dr. Mahadeo: Just a follow up question: Over the years that I was there as the Regional Health Authority (RHA), we actually did training for staff in Region 5. I do not know

whether that is going to be continued this year. I would want to advise that, maybe next year, Region 5 puts in its own budget.

Mr. Gill: At line item 6116: I note an increase of one additional contract employee and an increase in allocation from \$45.6 million \$52.3million, could the Hon. Minister kindly explain the additional \$6.7 million and the name and salary of the one new contracted employee?

Mr. Bulkan: The bulk of the increase in the budgetary allocation has to do with the five per cent salary increase which includes the gratuity and vacation allowances. The nature of the one new appointment, it is an Records Clerk.

Mr. Gill: What is the salary?

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$393,188,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I thought that 8 o' clock would be a reasonable time for us to have a suspension. I would therefore proceed.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration & Finance - \$12,850,000

Ms. Manickchand: Your honour, I actually think that we could make it for that 8 o' clock hour. We will strive to make it.

At project code 2504000-Furniture and Equipment, I see \$18 million allocated for the purchase of furniture and equipment. Firstly, is a fetal monitor going to be bought under this project code? Secondly, could we have a list of what is intended to be bought?

Mr. Bulkan: I think that the Hon. Member has moved all the way down to the last programme which is Programme 755.

Ms. Manickchand: Are we not taking it together?

Mr. Bulkan: That was not my understanding, but subject to the ruling of the Chair.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, I am sorry. I thought that we were just taking it in a bundle. I will start from the top. I have no questions.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration & Finance - \$12,850,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$40,000,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether at project code 1300900 - Drainage and Irrigation, has been completed? If it has not been completed what is outstanding?

Mr. Bulkan: I am sorry Mr. Chairman, but I do not quite follow the question that is being asked of me or what I am expected to answer.

Mr. Dharamlall: At project code 1300900 - Drainage and Irrigation, I would like to confirm with the Hon. Minister whether the projects that are outlined here have been completed, and if they have not been completed what is the current status?

Mr. Bulkan: These are actually new projects of which none has actually started.

Mr. Dharamlall: The profile has them from January 1st to the end of December. Hon. Minister, regarding the construction and rehabilitation of accesses in the Mahaica Mahaicony/Abary (MMA) area, could you please indicate which areas those constructions would be done?

Mr. Bulkan: Might I respectfully refer the Hon. Member to the capital profile, reference number 357, where it provides details of the areas that will receive funding under this allocation.

Mr. Dharamlall: I was specific to description of projects, what the project entails, and specific to number two, “Construction and Rehabilitation of accesses in the Mahaica Mahaicony areas”. I was asking the Hon. Minister the identification of those areas within the MMA scheme.

Mr. Bulkan: This is for the construction of access dams at Poorfellow, G. Naraine, and Pandit with a total of 6.4 miles for a budgeted sum of \$1.2 million.

Mr. Mustapha: At the same project code 1300900- Drainage and Irrigation: I have notice here a shortfall from last year of \$51million that was cut from last year’s budget; we now have \$40 million. Would the Hon. Minister say that less capital projects would be executed this year in Region 5 than in last year?

Mr. Bulkan: This question has already been addressed. The Hon. Member may have heard that reference was made to the effects of the prorogation and the fact that a capital programme, for the entire year, will have to be executed within only three months.

Mr. Mustapha: If I can have a follow up: Many big capital projects, when it starts late in the year, would normally rollover to the next year. These projects...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you making a speech or are you dealing with...

Mr. Mustapha: I am just advising the Hon. Minister that these projects could have started...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you are speaking to the point that arises from the Estimates that we are dealing with, yes; if you are going to make another speech, no.

Mr. Mustapha: I was just saying that the Hon. Member said the prorogation caused less capital works in Region 5, I was just saying...

Mr. Chairman: Do you think that you should do that after what I just said?

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member say, for Region 5, what capital projects were in execution, prior to August, 2015? There were capital projects being implemented?

Mr. Bulkan: Under this head there were no capital projects that were rolled over from last year.

Ms. Teixeira: I did not say rollover. If you are saying rollover, I would accept that. Are you saying Minister that there were no capital works that were awarded in 2014, that were not completed and, therefore, continued or as you used the words rolled over into 2015? Are you saying that? So, in other words you are not only saying that there were no capital projects in 2015, prior to August, but that there were actually no projects as of November - December 2014 that were concluded in 2015. Is that what you are saying Sir because you are wrong.

8.05 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: We are considering allocations under this head and the framework did not contemplate the commencement of capital works under this head that would allow for its continuation in 2016, but rather for its completion in 2015.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is the procurement status of this project code 1300900 – Drainage and Irrigation, and whether the Region has a Regional

Tender Board, who are the members of the Regional Tender Board, and when were they constituted?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation actually would be warranted to the MMA and they would be responsible for executing the projects that were identified.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$40,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have gone beyond 8 o'clock and we have completed two items of the Capital Expenditure. The Speaker is minded for us to have a suspension at this time. If Members so desire however, we can complete the consideration of the Capital Expenditure before we have the suspension.

Ms. Manickchand: We on this side would prefer that we complete it, if the Minister up to finishing it off.

Programmed: 753 – Public Works - \$75,210,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Regarding project codes 1100600 – Bridges and 1400800 – Roads: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate why there is an expected rollover of both of these projects? Hon. Minister, this is reflected in the profiles.

Mr. Bulkan: The rollover figure that is reflected there is actually just the retention payment, which is for the liability defects period.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$75,210,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$55,195,000

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Minister, could you kindly provide us with the list, if you are not minded to call them all out now, of the schools that would be addressed under this agency code.

Mr. Bulkan: Certainly, it would actually be far more effective for the Hon. Member to be in receipt of a printed list, as opposed to an oral account of the activities.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 2503800 – Furniture – Education: there is an allocation of \$20 million here, could the Hon. Minister say, upon advice, of course, if Region 5 having

been saturated with furniture needed for nursery, primary and secondary education, will this now would be for teachers?

Mr. Bulkan: There is no provision for any furniture for the nursery.

Ms. Manickchand: I would not expect that they would be Hon. Speaker, because those needs had been saturated. Let me be a little bit more direct, what would this \$20 million be buying?

Mr. Bulkan: Here again, I think it would be far more effective for the Hon. Member to be in receipt of the list showing the complete items that would be procured and this would be provided

Ms. Manickchand: Thanks.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$55,195,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$51,336,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 2401900 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Member say what kind of vehicles will be purchased here, how many motorcycles and who would have usage of the vehicles and motorcycles that are intended to be bought under this project code.

Mr. Bulkan: The vehicle in question is a pick-up and it is for the use by public health personnel in the Region to conduct outreaches and the distribution of drugs. It will also be used by the Vector Control personnel. There are a number of four scooters to be purchased and used by the environmental health staff in the execution of their duties.

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 2504000 – Furniture and Equipment – Health: May I be provided with a list of what is intended to be purchased under this legend.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is yes.

Mr. Mahadeo: Could the Minister say whether he has fetal dopplers on that list and whether there are incubators that could be used for transporting babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, either in New Amsterdam or Georgetown?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is no.

Programme: 755 – Health services – \$51,336,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 8.19 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 8.45 p.m.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 76 Region 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$130,477,000

Mr. Bulkan: I think the schedule has the page numbers incorrectly listed. It is actually pages “454-455”.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. Would I then be correct in thinking that all that are shown there pages 754 to 763, should be 454...

Mr. Bulkan: That is correct Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Member, be guided accordingly.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that there are four new contracted employees, could the Hon. Minister state the designations and salaries for these people.

Mr. Bulkan: That would be one Stores Clerk, a typist Clerk and two Checkers; the emoluments are all identical \$41,830 each; and their appointments were effected in 2014.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line item 6131–Other Direct Labour Costs: Could the Hon. Minister explain what constitutes this line item.

Mr. Bulkan: Hon. Member, did you say line item 6131?

Mr. Mustapha: Yes.

8.52 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: This figure represents allowances to officers who are in an acting capacity. A list can be provided to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances – could the Hon. Minister explain why there is an increase in the budgetary allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation is to allow for recruitment of a field auditor, inclusive of travelling allowance.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings - could the Hon. Minister name the buildings to be maintained?

Mr. Bulkan: Again, I believe that it will be more efficacious if a list is provided to the Hon. Member, giving the complete details.

Dr. Mahadeo: If I may, under line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure at \$3 million...

Mr. Bulkan: This is for repairs to State House fence at a cost of \$1.3 million and for elevating and resurfacing the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) compound with bitumen and concrete at a cost of \$1.7 million.

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$130,477,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$572,435,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There has been a huge increase. Could the Hon. Minister say what the reason for the increase is?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for the provision of fuel and lubricants for all of the pumps in the Region, for a number of excavators, bulldozers and generators. There is a fleet of vehicles which includes pickups, trucks, low-beds, graders and motorcycles.

Dr. Mahadeo: Follow-up: I know that the Region has acquired 14 new excavators and other equipment but, with the El Niño coming and after El Niño it will be flood, we anticipate that this will be adequate.

Line item 6253 - Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: There has been an increase here. Are the access roads to the backdam to the rice fields included here?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation does not cater for such access roads.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6253: Could the Hon. Minister say what programme is being catered for under this line item and kindly indicate which line item is responsible for the clearing of outfalls and other Drainage and Irrigation (D&I) canals in the Region, because in this Region are about 12 outfalls that are cleared twice per year?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation does cater for the clearing of outfalls as well as other D&I infrastructure in the Region.

Mr. Seeraj: Under Staffing Details, I notice there is a reduction by three on the establishment and an increase of 13 contracted workers. Could you give me the names of the 13 person, their designations and their emoluments?

Mr Bulkan: The majority of these are sluice attendants, rangers and serviceman. All were contracted last year. If I can take a median salary scale, it would be about \$54,000 monthly for each.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister name the buildings and the cost to maintain each building?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for repairs to living quarters at Manarabisi and two areas in Black Bush Polder.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage – I notice, for the years 2013 and 2014, there were no budgetary allocations. Could the Hon. Minister say what is responsible for a budgetary allocation for 2015?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that, previously, the transportation costs were allocated under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants – but they have now been transferred to this line item.

Mr. Ramson: Follow-up: The Hon. Minister is saying that the line item of other transport and travel cost was previously under line item 6231. There is a difference of \$56 million. Could the Minister please explain the difference being \$56 million subtracting \$6.5 million? There is a stark difference in the total aggregate.

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6231 was actually for fuel purchases as opposed to line item 6265 which caters for transport. It was incorrectly charged under line item 6231 which should only allow for purchases and not transportation cost.

Mr. Ramson: Follow-up: Initially, you said that it was line item 6231. Then I showed you the difference of \$56 million. Now you are saying that it is at line item 6255. The budgetary period for 2013, 2014 and now 2015 is still zero. There is no previous allocation in that budgeted sum so, if you are transferring from one year to another, the question is...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, are you addressing a question to the Minister?

Mr. Ramson: Yes, Sir. I would like the Minister to explain. If his explanation is that he is transferring from one line item to the other, it cannot be placed in a previous year which had zero allocation.

Mr. Bulkan: For the benefit of the Hon. Member, there is no restriction and stipulation because there were no prior year allocations under that line item that amounts cannot be budgeted under that line item.

The point being made is that, whilst, in prior years, the transportation costs were incorrectly categorised and lumped together with the fuel purchases, that was not how it should have been and now it is being regularised in this year.

Mr. Croal: Before I ask my second question, let me seek clarity. What is the expense of \$6.5 million catering for?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the freight charges for fuel.

Mr. Croal: Okay; that provides the clarity.

Dr. Mahadeo: I am still interested in knowing if you could help me to find the cost for the farm to market access road, if it is here at all, because, when I asked the Minister of Agriculture, he said the Region will cater for it.

Mr. Bulkan: The only answer I can provide to the Hon. Member is that there is no provision, under this programme, for such farm to market roads.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$572,435,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.07 p.m.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$168,422,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: There is a drastic reduction of \$12.5 million. Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: There is a reduction of over \$1 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain? I know that Region 6 has the capacity and we could have spent the \$42,500. We needed it so prorogation is not to be blamed here.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, yes, there is a reduction in line item 6251 but it is not true that there is a reduction in line item 6252. There is actually a minimal increase. The observation is correct that there is a \$12 million reduction. Regrettably, Mr. Chairman, we can only deal with the allocation in front of us, the \$30 million, and I can provide a list to the Hon. Member for the activities that will be addressed under this allocation.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister state whether, under line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, the \$30 million allocated is a budgetary constraint on the figure or whether those were the only roads that the Region was able to consult across the Region to get constructed?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am not in possession of that information and I am not in a position to offer the explanation being sought by the Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, if I may, could the Hon. Minister provide us with the list of areas that will be repaired under line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - to the tune of \$10 million?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, that list will be provided to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister provide us with a list for line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings? Which of these buildings will be maintained in Region 6?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes. Such a list will be provided to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Ramson: Line items 6251, 6252 and 6255: Would the Hon. Minister be able to say whether these sums are for projects to be completed or that have been completed?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, this is for works to be completed.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, if I may again, I am going to ask, maybe I sound like a broken record, but, under line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, are the roads to the rice fields or farms included there?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer is no. Most of the roads to be rehabilitated and repaired are actually in residential areas.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up question to the Hon. Minister: Region 6 normally has a dam maintenance programme. Could the Hon. Minister explain which line item that falls under?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that there were actually no requests from the RDC for funding of maintenance of dams in 2015.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, follow-up to that question: Could the Hon. Minister say if that is part of the service of the RDC to our communities that RDC is also supposed to consult rather than we have the communities seeking the RDC? The reason I raised this is because we are speaking about the new approach to management and the enhanced governance. However, I expect that, as a word of advice and as part of the bottom up approach to Government, the RDC should consult. I would like to know whether the RDC has that mandate to proceed to consult with communities.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes.

