

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 7]

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

22nd Sitting

2 p.m.

Tuesday, 18th December, 1973

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

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

Prime Minister (1)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E.,

Prime Minister

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (7)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,

Minister of Economic Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ministers (6)

The Hon. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour (Absent)

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

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

*The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development (Absent)

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

*The Hon. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Absent – on leave)

Members of State (9)

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

*The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection (Absent)

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

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

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

Miss M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the (Absent – on leave)
Prime Minister and Government Chief Whip

Mr. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

The Hon. K. B. Bancroft,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education
and Social Development

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Other Members (17)

Mr. J.N. Aaron

Mrs. L.M. Branco

Mr. M. Corrica

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Miss J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K.M.E. Jonas

Mr. M. Nissar

Dr. L.E. Ramsahoye

(Absent – on leave)

Mr. J.G. Ramson

Mrs. P.A. Rayman

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

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

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman

Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

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

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

18.12.73
2.05 p.m.

National Assembly

2.05 – 2.15 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the HONourable Prime Minister from the 18th to the 22nd December, 1973, both days inclusive, and to the hon. Member Mr. G.A. King for the 18th and 19th December, 1973.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1974

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1974, totalling a \$337,303,105.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

HEAD 40 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,818,028 for Head 40, Ministry of Education, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I will deal with page 116, Subheads 12 and 24. Subhead 12, Free Places, Secondary Schools. I wish first of all to commend the hon. Minister of Education on the statement she made which was published in the Daily Chronicle of Monday, 17th September, 1973, when she addressed the Annual Congress of the P.N.C.'s Campbellville Region and when she spoke, first of all, about the "dead-weights" in the teaching profession and those teachers who have "lovely, free, happy existences". She said, too, that all children must have an opportunity of sitting for the Common Entrance Examinations. You must not just have a

chosen few and others left behind. I am very pleased to see that the hon. Minister has insisted on this because one of the big problems that we have in our country today is the lack of school places and the overcrowding, particularly, in the Primary Schools. The hon. Minister has declared that they must all sit the Examination.

In the Primary Schools, the teachers have the habit of coaching the children to enable them to take the Common Entrance Examinations. As is well known or, maybe, not so well known, people in the field of Education know that the Primary Schools are graded according to the number of children. A Grade 'A' School, for example, has 750 and more students.

May I congratulate the person responsible for compiling the digest of Educational Statistics 1970 – 1971. It is a very excellent document full of information of the educational system in our country. I understand that this Digest is being updated but the new one is not off the Press, so I am quoting from 1970 – 1971.

We are dealing with these Primary Schools and the problem of overcrowding. A Grade 'A' School should have 750 students and over, within reason, but in this report on page 8 it is stated that there are thirty-five schools with over 1500 pupils in them. This means that in thirty-five schools they are doing the work of seventy schools put into thirty-five. It is quite reasonable to put it that way. These teachers take the opportunity, because of the problems that exist, of making extra money by giving coaching to the children after school. I would like to suggest to the hon. Minister – it has been suggested before but I do not think anything came out of it – that we adopt the shift system. I fear that I would be treading on the corns of the teachers. I do not think they would be pleased about it because, naturally, the coaching does bring in extra revenue for them.

The point is that these teachers are teaching all day at school, they go home in the evening and they have these children for extra classes. Sometimes it happens that the teacher is working for as long as ten or twelve hours a day. How can that teacher give of his or her best during the day when, day after day, she has to do this? This happens because of the system where our schools are overcrowded. I believe it is laid down in the code of ethics of Education

that ten square feet per child is the area that should be allocated and the school should not take more than that amount. But the number of children has since been increased by another ten per cent and another five per cent making it fifteen per cent more at the discretion of the Head Teachers. As a result they are taking these children and cramming the schools.

We know that some schools are more popular than others because they have built a reputation for themselves. Because of their high standard these schools have an opportunity of taking more children and so it goes on and on. For this reason then when we come to the granting of free places in the Secondary Schools for taking the Common Entrance Examination, it is necessary for the coaching which I spoke about. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if any consideration is being given to the shift system.

2.15 p.m.

Talking too about the free places in the secondary schools, I wonder if the hon. Minister would make it clear, it is an opportunity now to make it clear, to the parents how these free places are allocated. I do not think many of the parents realise that there is a cut-off point, as it were, that the nation-wide ones, the top ones, the countrywide ones with the best marks go first to Queen's College and Bishops', and when those places have been allocated, there is a cut-off point. From there, the places are allotted to the children on a regional basis.

This is an excellent idea, but something that is comparatively new to our country, especially to parents in the country areas, along the East Coast, the Bank, and so on (I am not thinking of Berbice and Essequibo where there are the Berbice High and Anna Regina). However parents feel that something is wrong that the children are being deprived of the opportunity of going to a school in Georgetown, not thinking of the advantages they have by making use of the Government junior schools within the region. The children and parent do not realise that if they wish they do have the opportunity of going to a Government-aided secondary school of their choice, and paying the fees, provided, of course, they have the qualifying standards.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister to clarify these points and also to say a few words about consideration of the shift system, if she thinks it is a good idea, if she thinks it would work.

Dealing with subhead 24, Grant-in-Aid to Fredericks School of Home Economics, we are asked to vote \$10,000. I am not speaking against this grant, but I should like to use this opportunity to use this Head to ask that the grant for home economics in Government-aided secondary schools be increased. In grade A secondary schools, I think they receive \$600 a year, and primary schools, \$500. With the stress and the emphasis being placed on home economics and industrial arts, I suggest that grants o these sections be increased. A grant towards home economics of \$600 a year in a secondary school is \$50 a month, and with the cost of living having gone up, to maintain the class, equipment, and provide food, it is not very much, so I ask that thought be given to increasing the grant to the home economics class in other schools.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, are you not dealing with page 117?

Mrs. DaSilva: Yes, I am. Subheads 25, 27, 29 and 32. First of all, subhead 25, Grant to the University of Guyana, \$2,850,000. Dealing with the University of Guyana, not dealing with the grant as such, I want to talk about the admission to the University of Guyana. Because of the increased competition, the basic requirements for admission to U.G. have been upped. I believe in the very beginning it used to be six “o” Level subjects but now a higher standard is required for admission. This is a very good idea but it does present a problem with students who come from schools where they are sixth forms and who have subjects at advanced level.

I think I saw in a book that thought is being given to granting them one year’s exemption on entering the University of Guyana if they have subjects at advanced level. This is nothing new; this is in keeping with what is done in universities in other countries. And old people like myself remember in the old days that when you took your School Certificate and you got your Matriculation, you were exempted for entry into University.

I want to make one suggestion to the hon. Minister about the secondary schools with the sixth forms that do “A” levels. She ought to consider having two levels of entry into the University of Guyana, one at the level which they have now based on the “O” levels, and the other one, the putting in of sixth formers who have done their advanced levels and granting them this one year’s exemption.

This would also help in the cost of education, because the salaries of the teachers at the secondary schools are not as high as the salaries of the staff at the University of Guyana, and if this entrance examination could be helped by staying on and doing their “A” levels at an approved secondary school, it would help on the money needed in the financing of the University of Guyana.

..... their point, when the students leave school to enter the University of Guyana, although they have taken their “O” levels, sometimes the results have not come out yet, so they do not know if they have got the passes required. They leave school in July to go into U.G. in September. There is no means by which the University of Guyana can have any knowledge of what these people are going to do and so they have one whole year wasted.

There could be some dialogue between the University of Guyana and the secondary schools from which