Mr. Ramson: A follow-up request: I would respectfully request the Hon. Minister to provide a detailed work programme for line items 6251, 6252 and 6255 to this side of the House, please.

Mr. Bulkan: I will so provide, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, this will be my final question on this page. Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) \$340,000 is budgeted for this project. Could the Hon. Minister say how many persons would be benefitting from this programme and what the types of training are that they will receive?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for training in auto-cad for the staff of the Works Department.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to find out from the Hon. Minister whether he thinks that, when we accumulate the entire budget, the cost of security services under education is value for money compared to the quality of services provided.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: It was just mentioned by the Hon. Minister that the RDC did not put in for moneys to do the maintenance of the roads. Mr.

Chairman, that is the responsibility of the Clerk of the RDC; he is the Accounting Officer of the Region. Do not come and fool people here.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$168,422,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 764 – Educational Delivery - \$2,510,855,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have noticed a drastic decrease of \$9 million in line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - and another \$3 million plus in line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. Again, I am saying that, in my opinion, Region 6 has the capacity to spend these moneys to repair these buildings and infrastructure. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with a list of those buildings and the infrastructural works that would be done and if he has an explanation as to why we had the reduction?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the list would be so provided and there is no explanation that can be provided, at this stage, save and except to say that what is being considered is the allocation that is outlined here in the Estimates.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees - I noticed that there are four new employees. Could the Hon. Minister give the designations and enumeration for these new employees?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the information will be provided subsequently.

Mr. Mustapha: Under line 6241 – Rental of Buildings - could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings and how many are in Region 6?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there are two buildings in question: one to house a school in Number 36 Primary, rented from the Christ Community Church; and the second one is Trinity Street Nursery being rented from the All Saints Anglican Church. Those are the details relating to \$600,000 and \$840,000 respectively.

9.22 p.m.

An Hon. Member: Is that monthly?

Mr. Bulkan: Those are annual figures.

Mr. Ramson: I have noticed that there is a marked increase in line item 6111 – Administrative - of about \$50 million and then I have also noticed that, on the Administrative Staffing Details, there are an additional 10 persons. Could the Hon. Minister state the profile description of the jobs, their salaries, emoluments, persons and the dates of contracted periods?

Mr. Bulkan: I undertake to provide these details being requested, subsequently.

Mr. Ramson: A follow-up: I would like the same information for line item 6112 – Senior Technical - which had a movement of about a \$120 million and about 30 persons added on the Staffing Details.

Mr. Bulkan: There are 31 new appointments and there are five upgrades. That would be responsible for the increase in the budgetary provisions.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Recently, I was reading that a female security guard was raped in one of the school compounds in New Amsterdam. With almost 9% of the budget for education going towards security, do you feel comfortable that, especially, the female security guards are safe enough with the rising crime situation that we are experiencing in Region 6?

Mr. Bulkan: I am unable to provide an answer for that.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$2,510,855,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, before you speak, I want just to bring to your attention that, since we returned from the break, we are still dealing with Region 6. Please proceed.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$1,267,531,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Before I ask the first question, I would like to make an observation. Again, line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - and line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I have seen drastic reductions - \$6 million and \$4 million. Again I am saying that Region 6 has the capacity to spend this kind of money to upgrade the buildings and the infrastructure. It causes me to think: is it because Region 6 was won resoundingly by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)? I hope not. Could the Minister provide me with the list of the buildings and the infrastructure that would be maintained? Again, the question

is whether there is any explanation or it is just a budgetary allocation that caused the reduction.

Mr. Bulkan: A list will be provided to the Hon. Member. The observation is, indeed, correct that there is reduced allocations in 2015.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Speaking from personal experience after working in Region 6 for the last 12 years and, before that, four years, last year, there was up to \$30 million that the Region 6 Administration spent because we purchased medical gases, oxygen, nitro-oxide, and we backed up in emergency situation.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please address the question that you want to ask and spare the preambles.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Sir. Would those moneys be available to the Region for them to do the purposes or will the Ministry of Public Health also be buying medical gases for the Region?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the question is that this allocation is expected to take into account the supply and the provision of medical gases, in addition to pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There has been an increase of about \$2 million. Is there an explanation? Will this include the home visits, the extended home based care service, care to the elderly that had been a regular feature in Region 6?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes, the provision does cater for field visits as well as home visits.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: The money remains the same. I would like to know if the Region has in mind to contract a biomedical engineer or whether the Ministry of Public Health will be doing the biomedical repairs in the Region?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the Ministry of Public Health is responsible, as was the case before, for the services of maintenance of equipment under that heading.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6291- National and Other Events - \$3.745 million: Has this money been spent already or, if some of it has been spent, could we hear on what events and how much is left?

Mr. Bulkan: Only a very small amount of the allocation has been spent. I can provide a list of all of the events to the Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Line item 6292 – Dietary: The dietary amount remains the same. However, in Region 6, Mr. Minister, we had started a shade house project, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture. I would like to know if that shade house is working so that we will have a reduction in the dietary expenses.

Mr. Bulkan: Would this be a greenhouse that the Hon. Member is referring to?

Dr. Mahadeo: It is a shade house, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Bulkan: Is this for planting?

Dr. Mahadeo: It was a project that was started in the National Psychiatric Hospital. We had carried it up to a stage. The next stage would have been for seedlings and for planting to take place. We should have already been reaping about six weeks ago.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that that project has not borne any fruit.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Does the training include primary healthcare at the mental health programme, care of the elderly training, training for diabetic school, training for counselling and testing, Continuing Medical Education (CME), training for the health and wellness army and training for the home nutrition project?

Mr. Bulkan: It does provide for some training in psychiatric upgrade. It is only one of the training activities that I recall that was outlined by the Hon. Member. But I can provide a list of all of the training activities that are contemplated under this allocation.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would just like to ask the Ministry to consider that all those training programmes be included. Thank you.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, I have just two questions to the Hon. Minister. Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Minister state the buildings that will be rented this

year? Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the other infrastructure?

Mr. Bulkan: Under line item 6241, it is for rental for accommodation for doctors in New Amsterdam whilst quarters are being constructed. It is a contingency provision, Mr. Chairman.

The details of the list of works to be funded under line item 6255 will be provided to the Hon. Member.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$1,267,531,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.37 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 –Regional Administration & Finance - \$7,300,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 1208100 - Buildings – Administration: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the extension of the student hostel in Stanleytown, New Amsterdam, to cater for students from the hinterland communities, including Bara Cara, is included here?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is no. This is for the student hostel at Springlands and it is not for the one at New Amsterdam.

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration & Finance - \$7,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$55,685,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Project 1301000, Drainage and Irrigation: Could the Hon. Minister indicate why the estimate for 2015 is \$77 million less than 2014?

Mr. Bulkan: With all due respect to the Hon. Member, we have addressed this phenomenon before. The question has come up several times during the course of this examination today. It has to do, essentially, with the fact that capital works cannot be undertaken in the absence of an approved Appropriations Act for the year in question. Subsequent to the anticipated approval of this Appropriations Act there will only be, effectively, about three months remaining to the end of the year to allow for completion of capital works. The RDC will be

stretched thin to try and effectively manage and oversee the execution of capital works for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, it is as a follow-up on the same vein. Is the Hon. Minister by extension stating that in 2016 we are going to see a monumental increase in the capital works in Region 6 under this project?

Mr. Bulkan: Am I expected to provide an answer, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: We are discussing Programme 762, Agriculture.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$55,685,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$69,960,000

Dr. Mahadeo: noting there has been a drastic decrease and accepting the Minister's explanation, I would like to ask if the heavy-duty bridge at High Reef, Albion, the footpath bridge at Vryman's Erven, Numbers 72-73 Villages sideline and the footpath bridge at Lesbeholden will be included in the bridges catered for in this budget.

Mr. Bulkan: The full details, a list of all the activities to be funded under this allocation, will be provided to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Mustapha: It is just a follow-up. How many bridges will be constructed under this programme?

Mr. Bulkan: It will be about seven bridges, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ramson: Could the Hon. Minister respectfully provide details as to whether any of the works for the project, which is outlined on profile page 371 of Volume 3, has commenced as yet? Or is the capital project expected to commence subsequent to the approval of the budget?

Mr. Bulkan: The latter would obtain.

Dr. Mahadeo: "Roads": Could the Hon. Minister say whether Steve Street in East Canje, the eight cross streets in Clifton, Tain, the footpath street in Topo, the village access road in Number 67 Village and the cross street in Number 68 Village will be included here?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member would be able to glean that information from the details that will be provided to him in written form.

Mr. Mustapha: If I may, Minister under project 1401000, Roads, there is a reduction by \$39 million. I have heard repeatedly questions about farm to market access roads. We start harvesting in Region 6 shortly. Could you say, Sir, if any of this money caters for the rehabilitation of those kinds of dams as we call them?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the question is no.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state under project 1401000, Roads, if the \$33.6 million, which represents less than half of the 2014 revised Estimate, is a budgetary constraint or a deliberate reduction in construction of community roads in Region 6?

Mr. Bulkan: It is a budgetary allocation to allow for completion of the targeted activities, post budget approval, for the period up to the end of the year.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the ramp that the residents of Orealla and Siparuta have been asking for will be constructed at Corriverton foreshore so they can have easier ingress and egress from the boats when they come?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member did not provide a project.

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$69,960,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$38,275,000

Dr. Mahadeo: “Buildings – Education”: Would the new primary school at Number 36 Village be built to cater for the 160 persons who are currently in a rented building? It is project 1203900.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that question is no.

Dr. Mahadeo: It is the same project code. Would the new building for the Number 2 Village Nursery School be built?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is also no.

Dr. Mahadeo: It is the same project code. What about the nursery school at Vryman's Erven?

Mr. Bulkan: Could I respectfully direct the Hon. Member to capital profile reference number 374 which lists and outlines the areas where construction will be undertaken, as well as the rehabilitation of the Leeds Primary School?

9.52 p.m.

Dr. Mahadeo: It is blank, here, reference number 374. This is reference number 375.

Mr. Bulkan: The reference number is 374. One of your colleagues might be able to...

Programme: 764 - Education Delivery - \$38,275,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 765 - Health Services - \$89,400,000

Mr. Mustapha: Project 2402000, Land and Water Transport: Thirty million dollars is budgeted for the purchases of ambulances and vehicle. Could the Hon. Minister state how many ambulances and where they would be located and what type of vehicle?

Mr. Bulkan: It would be two ambulances, one for New Amsterdam and the other for Skeldon hospitals. The one other vehicle would be a 4x4 to be used by the Chest Clinic at the New Amsterdam Hospital.

Programme: 765 - Health Services - \$89,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 77 Region 7: Cuyuni/ Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$164,012,000

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: With an allocation of \$18.5 million, could the Minister say which buildings are to be maintained and in which area in Region 7?

Minister within the Ministry of Communities [Ms. Hastings-Williams]: The buildings, which will be maintained and repaired, are Imbaimadai Guest House, administrative office at

Bartica, living quarters for a mechanical engineer, regional stores, living quarters for Regional Chairman, living quarters for REO in Bartica and living quarters for the Vice-Chairman at Kamarang.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: With a budget of \$13.5 million, could the Minister state what other infrastructures are those?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The other buildings include the sanitary block for the Amerindian hostel that is at Kamarang; community centre ground at Bartica, RDC wharf (RDC) in Kamarang, a water supply system for Paruima, Government compound - Bartica and Kamarang fencing at Mongreppo Hill, Bartica, power supply for Paruima, power supply, solar, for Kamarang and Paruima and landing facilities or wharf at Kako.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: With a budget line of \$22.5 million, could the Minister explain to this Assembly what is meant by “expenses to specific agencies”?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, one of our Members is trying to address a question, do permit it. Please proceed.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Line item 6211 addresses any activity that has to with the RDCs. I can give you some examples very quickly - RDC meetings, transportation and travelling for the Regional Chairman and Vice- Chairman.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister say - based on the counsel of our Hon. Minister of Finance earlier on programme budgeting...I would like to commend Mr. Bulkan for his marathon, under line item 6211, Expenses Specific to Agency, why is it there is almost 17% increase in the allocation?

Secondly, why electricity charges have been increased? I would like to find out from the Hon. Minister as well as to what is the design of the flag of Region 7 and whether the residents of Region 7 have been consulted in this new design and whether the residents of Region 7 have accepted a regional flag.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I would address the second question first. There is a system in which we would have asked the RDCs to go and do consultations. It is not a determined thing that we have a flag for the region, for your information. The increase in the allocations under line item 6211 is because of the Toshoas' election that was recently conducted.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister say how many Toshoas are benefiting from this allocation and if they have increased from last year? There is a 17% increase specific to this budget line item. It is a follow-up question to the Hon. Minister. Is the Hon. Minister also saying that the Minister of Communities is incorrect in stating that flags have already been identified for regions?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The stipends were paid to 17 Toshoas, 17 Deputy Toshoas and 8 senior councillors.

Mr. Dharamlall: On a follow-up, again, I did not think that the Hon. Minister has provided clarity on this issue. Have those Toshoas and deputy increased from last year?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am advised that there is no increase in the number of Toshoas.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister then say why there is a 17% increase under the line item?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: If the Member was listening to me carefully, I said that it was because of the elections that were recently conducted.

Mr. Ramson: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister please explain the increase of about a 140% from \$6,700,000 to \$15,800,000 and also the increase in contracted employees from 24 to 31 and the details thereto?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The increase is because of the difference in the rates. It was \$150 and the new rate is \$275.

Programme: 771 - Regional Administration and Finance -164,012,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Could the Hon. Member Mr. Ali...? The Hon. Member should rise when the Speaker calls on him.

Mr. Ali: Yes Sir.

Mr. Chairman: The Speaker would expect that you would conduct yourself with decorum in this House.

Members cheered to caution.

10.07 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this is not a matter for cheering nor for exultation. It is a matter for us to be embarrassed and troubled. Our conduct falls far short of what we all have a right to expect from ourselves in this House. I say no more.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$122,413,000

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Under line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, with an allocation of \$36,390,000, could the Hon. Minister say where this work would be done within Cuyuni/Mazaruni?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through the Chairman, the roads that will be maintained are Fourth and Sixth Avenues, Bartica, roadway - Bidrabu, roadway - Third Avenue, Bartica, roadway - Ninth Street, Bartica, roadway - Bidrabu, Agatash, sections of roadways - Bartica, roadway - Caribisi Hill, roadway - Mongreppo Hill, roadway - Bidrabu, waterfront and roadway Kamarang and Waramadong.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister say, for maintenance of drainage and irrigation works, in which area the works would be carried out?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through you, Mr. Chairman, there are alleyway drains, Eighth and Ninth Streets between Second and Third Avenues, Bartica, roadside drains - Bartica/Potaro Road, alleyway drains - First Street to Mongreppo Creek, Bartica, roadside drains - First Street to Ninth Streets, Bartica, roadside drains - First Avenue to Seventh Avenues, Bartica, waterways - Kamarang and Kukui Rivers in the Upper Mazaruni.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly, about this budget line of \$16,500,000, where this fuel will be used and how much will be used in the Upper and Middle Mazaruni?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through you, Mr. Chairman, the fuel will be used for Government's vehicles, generators at Bartica and Kamarang, and field visits to inspect projects.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), I see a sum of \$425,000. I would like to know what sort of training and what scholarship will take place under this very small sum.

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: It caters for workshops for evaluators and contractors.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, \$36,390,000: Could the Hon. Member tell us what criteria was used for the selection of these roads?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: The criteria, which that were used, were consultations with the communities and regular visits made by the engineers and Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs).

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member commit to give us copies of the minutes of those consultations?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: The RDCs, signing off on the budget is a testimony that they made consultations.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, my question to the Hon. Minister is in regard to the consultations that she referred to with the communities. All I am asking is that if the Minister can submit the minutes of those consultations to the House.

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: The RDCs would visit the communities and they would take their concerns and bring them to the RDCs' meetings and that is how we go about doing things.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister say whether these works would be done in a farming community, and if so, what would be the targeted output in relation to this expenditure?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: I had listed the drains and the locations in which they were to be made. I can give you one example: the Kamarang/Waramadong road, yes, they will have their produce brought down.

Sorry, Hon. Member. Through you, Mr. Chairman, You asked about drains and waterways. The Kamarang and Kukui rivers, they will be able to bring their agricultural produce.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$122,413,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$1,018,114,000

Dr. Westford: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate which schools, if any, are being catered for under this line item?

Mrs. Hastings–Williams: It is a list of 16 locations, some are schools and some are offices. I can provide the Member with that list later.

Dr. Westford: Line item 6292, Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate which are the institutions that will benefit under this line item? I would like the Minister to take into consideration the increased number of students that will be going to Waramadong and whether she feels this allocation would be adequate.

Mrs. Hastings–Williams: Through you, Mr. Chairman, the three schools which will benefit from this line item, are Waramadong Secondary School, Bartica Secondary School and Three Mile Secondary School, with a present enrolment of 404, 80 and 94 and they have the capacity for 430, 110 and 104. Yes, the allocation is adequate.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Hon. Minister, staffing details, I have noticed that there is an increase of 32 staff in general. Could you give an explanation?

Mrs. Hastings–Williams: Thank you for your question, Hon. Member. Through you, Mr. Chairman, we have had three promotions as Senior Mistresses, being promoted to Non–Graduate Headmistresses. There were ten Assistant Masters being promoted to Senior Assistant Masters, one District Education Supervisor (DES) to one District Education Officer (DEO).

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292, Dietary: Would you be kind enough to tell us if it is under this line item that the expanded feeding programme, touted by the Hon. Minister of Education, which was supposed to replace the \$10,000 cash grant, will be catered for?

Mrs. Hastings–Williams: The answer is no. This is purely for the dorms – the live- in children who use in the dormitories.

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Minister, could you kindly direct us as to which line would cater for that expanded feeding programme for the entire Region 7, for education in nursery, primary and secondary?

Mrs. Hastings–Williams: That is not currently budgeted for this year 2015.

10.22 p.m.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$1,018,114,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$376,433,000

Mr. Ali: Line Item 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage - \$36,242,000: This seems to be a very substantial allocation, not to be classified under a specific head. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what constitutes this expenditure?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: This line item caters for the transportation of medical supplies and the referrals of patients.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up question: I would like the Hon. Member to advise us whether the transportation service provided for the transportation of medical supplies is equipped to ensure that there is no spoilage and that drugs supplies are transported in a safe manner to the various locations.

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: We have had no problems over the past years transporting and storing medical supplies, using whatever transporting vehicles that we had.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$376,433,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$13,300,000

Mr. Ali: Project code 2402100 – Land and Water Transport - \$7,000,000: Could the Hon. Minister advise us what vehicle is to be purchased and where and to whom will this vehicle be assigned?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: The vehicle that will be purchased is a four-wheel drive double-cab, which will be located at the Office of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC). The present one that they have is in excess of 15 years. This vehicle will be assigned to the Administration and whenever it is required by the Council.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$13,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$28,410,000

Mr. Ali: Project Code 1401100 – Roads: Could the Hon. Minister advise us as to when these works were awarded and when works would have commenced?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: For your information, we have two rollover projects, that is, the roadway from Track X to Caribese Hill and the roadway from Mora Point, Bartica.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say whether there will be any new works under project code 1401100 – Roads?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: Yes, we will have the roadway from Agatash to Bartica.

Mr. Ali: Would the Hon. Minister agree that the legend and profile require some modification to reflect this?

Ms. Hastings: The project profile states, “Completion” which is the completion of the rollover project and the rehabilitation of the Agatash Road.

Mr. Ali: When I asked about new roads I thought I heard you said the Agatash Road, but I understand the clarification.

Project Code 14202100 – Bridges: Could the Hon. Member say when this contract was awarded and when is the expected completion date?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: I am advised that the Project is not yet awarded. It is awaiting the approval of these Estimates.

Mr. Ali: Project Code 1500900 – Sea and River Defence – \$6,300,000: Could the Hon. Minister say which are the area(s) that would benefit from this investment?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: Hon. Member, I can refer you to profile No. 385, which states Byderabo, Bartica.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$28,410,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$50,744,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 2504400 – Furniture and Equipment – Education: Could the Hon. Minister please state whether the procurement of furniture and equipment for schools

would be done in the Region, meaning that the supplies would be derived from the Region or will it be done from extra-regional sources?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: Yes, it will be contracted in the Region.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you state whether it will be granted to village councils or if it will be done by private contractors?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: It will be done by both private contractors and the village councils.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state, under what procurement method it will be provided to the Amerindian village council?

Mrs. Hastings-Williams: I am advised that both are catered for under the Procurement Act.

10.37 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, a supplementary in relation to the question on procurement. For Amerindian villages, is there any preferential arrangement in terms of allowing the village councils or companies from those villages to tender?

Mr. Hastings-Williams: The Procurement Act provides for the communities to tender, like for example, the village councils.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$50,744,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$45,630,000

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$45,630,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 78 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$83,863,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6211- Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister tell us or this House, whether \$20,598,000 is adequate for costs associated with the RDC? I am aware that RDC meets every quarter, which, I believe, is an insufficient time

to actually conduct the business of a vast region. I also noticed that the increase was quite minimal and whether they would continue with the quarterly meeting or they would want to adjust it.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the observation is noted. The question was asked, but it is also noted that the 2015 allocations are an increase for over 2014. If it is felt that in going forward, this sum needs to be relooked at for the effective management for Region 8, then this would be taken into account.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6231- Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House whether \$4 million is adequate for the Administration to conduct work within the Region in both sub-districts?

Mr. Bulkan: As was the case with the previous question, the 2015 budgetary allocation are an increase over the allocations for last year. The question is noted and will be taken into account.

Mr. Dharamlall: On programme budget and on the counsel of the Hon. Minister of Finance, programme 781, could the Hon. Minister state what activities are being pursued for the imminent township of Mahdia and whether there were consultations in Region 8 on the regional flag?

Mr. Bulkan: I believe that there are budgetary allocations and provisions under Public Works to do major rehabilitation and upgrade of the internal roads and drains in Mahdia. That is one major initiative and activity that is expected to be in place before the achievement and township status.

Bishop Edghill: Earlier today, I had asked a question and an undertaking... Sorry Sir.

Mr. Chairman: I do not know whether the parties who are asking the questions are through. Let me see whether they were, so that they do not have to come back again.

Bishop Edghill: I did not hear you Sir; my apologies.

Mr. Chairman: A question was asked and an answer was given. I do not know whether the questioner had another question to ask as a follow-up. If there is not, then proceed.

Mr. Dharamlall: I just wanted to confirm with Minister Bulkan whether there were consultations on the regional flag of Region 8 and if there were, what is the design?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is that question directed to the Estimates?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes. I was taking counsel from the Hon. Minister of Finance who said that...

Mr. Chairman: I heard you mention flag.

Mr. Dharamlall: Very well Mr. Chairman. The Hon. Minister of Finance, who is the agent of this budget, did say that we can speak to programme budgeting. So, I was asking the question in the context of programme budgeting. If, however, I have to be specific, then I need to be guided. Maybe, it is under line item 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency or line item 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials. I wish to be guided, but the question still remains whether there were consultations on the regional flag of Region 8?

Bishop Edghill: I am merely reminding the honourable House that earlier today, I did ask a question and an undertaking was made. The question was: What were the names of the 10 Regional Executive Officers (REO) and their date of engagement? We were told that the REOs would have been here. I would expect that we would have that information available to us, even now.

Specifically, we are considering Region 8, and as a Member of this House, I do not know who the REO of Region 8 is. I am awaiting the name of the REO of Region 8. I have asked a question.

Mr. Chairman: Does the Hon. Minister wish to address the question?

Mr. Bulkan: I cannot say that I heard a specific question from the Hon. Member, but the name of the REO for Region 8 is Mr. Rafel Downes.

Bishop Edghill: I am happy for that confirmation and I would like the Hon. Minister to confirm that Mr. Rafel Downes was a candidate for the APNU/AFC at the last elections.

Mr. Chairman: I do believe that we are going way outside the intention of this aspect of the Estimates. I would ask Members to restrain themselves and let us deal with the issue at hand.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Are you speaking to this matter, Madam?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am not speaking on this matter. I would like to proceed with questioning on the Budget. I was not fast enough on my feet when my Colleague entered some questions. I would like a follow-up on line item 6231- Fuel and Lubricants and to inquire from the Minister how much of this sum will be allocated to the North Pakaraima Sub or District Office?

Mr. Bulkan: It is anticipated that approximately 60% of this budgetary allocation will be for Sub-Region 1.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Hon. Minister, I do appreciate that you have realised that the North Pakaraima is quite a vast area and needs to be serviced well. With respect to line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings, would the Hon. Minister advise this House as to which building will be maintained with the sum of \$4.5 million?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgeted sum would be for maintenance works to the Vice-Chairman's residence, as well as the residence of the Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO), both of which are located in Kato.

10.52 p.m.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6264 – Vehicles Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what would be the spares and services and what vehicles would this be addressing?

Mr. Bulkan: This would be for the fleet of the vehicles under the care of the RDC.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Supplemental: Could the Hon. Minister provide a list of the vehicles? I would like to know whether the North Pakaraimas will also benefit from this sum of money that is being allocated.

Mr. Bulkan: The list will be so provided.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I notice there is a mere \$1.2 million allocated here. However, Region 8 comprises of any indigenous communities and villages. Region 8, like all the other regions where indigenous villages are located, also celebrates heritage month. Would this sum of money go towards supporting some of the heritage activities for these communities or will they not be supported?

Mr. Bulkan: It would be noted that the budgetary allocation is the same as it was in the two prior years. I do not have the information at hand as to if, under this allocation, provision was made for support to the Amerindian villages, but if that is traditionally the case, then there will be no departure from that practice.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Thank you Hon. Minister. That is my final question.

Mr. Dharamlall: Quickly, under line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, could the Hon. Minister state why no budgetary estimate has been prepared for roads within Amerindian villages in the North Pakaraimas, especially the bigger villages such as, Kato, Monkey Mountain, Paramakatoi and Kopinang.

Mr. Bulkan: It is not normally the case that that allocation would be done under Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance. It is usually the case where it would be funded under Public Works.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$83,863,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$123,195,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state, under line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads and 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges, which villages in the North Pakaraimas would be benefiting from roads and bridges, respectively.

Mr. Bulkan: Several villages in the North Pakaraimas, namely: Maikwak, Chenapau, Kato, Kaibarupai, Waipa, Sand Hills and Kanapang. Those would be some of the villages.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow up: Could the Hon. Minister please provide that list to the House.

Mr. Bulkan: We will provide the list.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister kindly tell this House what bridges and their locations where the works will be done with this allocation.

Mr. Bulkan: Some of the bridges would be at Uribaru, Kopinang, Tumong as well as Kamana.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: A follow up question, could the Hon. Minister be specific, with respect to the bridge at Tumong and Kopinang because I am aware that the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs funded two bridges in Kopinang, which were the bridges that funding were requested for. In terms of Tumong, that bridge was also built by Caries Construction.

Mr. Bulkan: I regret to inform the Hon. Member that the bridge that was constructed at Tumong actually washed away six days ago.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state, under line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads and 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges, whether the village councils will be contracted to construct the roads and bridges or whether it will be done by external contractors.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is that the village councils will be engaged and invited to tender for work in their communities.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister state, how many vehicles are in the Region and how many are serviceable, non-serviceable and to whom they are allocated.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the Region has a fleet of about 10 vehicles, but unfortunately there are only about three of them that are actually serviceable.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could I be informed whether the Regional Chairman has access to a vehicle.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is yes.

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether any allocation was made for the water distribution system in Mahdia.

Mr. Bulkan: Could the Hon. Member be kind enough to provide the line item.

Mr. Croal: I would be guided by the Hon. Minister of Finance on programme budgeting, but while we have to provide questions under a line item, it was a general question...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you are going to ask a question please ask it.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure.

Mr. Bulkan: These are mainly for works to RDC buildings, mainly at Mahdia.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$123,195,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(1)

First Vice President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I believe this is a convenient time that I should move a motion that this Sitting goes beyond the 11 p.m. schedule, until the business for tonight is concluded.

Question put and carried.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$477,505,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the \$10.5 million will support the teachers and the other educators in the Region with respect to attending workshops, seminars and other business to do with education. I am aware that these categories of workers do find it very difficult when they have to come to these activities. One of the issues that have confronted them has always been the issue of the shortage of fuel to provide for the All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) to transport them, and many days are lost.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that this allocation would cater for support to teachers for traveling within the Region for training purposes.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member would be the last speaker on this matter.

Ms. Manickchand: Under line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister kindly indicate if this \$137,793,000 is allocated towards the expanded school feeding programme that was announced by the Administration.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is no. The allocation caters for a continuation of the dietary needs at the Mahdia and Paramakatoi dorms.

11.07 p.m.

Ms. Manickchand: Follow-up: The Hon. Minister of Finance has commendably spoken about us expanding the way we view the budget and not limiting ourselves to line items but looking at programmes and, as a programme for expanded school feeding...right now, every

child from Nursery to Grade II is entitled to either a hot meal or a snack and that is across the country.

Expanded would mean, for me, either another meal or more meals or more grades being included into the School Feeding Programme. As a programme, has the Hon. Minister of Finance advised you, as a Member of Cabinet, where in the regional budgets allocations for the expanded School Feeding Programme may be found?

Mr. Bulkan: That expanded programme is not catered for in the 2015 budget.

Hon. Member: As a matter of regional importance, I would like to find out from the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have forgotten that the Chairman indicated that, after the last question, no other question will be entertained.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$477,505,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$177,709,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister tell us whether the sum allocated for drugs and medical supplies is sufficient for such a large region? In particular, there is need for further support with respect to health services in this Region.

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position to answer the Hon. Member definitively but the budgetary allocation before us is what is under consideration.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Follow-up: Will the Hon. Minister be able to provide such information by tomorrow?

Under line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage – does this cater for support to the Indigenous residents and villagers of the North Pakaraima as they seek medical support across the border?

Mr. Bulkan: To the best of my knowledge, currently, there is no provision, under the RDC structure, to provide direct support for residents in those far-flung communities to seek medical support in the neighbouring country of Brazil.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Follow-up: Will the Minister make amends with respect to this aspect of supporting them in transportation, *et cetera*? I know that, during our work in those villages, this has been one of the issues raised not only with myself, but with the Hon. Minister when he visited during the campaign.

Mr. Bulkan: Consideration would be given to take a fresh look at supplying the needs of residents in those bordering villages.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with timelines on when he intends to deal with this matter since it is a fresh approach?

Mr. Bulkan: Actually, I am advised that this very issue is currently being given active consideration by the RDC.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$177,709,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$14,365,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Project code 1209100 – Furniture and Equipment – Staff Quarters: Could the Hon. Minister tell us if the furniture to be purchased is to furnish the house of the Regional Executive Officer (REO)?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for the RDC buildings at Mahdia and Kato.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It mentions staff quarters. Could the House be advised which staff will be benefitting from this purchase?

I would wish to move to project code 2402200 – Land and Water Transport - Purchase of vehicle at a cost of \$3.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister say whether the vehicle to be purchased will be for the Vice-Chairman?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that question is yes.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$14,365,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$53,475,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under project code 1100800 – Bridges – could the Hon. Minister tell this House which bridge is to be constructed with this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for a bridge at Itabac.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Similarly, under project code 1401200 – Roads – could the Hon. Minister tell this House or provide information on which roads will be constructed?

Mr. Bulkan: That information can be found in the Volume 3 Capital Project Profile, Reference No. 401. The budgetary allocation is for the construction of roads from Paramakatoi to Red Creek and then Maikwak to Paramakatoi and another road from Chenapau to Paramakatoi.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Follow-up: The construction of the road from Paramakatoi to Red Creek: how did the Minister prioritise the road with respect to the road from Kopinang to Paramakatoi or from Kaibarupai to Paramakatoi?

In Red Creek, with no discrimination, there are only 14 individuals, in total, living there with about four children. I know that there are interests in mining but I would presume that roads leading from the communities of Kopinang to Paramakatoi, from Maikwak to Paramakatoi or from Kaibarupai to Paramakatoi can serve best many and, in fact, put together close to 100 children attending school.

Mr. Bulkan: This is to provide increased access for the residents of Red Creek, enabling them to travel directly to Paramakatoi.

Mr. Dharamlall: Is the Minister confirming that a road is being constructed from Red Creek to Paramakatoi to serve 14 residents verses more than a 100 residents from the main villages to Paramakatoi?

Mr. Bulkan: The road from Maikwak passes through Red Creek so it is not a road to service only the residents of Red Creek.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 2402200 – Land and Water Transport - Purchase of tractor and trailer: Could the Hon. Minister state when that procurement will be done and under whose command the tractor will be in the North Pakaraimas?

Mr. Bulkan: The equipment will be located at Kato and it will be under the control of the Vice-Chairman as well as the Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO).

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state when the procurement will be done and whether the RDC will have to recruit a driver or operator to operate the tractor?

Mr. Bulkan: The procurement is expected to take place immediately following the approval of these Estimates and I am advised that there are drivers in the Region, so there is no need to recruit any drivers for this equipment.

11.22 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, on a follow-up, I know, at one time, we...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, this is your last follow-up.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that, in the last Administration, drivers were being trained in the North Pakaraimas so I hope that it is one of those trained drivers. However, the question is that, in the procurement of these types of equipment, the tractors and other new ones, they usually take a long time. I would like to advise you on that and there is a possibility that it could go beyond the end of the year if it is not already available in Guyana and if it has to be imported.

Mr. Bulkan: I note the information, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister for his statement and the Hon. Member for his suggestion.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$53,475,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 783 – Educational Delivery – \$44,425,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through you, Mr. Chairman, project code 2402200 – Land and Water Transport - could the Hon. Minister tell us why it is that he is only allocating \$2.3 million for the purchase of a vehicle - I suspect that it is an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) - when I am also... I want to say that he is aware of how difficult it is for the movement of educators in the North Pakaraimas. Maybe this is a fresh start; maybe he is going to put this ATV in that area but it would be insufficient. I would like to recommend that, in 2016, he seek to increase the budget for the procurement of such vehicle to assist the educators in those areas.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I note the comment proffered. Yes, I agree that it is a start.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, under project code 1209100 – Furniture and Equipment - Staff Quarters - could the Hon. Minister state who the occupants of the teachers' quarters in Mahdia are and under whose direction they are occupants in that building? As a follow-up, why is it that teachers are not occupying the teachers' quarters in Mahdia?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the building that was designated for use by the teachers was not habitable and the teachers had to be housed elsewhere whilst the renovation and refurbishment were being effected. Following the completion of the refurbishment, the building would be in a position to accommodate the teaching staff.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up: Is anyone currently occupying the building?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that there are two teachers and they are about to start making use of this building.

Programme: 783 – Educational Delivery – \$44,425,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$ 42,454,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through you, Mr. Chairman, project code 2402200 – Land and Water Transport - could the Hon. Minister tell us what type of vehicles will be bought under this allocation and where they will be placed?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, it caters for the acquisition of two ATVs: one would be based at Bamboo Creek and the other at Kopinang.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, under project code 2504800 - Furniture and Equipment - Health - could the Hon. Minister state whether the Yawong Health Centre is going to be benefiting from Furniture and Equipment and when the Yawong Health Centre will become operational?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes; some of the allocations would be used towards the Yawong Health Centre and it is anticipated that that Health Centre would be operational within one month's time. It also caters for provision of furniture and equipment to the health centres at Monkey Mountain as well as Kurukabaru.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as a follow-up, what type of services would be provided at the Yawong Health Centre?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, a doctor has been advised to be based at that Health Centre.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through you, Mr. Chairman, a follow-up with respect to project code 2402200 – Land and Water Transport: why is it that the ATV will be placed at Bamboo Creek instead of the Health Centre, which is state-of-the-art infrastructure? Bamboo Creek already has two ATVs and Yawong only has one which the Toshao was presented by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. That Health Centre, indeed, is state-of-the-art. You should visit it. They need to use it and they also need emergency transportation there.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, as the Hon. Member knows, Yawong is a stone's throw away from Paramakatoi and I would imagine that, in addition to the Health Centre at Yawong, residents there would also be able to utilise the services of the health facilities at Paramakatoi. The Health Centre at Bamboo Creek also caters for residents at Urubaru, which I am advised is a community of 300 persons.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, it may seem like a stone's throw for a healthy person who will walk up the mountains to Paramakatoi and take 15 to 25 minutes to get there, but, if you are ill, I do not think it could be considered a stone's throw to walk 25 minutes over some huge mountains.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there is a Health Centre at Yawong.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through the Chair, there is a health centre but the Minister needs to be advised that there is no health officer there at the moment. Your advice to this House was that you are hoping to place a doctor there and I feel very good about it.

Mr. Chairman, I have one final question. With respect to project code 2504800 – Furniture and Equipment – Health - could the Hon. Minister tell this House whether he has considered the four volumes of research and recommendations submitted by the Regional Executive Office (REO) with respect to revolutionising the North Pakaraimas and Region 8 with respect to cyberspace and cyber-development? I believe that is the thrust of his documents and his volumes.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the allocation caters for the purchase of furniture and equipment. A detailed list is provided for in Volume 3, reference number 411.

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$ 42,454,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 79 Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$129,628,000

Mr. Charlie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister relate, for the additional five contracted employees that were employed under the programme, their designations and their emoluments?

Mr. Bulkan: The additional employees are Accounts Clerk and Drivers.

Mr. Charlie: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Mr. Chairman, line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I have noticed that there is an increase in the budgetary allocation for line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency - of \$30,549,000. Could the Hon. Minister relate the proposal of the expenditure as it relates to the budgetary allocation?

11.37 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Could I ask the Hon. Member to repeat that question, please?

Mr. Charlie: I repeat, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency: I have noticed that there is an increase of \$30,549,000 in the budgetary allocation for the line item. Could the Hon. Minister relate the proposal of the expenditure as it relates to this budgetary allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: The increase was on the amount that was budgeted in 2014, but the actual expenditure in 2014 is the identical amount that is being budgeted for in 2015. I believe that the revised figure in 2014 was to cater for the payment of stipends to Deputy Toshaos, which was a new feature.

Mr. Croal: Since we are on Region 9, could I ask the Hon. Minister to, first of all, name the Regional Executive Officer for Region 9?

Mr. Bulkan: That would be Mr. Carl Parker.

Mr. Croal: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities: There is an increase of \$1.2 million on subventions to local authorities. Could you, first of all, indicate the reason for the increase and give an overall breakdown of the subvention?

Mr. Bulkan: The increase in the subvention to the local authority, to the National Democratic Council (NDC) in Region 9, was not unique to that NDC. As I related earlier in the allocations from the Ministry, the subventions to all of the NDCs were similarly increased.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state why, under line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency - with Region 9 being such a large Region, only \$30.549 million was budgeted under line item 6211? With the caveat, too, Hon. Minister, that, in the seven Regions that the People's Progressive Party (PPP) has the regional mandate, those Regions have not had increase, but, in the three Regions the Government is running, those Regions have increases?

Mr. Bulkan: The bit of information that I would like to relate to the Hon. Member is that this budgetary provision was arrived at in consultation with the RDC which, as the Hon. Member pointed out, the party, to which he belongs, has a majority.

Mr. Dharamlall: On that same note, the Hon. Minister needs to know, as well, that the...

Mr. Chairman: Are we going to have a back and forth?

Mr. Dharamlall: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Are we dealing with the Estimates?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The RDC had presented a budget that was \$50 million plus under line item 6211 and it has been reduced to \$30.5 million. So, could the Hon. Minister indicate why the RDC's request was not heeded?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position to offer a response to that.

Mr. Croal: Just as a follow-up: could the Hon. Minister indicate if the Regional Executive Officer is present?

Mr. Bulkan: Affirmative, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Croal: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: There is approximately 90% increase. Can you state the reason for this significant increase?

Mr. Bulkan: The increased budgetary provision is largely attributable to the increased rates for electricity in the region.

Mr. Ramson: I have noticed that there is no provision for line items 6251, 6252, 6253, 6254 and 6255, which are roads, bridges, drainage, sea defences and river drainage, *et cetera*. Might I respectfully enquire from the Hon. Minister whether no request had been made from the Region and why there is not a programme for the maintenance of bridges, *et cetera*?

Mr. Bulkan: Perhaps the Hon. Member was absent from the House when a similar question was posed that allocations for maintenance of roads and bridges are not done under that programme head, but under a different programme head.

Mr. Croal: Hon. Minister, you indicated that the increase was because of the increased tariffs. Could you indicate the locations for those electricity charges, the metres?

Mr. Bulkan: This would be in Lethem, Tabatinga, Mocomoco, Culvert City and Saint Ignatius.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281 - Security Services - \$14,217,000: Could the Hon. Minister state the name of the security firm attached to this programme? When was the security contract awarded and how many security guards are attached to this programme?

Mr. Bulkan: The name of the company is Roshan Khan's (RK's) Guyana Security Services. It is a one-year contract entered into on or about November of last year and it caters for about 37 guards.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service - could the Hon. Minister state which vehicles require spares and service currently, how many vehicles are available or serviceable in the Region, and whether the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have access to vehicles?

Mr. Bulkan: The fleet consists of 14 4x4 vehicles, five ATVs, 14 motorcycles and two trucks. The Chairman has access to a 4x4. The Vice-Chairman has nothing at this time.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister state when the Vice-Chairman would have access to a 4x4 vehicle?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position to offer an answer to that at this stage.

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not want to sound repetitive, but the issue of my identity is extremely important. Region 9 is a border region. Could the Hon. Minister state whether consultation has occurred with the residents of Region 9 on the flag of the region?

Mr. Bulkan: Specimens of an emblem of flags were given to each Regional Chairman of our 10 RDCs, inviting their feedback and their response. We are still awaiting the feedback from the Regional Chairman of Region 9.

Ms. Manickchand: Follow-up on that question, Sir: Would the Hon. Minister consider it more inclusive, in terms of the democracy, to have received a sample, rather than to have created, centrally, samples and send them to the regions? That is subject, of course, to opposition, by this side of the House, to any flag in any region and for us to maintain one Golden Arrowhead, the Guyana Flag. But, I would still like the question to be answered.

Mr. Bulkan: We seem to be proceeding along the lines of a debate and I am not so sure that that is what we want to encourage.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Will the Regional Vice-Chairman be allocated sums from under this line item to conduct his work?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that is no.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: A follow-up to my question, Mr. Chairman, through you: What arrangements will be made for the Vice-Chairman to be able to effectively conduct the activities of the mandate entrusted to him for the people of Region 9?

Mr. Bulkan: There is a vehicle that is provided to the Chairman that is shared jointly with him as well as the Vice-Chairman.

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$129,628,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$31,313,000

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - \$7 million: Could the Hon. Minister relate the nature of rehabilitation works to be undertaken and location of the buildings?

Mr. Bulkan: Among other activities, it is to rehabilitate the foot and mouth disease camps. These would be located at Saurabo and Gomes Crossing.

11.52 p.m.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: An additional three persons were employed. Could the Hon. Minister relate the designations of the employees and their remuneration?

Mr. Bulkan: That would be two Labourers and one Cleaner. The remuneration is not available at this time but could be provided subsequently.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): With the importance of agriculture in Region 9, could the Hon. Minister state why a bigger budget was not proposed for training in Region 9?

Mr. Bulkan: I will like to thank the Hon. Member for that observation. I will be the first to confess that the budgetary allocation for the agriculture programme is inadequate and measly. In fact, if we look at the allocations across the two prior years it will show that it is considerably less. Nonetheless, it is the anticipation and expectation of the administration that considerably more resources will be directed toward promoting agriculture in Region 9, and this allocation would be improved upon in subsequent budgets.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$31,313,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$114,181,000

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: The allocation is \$23,754,000. Could the Hon. Minister state the names of the buildings to undergo maintenance work, the location, present physical condition of buildings and, to be specific, the nature of maintenance works which has to be executed?

Mr. Bulkan: I believe it will be more effective if the Hon. Member receives this information in writing. I undertake to so do.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister, under the heading “Maintenance of Infrastructure”, line items 6251 and 6252, provide this Assembly with an update on where these activities will be executed?

Mr. Bulkan: With regard to bridges, these will be at Yurora, Yupukari and Mocomoco. For the road repairs, these will be at Lethem, St Ignatius and Culvert City.

Mr. Dharamlall: It is as a follow-up. Are those contracts already tendered? If they are, have the village councils tendered for works and have the village councils been considered to be provided with contracts to execute these works?

Mr. Bulkan: These works have not yet been tendered for but it is expected to be done shortly. Local contractors, of course, will be encouraged to bid for those contracts.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$114,181,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$690,651,000

Mr. Ramson: Could the Hon. Minister please explain, since the coalition Government promised to prioritise education...

Mr. Chairman: Hon Member, would you simply get the Minister to answer your question.

Mr. Ramson: I am doing that, Sir. This is in relation to line item 6242, Maintenance of Building. Could the Hon. Minister please explain the 1,300% decrease from \$50 million to \$4 million for “Maintenance of Buildings” in relation to education, since the coalition Government has promised to prioritise education and Indigenous people’s affairs?

Mr. Bulkan: I thank the Hon. Member for his question and for the observation. Unfortunately, and regrettably, I am not in a position to offer an explanation at this time.

Mr. Charlie: A follow-up Mr. Chairman. I too am very disappointed, being the geographic...

Mr. Chairman: You are following up. I understand that people are following up all the time. A follow-up means that you did the first question... We are in danger of spending time making points rather than asking questions.

Mr. Charlie: My question is pertaining to this particular line item.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Charlie: A budgetary allocation was submitted by the Regional Democratic Council to the tune of \$31.875 million which catered for maintenance of buildings at Kwatamang Teachers' Quarters, Arapaima Nursery School, Macusi Primary School, Quarry Headmaster/mistress Quarters, R25 Officers' Quarters and Arapaima Primary School. I do not know, Mr. Chairman, if this is an oversight. If it is, can it be rectified?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I stand by the comment I have made earlier.

Mr. Ramson: It is just a follow-up. If the Minister is saying that he is unable...

Mr. Chairman: The Speaker must do that. I notice that Members have adopted the practice this afternoon and into tonight of simply seizing the mic and continuing to speak.

Mr. Ramson: My apologies, Sir. It is an old cross-examination habit. Could the Hon. Minister please explain, if he has no information to share in relation to the 1,300% decrease, when would he be in a position to share that information with this Assembly?

Mr. Bulkan: I undertake to ascertain what the circumstances are leading to the budgeted sum and to communicate with Members on the opposite side.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, could the Hon. Minister say whether the \$4.857 million will be allocated to rehabilitate the Headmaster/mistress' quarters in Shulinab? This is one of the issues that has come to the front within the last two months.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that question is no.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It is just to add that I will recommend that this matter be looked at in the 2016 budget among all the others that have been mentioned.

Mr. Bulkan: Duly noted Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Manickchand: May I, Sir? Mr. Chairman, I notice in line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is an increase in 11 contracted employees. Could you kindly tell this Assembly, Hon. Minister, if any of these new persons were hired in the last four months?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that none of these appointments were effected within the last four months.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292, Dietary, \$67,855,000: Could you kindly tell us, Sir, if this is catering for the expanded school feeding programme, which was announced by the administration, that is going to replace the “Because We Care” cash grant?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, this allocation is for hot meals at the four dorms.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, pardon me for going back to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings. I will like to ask the Hon. Minister if this oversight is a deliberate attempt not to develop the Amerindian villages.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister is not obliged to answer that question. Hon. Members must restrain, what appears to be a natural tendency,... It is much to be regretted that we do that, in this chamber, when we are discussing matters we consider to be very important.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through you Mr. Chairman, line item 6284, Other, could the Hon. Minister tell us what expenditure is going to be incurred under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, that would be payment to Sweeper/Cleaners, stipends to Voluntary Service Officers (VSOs) and other temporary staff.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6292, Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly whether \$67,855,000 is adequate for the dietary supplies to the dormitories? Is he satisfied with this? There had been heavy criticism on the amounts provided, by the previous Government, by this now Government.

12.07 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the budgetary allocation is adequate at this stage. I am further advised that a number of parents actually contribute their traditional staples towards the dietary needs of the students at these four dorms.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up on this. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly by what means the parents of the North Pakaraimas, who have children at Sand Creek, are able to deliver traditional dietary supplies to their students? It is that when we know that they may not even be able to come to visit them during the term, due to the distance, the logistics and the vulnerabilities.

Mr. Bulkan: I did not say all of the parents, but some of the parents.

Programme: 794 - Education Delivery - \$690,651,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 795 - Health Services - \$261,906,000

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Hon. Minister, I noticed that the \$22,001,000 has been put aside for drugs and medical as has been done in all the regions and you have explained this earlier of this “fresh approach”. However Sir, my dilemma is this that when we did Region 8, Health Services, under the same line item 6221, Region 8 with a much smaller population, it was allocated \$22,469,000. Region 9 with a population that is much larger with fifty-something villages has only been allocated \$22,000,000 for drugs and medical supplies. I believe this is a major concern.

I have asked you, Sir, about the other allocations, and other Members of this side, but the Region 9 allocation for drugs and medical supplies is the most disturbing of all, as it is the lowest of all ten regions in a situation where Region 9, in comparison to Region 8, is not having the smallest population. Could the Minister please be advised if he is willing to increase this in order to ensure that the Region 9 population are not disadvantaged?

Mr. Bulkan: Perhaps it is a case where the residents of Region 9 are healthier.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, this is a serious point that I am raising. I am not being facetious, Hon. Member, but I am deeply concerned. I have listened to the Minister’s argument all day about the way in which the Government is proposing to deal with the regional health services and regional drugs and medical supplies, but he cannot be facetious and say that people in Region 9 are healthier.

The fact is that this has not been an issue with any other region and Region 9 population is larger than Region 8. How can Region 9 drugs and medical supplies be less than Region 8, Sir? This is very serious issue, so I am asking the Minister if he could please ascertain, because he has said here that the RDCs put up these proposals. Is the Minister telling me that the RDCS put up this proposal for drugs and medical supplies and it was most frugal and modest of all 10 Regions?

Mr. Bulkan: If the Hon. Member is suggesting that I have indicated that the RDCs determine the allocations, that is not so. The RDCs are engaged and they are involved in making

submissions but they do not determine what are the budgetary allocations or proposals. It is done by the Ministry of Finance and the sector Ministries.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I am appealing to you this matter is so critical and urgent, that I am asking that the Minister may pause and clarify with the Director of Budget and the Ministry of Finance as to whether this is an oversight or a typographical error. It cannot go through this House without some explanation other than selling that the people of Region 9 are healthier than anywhere else.

Programme: 795 - Health Services - \$261,906,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$21,500,000

Mr. Charlie: Project 2402300, Land Transport, allocation sum \$6,000,000: Could the Hon. Minister relate what type of vehicles that will be purchased and which department within the programme the vehicles will be assigned?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for the purchase of two ATV, one to be based at Sand Creek and one for the Regional Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Charlie: Project 2402400, Water Transport, allocation \$2 million: Could the Hon. Minister provide details of the boat and engine that will be purchased, in terms of type, length, what horsepower, engine and for which sub district does the budgetary allocation cater for?

Mr. Bulkan: That would be for a 24-foot boat with a 15-horsepower outboard engine and it is to be based at Karasabai.

Programme: 791 - Ministry Administration and Finance - \$21,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$11,295,000

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$11,295,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 793 - Public Works - \$76,964,000

Mr. Charlie: Project 1100900, Bridges, allocation \$17,764,000: Could the Hon. Minister provide the list of bridges that will undergo construction, nature of works and location of bridges?

Mr. Bulkan: It is only for two bridges. It is for the completion of the bridge at Sand Creek and the construction of one at Wichabai.

Mr. Charlie: Project 1401300, Roads: Could the Minister provide the nature of road works - which village community and sub district are the roads located and what overall kilometre of roads will be upgraded and what nature?

Mr. Bulkan: I thank the Hon. Member for his question. The information is provided for in Volume 3, capital projects profile, reference number 419, and the nature of the works is Double Bituminous Surface Treatment (DBST).

Programme: 793 - Public Works - \$76,964,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.22 a.m.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$40,100,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through you, Mr. Chairman, Project 2402300, Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister advise this House whether the purchase of vehicle is intended for any community to assist in the transportation of schoolchildren? It is bearing in mind that in the just concluded debate on the budget speech, the Minister within the Ministry of Communities assured this House that children will no longer have to walk because they will be provided with transportation to the schools.

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for the provision of a 4x4 pickup to be used in the monitoring of schools throughout Region 9.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Through you, Mr. Chairman, a follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister advise when the programme for expanding school transportation for children for the hinterland will be effected?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position to provide a definitive answer to that question.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$40,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$31,100,000

Mr. Charlie: Line item 2402300, Land Transport, allocation sum \$9,000,000: Could the Hon. Minister relate the type of vehicle to be purchased and where this vehicle will be assigned under this programme?

Mr. Bulkan: It is to cater for the purchase of a pickup to be used at Lethem and an ATV at Gunns.

Mr. Seeraj: Hon. Minister, overall I notice the capital expenditure for this region has been reduced by some \$126,000,000 from 2014 appropriation. Under this particular head, Health Services, Project 1204800, Buildings – Health, I have also noticed a reduction here of the rehabilitation of hospitals. Sir, could you tell me if this new amount of \$15.1 million will be adequate to cover for the repairs and rehabilitation of the hospitals in this region?

Mr. Bulkan: Perhaps for the last time for this evening I will make mention of the fact that the capital programme for capital works in all ten of our regions has been a victim of the act of prorogation.

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, Sir, the question is that if the Minister is comfortable that the amount allocated is adequate enough to cover for the repairs and rehabilitation of the hospitals in the region, given the reduction which I am talking about. The capital expenditure is being reduced by \$126,000,000.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think that question was asked several times this evening and all of us heard that question asked by different Members of the National Assembly. You are asking it again.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you very much, Sir, but this is the first time we are examining Region 9.

Mr. Rohee: Project 2505300, Furniture and Equipment – Health: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the purchase of furniture and equipment be open to public tender and whether Precision Furniture Woodworking would be one of the bidders for this tender?

Mr. Bulkan: I referred the Hon. Member to reference number 428 in the capital profile and it lists all of the items to be acquired under this allocation and it will show that it is all mainly

medical equipment, in addition to fans, water dispensers and stoves. The process of acquisition will be via the public tendering process.

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$31,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/ Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$160,992,000

Bishop Edghill: I am sorry that at this hour of the morning I have to be the one asking the questions. Sir, certainly this region is not one that will suffer from cuts because it has additional, so we will have to have some explanations.

Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase and what would these sums be expended on?

Mr. Bulkan: Some of the activities that would account for the increase would be the increase stipends to Amerindian councils, namely the Toshoas from \$20,000 to \$30,000. There is an addition of payments to the Deputy Toshoas, which is a new feature, of \$15,000, as well as senior councillors. It includes also for travelling and outreaches by the Regional Chairman, as well as members of the RDC.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6281, Security Services: We see that there is a significant increase to \$24,388,000. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the contractor that provides these services, the buildings that are to be secured and when was this contract engaged and when will it be matured?

Mr. Bulkan: The provider is Home Safe Security. It is a one-year contract entered into late last year. The increased allocations are as a result of the higher rates which were referred to on several occasions, earlier today.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: I see there is hefty sum of \$4.4 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this, please?

Mr. Bulkan: This is as a result of payments to the Personal Officer who is now receiving commuted allowance.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service: I see there is an amount of \$1.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many vehicles this is going to service?

Mr. Bulkan: This caters for a serviceable fleet of five vehicles.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: I see there is \$2.6 million. Could the Hon. Minister give me a list of the vehicles so that we can look at it?

Mr. Bulkan: That allocation is not only for vehicles but it also includes for activities for the monthly payment of salaries in the Berbice River as well as monitoring of recurrent projects in the Berbice River, procurement and transporting of supplies, and that would be on a monthly basis, and increased monitoring of development projects throughout the region.

Mr. Neendkumar: After my colleague have asked the question about this hefty amount in line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency, I notice, under line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence, here there is another total of \$4.2 million. Could the Minister tell me what this part is for and who are the beneficiaries?

12.37 p.m.

Mr Bulkan: It caters for transportation costs as well as subsistence for the Personnel Officer, Procurement Officer, Accounts Clerk and the District Development Officer (DDO), during the execution of their duties as well as for the procurement of supplies in Georgetown and also in relation to the submission of payroll information and the monitoring of projects.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line Item 6272 -Electricity Charges: I notice electricity charges is a meagre \$500,000. Could the Minister explain this?

Mr. Bulkan: There was actually a fairly substantial credit that was brought forward from last year that accounts for the small allocation for 2015.

Mr. Neendkumar: Noting that the Hon. Minister is speaking about a fairly substantial credit that was brought forward from last year, I want this Nation to note that at Programme: 801-Regional Administration and Finance, I am seeing that more than \$20 million was allocated for the sector. I would like to know how we can justify this.

Mr. Bulkan: We are dealing with Electricity Charges and I have offered an answer.

Mr. Neendkumar: No, I went on to ask another question. I am saying that under Programme 801 – Regional Administration and Finance, there is more than \$20 million allocated. I do not mind that you want to be happy and Region 9 is suffering, Amerindian people have a right too.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, Programme: 801 is a programme head, there is no line item 801.

Mr. Hamilton: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees ...

Mr. Chairman: If the Hon. Member wants to speak, the Hon. Member should request the Chair to permit him to speak. Could we try again?

Mr. Hamilton: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Whilst the Personnel went down by one, the sum has increased by some \$800,000. Could the Minister explain?

Mr. Bulkan: The observation is correct, but the increased sum is actually marginal and it would have resulted from the salary increases that would have been paid.

Mr. Hamilton: Line Item 6312 - Subventions to Local Authorities: Could the Hon. Minister indicate, what are the local authorities that subvention of \$9 million will be going to?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for subventions to the Sub-Office at Ituni which caters for the community library. It is for the payment of security, telephone, electricity as well as for an Overseer and a Typist at the Kwakwani Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC).

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what functions that one Contract Employee carried out and when did they resign, retire or was dismissed from this service?

Mr. Bulkan: This information would have to be provided at a later stage.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: When I had raised the issue just now that in 2015 it is \$500,000, the Hon. Minister said that he had a big brought forward. I want to draw to his attention that in 2014 was \$495,000, so where did he get this big brought forward from? I do not appreciate this answer. He must justify this better to me. He did not have a big brought forward, where did he get the amount from?

Mr. Bulkan: Actually, it was a reoccurring amount that was brought forward from as long ago as 2011.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, before you put the question, just for the sake of clarification. The Minister is indicating that there is a credit that is brought forward. We noticed that in 2013 the actual expenditure for this programme was \$98,000. Budgeted in 2014, it was \$500,000, but we actually paid out \$495,000. If there was a credit, we cannot be paying out. It is not a debt it is a credit, you told us.

Mr. Chairman: Does the Hon. Minister wish to respond?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes. Just one minute please, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Mr. Bulkan: An explanation would have to be provided at a later stage.

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$160,992,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$126,554,000

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister indicate where these works are to be undertaken and the anticipated sums for each project?

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to undertake to provide this information to the Hon. Member in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: I notice a hefty sum of \$6 million. Could the Hon. Minister let us know the numbers of these vehicles and to whom these vehicles are located?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for vehicles assigned to the Public Works Department attached to the main Regional Democratic Council's (RDs) Office and it includes two double-cab pick-ups, as well as a dredge and a back hoe.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line Item 6231– Fuel and Lubricants: I notice again here there is \$5,600,000 allocated. Could the Minister tell us something about this huge sum?

Mr. Bulkan: It is also for the fleet of vehicles. It caters for site visits; project monitoring and evaluation for the generator, grader, Bobcat; and for the operations of these equipment.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line Item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: I see we have \$22 million allocated here. Could the Minister tell me which roads will be maintained and what quality of work he expects? Is the Minister doing asphalt roads?

Mr. Bulkan: These are for roads in Linden and it is for asphalt roads – roughly 700 metres of roads.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister tell me which roads in Linden, the streets must have names?

Mr. Bulkan: That would be Casuarina Drive and Alstrom Alley.

Mr. Neendkumar: Is there any money for the Linden/Kwakwani Road? It is in a miserable state and I am concerned about the people in Ituni and Kwakwani and right up.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer is not under this heading.

Mr. Neendkumar: Is there any allocation for roads in Kwakwani?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I appreciate the questions you want, but we must move on. You have two other questions to ask.

12.52 a.m.

Bishop Edghill: Line Item 6321 – Fuel and Lubricants - \$5,500,000, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if there would be an adequate process of monitoring expenditure as it relates to fuel because of the continual complains of what is taking place in the Region as it relates to fuel?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes, there is an adequate system in place.

Mr. Neendkumar: At line item 6255- Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, I see that there is a hefty sum of \$12 million, could the Hon. Minister let us know what the infrastructure projects are that he would be spending this money on and for each of them, what would be the cost?

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to respectfully suggest to the Hon. Member that this information would be provided in writing by tomorrow.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$126,554,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,734,765,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6272- Electricity Charges: There is a figure of \$4,966,000, Hon. Member, having gone through all 10 regions; we are on the last region now. I wish to ask how is it that this region's electricity charges are so low as compared to other regions. Region 10's electricity charges for all the four heads is approximately \$6.8 million. We have just finished Region 9 for the electricity charges for their heads and it is \$32 million.

Could the Hon. Minister please explain what the contributing factor is for the very extraordinary low electricity charges for Region 10 totalling \$6.8 million? This includes the \$4.9 million electricity charges for Education Delivery, which is in fact the highest amount in the entire region?

Mr. Bulkan: The sums payable arose from a function of two factors, these being, consumption times the tariff and that would determine the sums payable.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to just remind the House that there is a subsidy in this Budget that is being presented for a \$3 billion subsidy to Linden for electricity. At line item 6222 - Field Material and Supplies: Of course, this region does not have the difficulty of reduction like the other regions, they have increases. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what is responsible for this increase and the items to be procured under this line?

Mr. Bulkan: It is to cater for the provision of teaching and learning materials, to enhance the delivery of education in schools as well as to secure items for the science labs at the seven secondary schools, and items for the home economics departments.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: There is a 50 plus per cent increase in expenditure for 2015. Of course, we heard all of the things about how prorogation has hindered the allocations. With a 50% increase here, could the Hon. Minister tell us what are the other infrastructures that are to be maintained, where they are to be located and the estimated cost per item?

Mr. Bulkan: If the Hon. Member was paying any attention to the explanation that was offered in relation to the effects and the deleterious impacts of prorogation, it had to do with the capital. We are examining current...

Bishop Edghill: I do not need a lecture from the Hon. Member. I need an answer to the question.

Mr. Bulkan: We are examining Current Expenditure for which the prorogation did not have an impact on. The other infrastructure that would be maintained under this allocation has to do with works on sanitary, as well as recreational facilities, and for schools all across the region.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to ask the Hon. Member to lay over a document so that we can know and follow what is taking place. My question was where; not in vague terms across the Regions because there are several schools and educational institutions in the region and the amount. I would be happy to have that lay over.

At line item 6292- Dietary - \$47.6 million: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House what are the expenses to be incurred here? Where and how many persons are going to be the beneficiaries of this expenditure?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for provisions for the two dorms, one at Kwakwani and the other at Amelias ward. These are for students from outlining areas.

Bishop Edghill: I ask for the number of beneficiaries as well. The dorms must have a number of how many students are in the dorms.

Mr. Bulkan: The total is 163 students.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like to draw to the Hon. Minister's attention that at both the Kwakwani dorms and the dorms in Linden, there are always serious problems with children not getting milk, sugar, and the quality of food. Is the Government going to ensure that they get those now? The regional administrators know that I have made representation for this time and time again.

Mr. Ramson: At line item 6281 - Security Service: Could the Hon. Minister explain the 70% increase for security services from \$89 million to \$150 million? At line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Despite the reduction in the number of contracted employee, we had an increase of \$8 million. For line item 6111 – Administrative, we have had an increase of \$130million odd. I am taking these together in the interest of time.

Mr. Bulkan: The increased security charges are as a result of the increase rates.

Mr. Ramson: What are the rates?

Mr. Bulkan: The rates moved from \$150 to \$300 per hour. Can I implore the Hon. Member to come not so hard and fast with his questions; if he can repeat the questions?

Mr. Ramson: Under line item 6116 –Contracted Employees: We have had a reduction in the number of Contracted Employee, but there was a correlating increase of \$8 million. Since they are under the same sub-head, which is line item 6111 – Administrative, could the Hon. Minister explain the increase of almost \$130 million under the figure of Admin?

Mr. Bulkan: In the case of line item 6116 – Contracted Employee, the staff reductions were for a number of two, but the increased to allocation is as a result of the 8% increase in salaries. This is what accounted for the increased figure.

In the case of line item 6111 - Administrative, the increased staffing, there was an upgrade in the categories of existing staff and there were new appointments at the level of trained graduate teachers and trained grade one class teachers that would have accounted for the increased budgetary allocation.

Mr. Neendkumar: The Staffing Details at line items 6112 – Senior Technical, I have noticed that there is an increase of only one, but when I look at the line item there is an increase of approximately \$60 million. Can we have an explanation for this?

Mr. Bulkan: That would have been as a result of an upgrade at the level of the staff under that heading.

Mr. Neendkumar: I find this difficult to understand. It is really difficult to look at the percentage.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have your last question to ask.

Mr. Neendkumar: In respect to line item 6264 – Vehicles Spares and Service, I see that the Hon. Minister has \$3.3 million. I would like to know the amount of vehicles because when I look at line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricant, I see that there is a hefty sum of \$6 million.

Mr. Bulkan: It is for a fleet of four vehicles, in addition to two ATVs, a boat and engine and one canter truck.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,734,765,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

1.07 p.m.

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$417,569,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Staffing Details, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, I have noticed that there was an increase during 2014 to 2015 by four, but when I look at the salary, at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, I see that there is a more than \$8 million increase in salaries. Is there an explanation for this?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for four new staff and the destinations are; two midwives, one Clinic Attendant and one Stats Clerk.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: For this programme there is a \$115 million increase, but under this line item alone, there is a 1400% increase from \$7 million to \$98 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House if this is to satisfy all the needs for the McKenzie Hospital, the Upper Demerara Hospital, the Kwakwani Hospital and all the health centres in the Berbice River and in the Amerindian communities - 58 Miles, 47 Miles?

Mr. Bulkan: It is not for all of the health facilities in the Region, but it is for Upper Demerara Hospital and health centres.

Bishop Edghill: So are we to understand that the Linden Hospital Complex is taken care of separately, apart from this allocation here.

Mr. Bulkan: That is correct Hon. Member.

Bishop Edghill: A follow up question: How much of it is already spent for the year?

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to undertake to provide these details at a later stage.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) - \$6,141,000 for the year, could the Hon. Minister tell us who is to be trained, where this training is to take place, when this training would be conducted and what type of training it is.

Mr. Bulkan: The training is in the areas of dental, environmental, as well as for an Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI).

Mr. Hamilton: Just some clarification: I heard the Minister indicating that the \$100 million for drugs and medical supplies is to supply the Upper Demerara Hospital, which are the Wismar Hospital and the health centres, the Linden Hospital Complex and the Kwakwani Hospital. Where the drugs and medical supplies will be coming from?

Mr. Bulkan: That is not catered for under this Programme: 804 – Health Services, which is before us.

Mr. Hamilton: We were told this morning that the new dispensation is a regionalisation of drugs and medical supplies, procured and purchased in the specific regions. Therefore, I am advised that in the case of Region 10, the Minister is saying that that new dispensation does not follow. Therefore, just for clarification, I am trying to ascertain from the Minister, who or where drugs and medical supplies will be procured from for the Linden Hospital Complex and the Kwakwani Hospital.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Hamilton: I asked Hon Minister, why the distinction in Region 10, where you have a two crown approach and in all the other regions you have budgeted sums.

Mr. Bulkan: The hospital in question has always been managed by the Ministry of Health. It is an inherited situation that continues up until now. Going forward, I cannot guarantee that it would remain this way or if it would be rationalised in keeping with what the Hon. Member has alluded to.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have one other question and then I shall put the question.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I really wanted to solicit your assistance in getting answers. Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: I see there is \$889,000. If you look at the Programme that we just left, Programme: 803 – Education Delivery, it is \$4.9 million. So when I look at the comparison, I would like to ask for a further explanation. I know that the electricity cost on the East Bank of the River is higher than on the West Bank of the River. I would like a breakdown to see where money is being paid, particular nearly \$5 million and hear why we paying this difference in electricity. It is a serious indictment, Mr. Chairman. I am begging you to please let us get a fair explanation.

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation before us is for a sum of \$889,000 representing electricity charges, mainly for the hinterland and riverine health centres.

Bishop Edghill: I do not mean to prolong this, but the Hon. Minister, if he knows the geography of Guyana, the hinterland and riverine health centres are not on a grid where the Government could be paying electricity charges. They are either solar powered or generator driven, which would come under Fuel and Lubricants.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, please, as a follow up. These answers are unacceptable in all fairness.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the hinterland health facilities are powered by solar power as well as generators. So, of course, there are no running costs for the solar power, but there will be costs for those that are powered by generators.

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$417,569,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$28,500,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 2406200 – Land and Water Transport, \$11.5 million has been allocated for the purchase of a vehicle or vehicles and outboard engines. I would like to know how many vehicles, where they are going to be assigned, how many outboard engines would be purchased or if we could have a breakdown of the \$11.5 million expenditure - what is for vehicles, what is for engines and how many vehicles.

Mr. Bulkan: There is an outboard engine for the Demerara River at a cost of \$1.5 million; there are two double-cab vehicles for the RDC Main Office as well as the Kwakwani Office for a cost of \$8 million; and there is a four-wheel drive minibus for the RDC Main Office. This is to transport councillors to meetings and to visit projects. It is at an estimated cost of \$2 million. The two double-cab vehicles are for use by the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like to draw to the Hon. Minister's attention that the outboard engine for the Berbice River was lying somewhere on West Coast and I do not know whether it has finished being repairing. I would like to know what happened to that engine and further, how much horsepower does this outboard engine has which the Government is buying and if they have the boat to carry it.

Mr. Bulkan: It has 75 horsepower and yes, there is a boat.

1.22 a.m.

Bishop Edghill: I thank the Hon. Member for the information provided. Under this particular Programme: 801 that we are looking at, there is a \$21 million increase over 2014.

Under project code 2505500 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration, there is a \$10 million allocation. Could the Hon. Member give to this House a breakdown of how the money is to be spent, what is to be purchased and for where?

Mr. Bulkan: I can undertake to provide this information, in writing, to the Hon Member.

Mr. Rohee: Follow-up: With respect to the purchase of furniture and equipment, just for reaffirmation, would the process to be followed be in accordance with the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board procedure, and would one of the companies bidding for the contract be the Precision Woodworking Limited?

Mr. Bulkan: The method of procurement is by open tender procurement procedures.

Mr. Neendkumar: I notice that, in 2013, \$2,096, 000 was budgeted and, in 2014, \$2,500,000 was budgeted. We have just built a new school, which had serious problems, and that school is fully furnished. What I would like to know then is: what will the \$10 million that is budgeted under purchase of furniture and equipment buy? I heard the name Precision Woodworking Limited being mentioned. I hope it does not get the contract. I would like to know what type of furniture will be purchased, how many and where they will be put?

Mr. Bulkan: There seems to be a fixation with a particular company and I would urge the Hon. Members to stay away and to steer clear from that subject because they would not want that to be examined in its entirety.

Programme: 801 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$28,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$96,257,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1902200 – Agricultural Development – Provision for excavation and desilting of creeks: Could the Hon. Minister provide greater clarification and data with respect to the creeks that are to be excavated and desilted, their locations, whether they are in

the Gazetteer and whether there is a preferred company or whether they will be sole sourcing with respect to the company to do this operation?

Mr. Bulkan: It is for two areas: Fairs Rust and Block 22, Ice Water. It will be an open tender process.

Mr. Rohee: I am interested in knowing whether these creeks could be found in the publication known as the Gazetteer published by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the answer to that is yes.

Mr. Dharamlall: Follow-up: The creeks are supposed to be natural waterways. Have the requisite permits been secured from the relevant authorities and bodies in this regard?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position to answer that question.

Bishop Edghill: Under project code 2404800 - Land and Water Transport – Purchase of vehicles and equipment - from the legend, I discovered that we are proposing that one of the vehicles to be purchased is a grader, which is highly commendable. Would the Hon. Minister indicate to this House if the grader will be used for the maintaining of the Linden to Kwakwani road and the road from Linden to Mabura Hill 47 Miles?

Mr. Bulkan: For the first of the two roads, the grader will be used to effect maintenance works, that is the Kwakwani as well as in addition to Coomacka and Ituni. It is not envisaged that the grader will be used for works to the Mabura road or up to 47 Miles, but the other priority areas would be the road in the direction of Three Friends, Rockstone/Anarika, Old England and Yawrabo.

Bishop Edghill: I welcome this development of the purchase of a grader for the maintenance of roads but I am aware that there is already a grader in the Region, working on the very same roads that the Hon. Minister identified. Will the new grader be bought to replace the one that is there? Is the grader that is in the Region defunct or are we adding to the capacity? I would like to know.

Bulkan: It would be the latter - adding to the fleet.

Mr. Neendkumar: While it is heartening to hear that another grader will be purchased, for us to maintain the Kwakwani to Linden trail, we need much more than a grader. We will need

to get capping and materials. Where are we going to get them and what will be the use because we cannot grade the road and carry it down all of the time? That is the problem with the road. Could the Minister say where he will get the material and the moneys to get the material to grade?

Mr. Chairman: Is the Minister inclined to offer an answer to this question?

Mr. Bulkan: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Neendkumar: So, it will be a white elephant or it will do private work.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$96,257,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$69,600,000

Bishop Edghill: Here again I would like to welcome the fact that prorogation did not affect the increase in capital works in this Region. There is an increase in the moneys allocated for education delivery. Under project code 2404300 – Land and Water Transport, \$15,900,000 is allocated for the purchase of boats, outboard engines and vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister indicate how many vehicles, how many outboard engines, how many boats and the expenditure allocated to each item?

Mr. Bulkan: There is an enclosed canter truck at an estimated cost of \$6 million and that is for the main RDC office. There are two ATVs, one for the main office and the other at Kwakwani at an estimated cost of \$5.4 million. There is a 150HP outboard engine to be based at Kwakwani at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million and a 21-foot boat with cover to be used with the outboard engine at an estimated cost of \$2 million. Total cost is \$15.9 million.

Bishop Edghill: Project code 2505400 – Furniture and Equipment – Education: There is an allocation of \$13.5 million for purchase of furniture and equipment for schools as compared to \$12,475,000 in 2014. There is an increase here also. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is to be procured and who will be the beneficiaries as it relates to this expenditure?

Mr. Bulkan: I undertake to provide this information, in writing, to the Hon. Member early in the morning.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$69,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$45,900,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 2403500 – Land and Water Transport – Health - Purchase of vehicle: Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what vehicle is being purchased, whether there is not a vehicle already in this programme and what the additional vehicle is for?

1.37 a.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, it is to cater for the purchase of one 4x4 and it is to be able to effect outreaches.

Bishop Edghill: Could you answer the other part of the question?

Mr. Bulkan: I am sorry, Hon. Member. Could I ask you to repeat the second part of the question, please?

Bishop Edghill: Is there a vehicle already in the health programme and what will this new vehicle be assigned to do?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, yes, there is another vehicle but it is in a very unsatisfactory condition and it is very unreliable.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, could I ask whether this vehicle will be under a direct management of the Regional Health Officer (RHO) or the REO?

Mr. Bulkan: That would be the former.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to be helpful to this House. I am hearing that this vehicle is in a state of despair. I would like to bring to your attention that, in 2013, an allocation of \$14.2 million was allocated for Land and Water Transport and \$15 million was allocated in 2014. So, it is a case where this particular programme is well capitalised and they are now having another vehicle for \$9 million.

Mr. Bulkan: It is not the same type of vehicle, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, I am intrigued by the provision for health centres and incinerators. Could the Hon. Minister provide us, at this point in time, not tomorrow, Thursday or Friday, with details in respect to the specifications of these incinerators? Of the

\$18 million that is budgeted, how much would be allocated for the incinerators to be attached to the two health centres? I think there are five incinerators budgeted for. I would like to have some more information, Mr. Chairman, since incinerator is a very intriguing subject.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up on the same project code: could Mr. Minister clarify whether the incinerators that are to be built would be built based on the advice and specification given to the regional health services in Region 10 by the Pan American Health Organization (PHAO)? If I may back up, we have had the issue where incinerators were not built to the specification and design in the past and so I am seeking to clarify whether the incinerators to be built would be built based on the specification and classification that PHAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) have recommended?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the question posed by the second Hon. Member: I can confirm that yes, as outlined by him, specifications provided by PHAO and WHO would be used. The question posed by the first Member on the five incinerators: the estimated unit cost for each incinerator is \$1.2 million.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, in terms of the architectural design, is it envisaged that, for these incinerators, local persons would be contracted and how would they be contracted to design and build these incinerators?

Mr. Bulkan: No. The design will be supplied and the construction would be undertaken locally.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, under the same project code, could the Minister say whether these incinerators would be double burn incinerators and what type of medical waste would be disposed using these incinerators?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the material to be incinerated would be not from the hospitals, but from the health posts and health centres. With regard to the technical design and specifications of these incinerators, I am not in a position to provide the Hon. Member with that information.

Mr. Rohee: These incinerators could post environmental hazards, especially if hazardous waste is dumped and incinerated there. I would like to have the assurance that the incinerators will indeed be used to dispose of hazardous waste and that human habitation around these incinerators will be very far away.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the waste that is being incinerated originates from our health centres and it would hardly be envisaged that the health centres would want to contribute to placing the health of the residents at risk and to be able to place an additional burden on those health centres. I would like to assure the Hon. Member that the considerations that he has posed have been taken into account.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, project code: 2505600 – Furniture and Equipment – Health – Education: Under this heading, some of the items, I think, for purchase would be new neonatal defibrillators, ultrasound machines, audiometers and so forth. Could we get the quantity and where they would be placed?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the complete details can and will be provided to the Hon. Member.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$45,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we have completed examination of your items and we thank you for your assistance.

Agency: 25 Ministry of Business

Current Expenditure

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration - \$78,473,000

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister look at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees? There are 24. Could he indicate to the House whether the total number of employees is 40 and whether they are new persons or persons working within the Ministry of what we had then, Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce?

Minister of Business [Mr. Gaskin]: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. There are no new employees in this 40.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister, all the employees accounted for employees transferred from the old programme.

The other question, Mr. Minister, is based on line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings. Could you indicate which building we are speaking about?

Mr. Gaskin: Mr. Chairman, the building in question would be the head office on South Road as well as the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia.

Mr. Hamilton: Minister, could you confirm, just for the record, that the Ministry of Business's office and the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce's office are in the same building?

Mr. Gaskin: The Ministry of Business will be occupying the building formerly occupied by the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce on South Road.

Mr. Hamilton: Could you, Mr. Minister, state where the Ministry of Business is presently located?

Mr. Gaskin: It is on South Road, in the building formerly occupied by the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce.

Mr. Hamilton: I am just seeking some clarity before I ask the question. Is the Ministry of Tourism in the same building or not?

Mr. Gaskin: It is not.

Mr. Hamilton: I wanted to ask a question about line item 6272 - Electricity Charges. The sum allocated is \$11,612,000. Could you advise us how...because when you look at 2013 and 2014, there is no sum there. How is it that the Ministry came by the allocation that is reflected in 2015?

1.52 p.m.

Mr. Gaskin: Mr. Chairman, the amount of \$11,612,000 represents the electricity charges for the months of September to December of 2015 for the Ministry of Business' headquarters in the South Road building as well as the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia. And, it was arrived at on the basis of the previous year's charges.

Mr. Hamilton: Could you say that the same can be said of the line item 6281 – Security Services?

Mr. Gaskin: What do you mean by "same"?

Mr. Hamilton: If you look at line item 6281, that also does not have an amount allocated there in 2013 and 2014. So, the question is: how are you able to reflect \$12.528 million?

Mr. Gaskin: The amount of \$12,518,000 represents the security services for the period September to December, 2015 for the Ministry of Business' headquarters in South Road as well as the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister, so, the determination is based on what transpired from January to August. Were you able to come to the figures based on what transpired in the past eight months? That is what I am trying to find out.

Mr. Gaskin: Yes, this was based on what transpired in the previous months.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6284 – Other - \$2.178 million: Could you indicate what activity that would be going towards?

Mr. Gaskin: This amount caters for the creation of the Ministry's website, preparation and distribution of printed materials, including information packs and circulars, consultancy for needs assessment, system design, establishment of information and communication technologies (ICT) system, payment for advertisement for vacancies, washing of hand towels, curtains, *et cetera*, and purchasing of curtains to enhance the appearance of the Ministry.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could you indicate how the sum \$3.736 million will be utilised?

Mr. Gaskin: This is for a number of events such as support for regional business expos as well as a national small business expo, meetings and other engagements with the private sector. I think that is the lot.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister, line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants - \$3.419 million: Could you inform as to how many vehicles you would be utilising as regards the fuel and lubricants?

Mr. Gaskin: The sum of \$3,419,000 represents expenditures for fuel and lubricants for the period September to December, 2015 for the Ministry's vehicles, the generators at the headquarters in South Road and the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia, as well as brush cutters and other power washers, *et cetera*, used by the Ministry.

Mr. Hamilton: Just for information, the fleet of vehicles we are talking about...

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

Mr. Hamilton: Fuel and lubricants: I am trying to find out how many vehicles the Ministry has?

Mr. Gaskin: The Ministry has six vehicles.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6281 – Security Services: There is a provision of \$12,518,000. Could the Hon. Minister tell us which sites and buildings fall under the Ministry of Business that require the security service?

Mr. Gaskin: This particular line item refers to the security service for the headquarters in South Road as well as the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, does this security service also cover the Guyana Tourism Authority building, the Business Council and the Guyana National Bureau of Standards that are located in the compound of the Sophia Exhibition Centre?

Mr. Gaskin: It covers the entire National Exhibition Centre compound in Sophia.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, does the Arthur Chung Conference Centre fall under the Ministry of Business or is it now under the Ministry of Tourism?

Mr. Gaskin: The Arthur Chung Conference Centre is not under the Ministry of Business. It falls under the Ministry of Tourism.

Mr. Rohee: Looking at the staffing details of this Ministry, it appears to me that 56% of the staff are contracted workers. I would like to know, with 56% of the staff being on contract/gratuity, whether the Minister considers this to be a stabilising factor in the institution of the Ministry and whether there is any plan to convert the contract/gratuity workers to the fixed establishment, as is the policy of the Administration?

Mr. Gaskin: I am having a bit of a difficulty answering the Hon. Member's question. I am not sure what he means; perhaps, he can repeat the question about the gratuity.

Mr. Rohee: Twenty-four of a total of 40 of the employees of the Ministry are contracted employees. My calculation is that this amounts to about 56% of the staff at the Ministry. If this is so, my question is twofold. Is the Minister of the view that this situation portends to stability in the staffing situation of the Ministry? And, is this in keeping with the policy of the Government, which is to convert the workers on contract/gratuity to the fixed establishment?

Mr. Gaskin: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member is asking me for my views on a subject of his choice that I am finding a little difficult to relate to the line item. I beg your indulgence, but I cannot answer that question. There is no plan to make any changes about this, at least not for the rest of 2015.

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration - \$78,473,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$134,651,000

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, I have just two quick questions for clarity. Could the Minister confirm whether the 10 employees, inclusive of the contracted employees, are new employees or employees who were in the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and they were just transferred to the Ministry of Business?

Mr. Gaskin: They were all transferred from the previous Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce.

Mr. Hamilton: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$123.172 million: Could the Minister indicate the different items, organisations and subsidies for the National Assembly?

Mr. Gaskin: The subsidies are to fund the Guyana National Bureau of Standards, the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) and the Small Business Bureau.

Mr. Lumumba: Hon. Minister, line item 6321: Earlier in your presentation, you spoke of the desire to ensure that 20% of businesses of the Budget or procurement services - I do not know how you framed it initially - would go towards small businesses.

2.07 a.m.

I thought that the \$12.4 million would be part of some type of training or administrative mechanism that would be utilised to put this in place. I want to preambule a bit and beg for the indulgence of the Chairman, because this is a very comprehensive and complex issue that you will be venturing on, which I do support. I am trying to figure whether this \$12.4 million will be part of the expenditure that will be used to implement this rather complex process or procedure which would include training, preparation, visitations, gaining experience, and putting together a commission. I am asking basically whether this \$12.4 million would be

part of that process or if there would be some additional funds you envisage you would receive from some other source to get this done.

Mr. Gaskin: In response to the Hon. Member's question - I thank him for his interest and for his stated support – the 20% of all public procurement contracts being awarded to registered small businesses is a provision of the Small Business Act of 2004 which has not been implemented since then. Our Government intends to implement and make this provision effective. We will address the means by which we do so in our Ministry's five-year strategic plan. However, the allocation for the small business bureau of \$12.468 does cover for a consultant to be contracted to develop the framework and to provide us with recommendations for actually achieving that goal of 20% of all public contracts going to small businesses.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, \$123,172,000, out of it \$68 million, or approximately 57%, is going to the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest). What is it, the Hon. Minister contemplating, would comprise this expenditure of \$68 million? Would these resources be utilised to commence work on the single window investment platform he spoke of in his budget speech?

Mr. Gaskin: The single window project or programme will not be funded through the allocation for GO-Invest. The \$68 million allocated for GO-Invest represents expenditure for employment of staff of 21, participation in local trade shows, investment, targeting and follow-up visits to monitor projects, advertising at various media to promote the services of GO-Invest and the investment opportunities that exist within Guyana, an outward mission to the Roraima state, Brazil, to facilitate business development between GO-Invest and the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises of Brazil (SEBRAE), the general upkeep of the building and utility charges. I think that covers the bulk of it.

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Chairman, it is just a follow-up to my previous question. The Minister spoke of a consultant. I think the issue is so fundamental and so historic that it would require a commission, a proposal, site visits and encounters with, for example, the United States of America Small Business Administration and the setting aside a programme because that is the direction in which the Minister is going. My question is whether the Minister envisions that he will do the following things because this will require a lot of legislation. This requires a lot of legislation so that he will not be challenged. It has some fireworks in it. Twenty per cent is being set aside and people are going to challenge it. It requires a lot of talks, a

commission, a bipartisan approach, legislation and visitation. I am assuming that the Minister will put all these things together and bring it back to the National Assembly at some point.

Mr. Gaskin: As I said, this initiative will be addressed in the Ministry's five-year strategic plan.

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$134,651,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration - \$8,050,000

Programme: 251 – Policy Development and Administration - \$8,050,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion - \$361,320,000

Programme: 252 – Business Development, Support and Promotion - \$361,320,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you wish to say something you can speak now.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, for clarification for the Assembly, I will like to ask a couple of questions on the aforementioned items.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I will have to limit you to two questions, not two questions rolled up into four or four rolled up into two.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, I would ask one question just for clarification from the Minister. The sums allocated for the items, it is noted, are to be spent from September. I would like to find out whether it is envisaged that all of the sums will be spent by the 31st December or it is the intention that they will roll over into 2016.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we thank you for your comments.

We thank the Minister for his presentation.

Hon. Members, this brings us to the end of our business which we had set out for today.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: There is a matter which was held over from yesterday. This we will attend to tomorrow. The documents are ready but we will bring them to the floor tomorrow. I thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: I may invite the First Vice President and Prime Minister to move the adjournment.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, I move the adjournment of this House until 9.30a.m. today, Wednesday, 26th August, 2015.

Adjourned accordingly at 2.21 a.m.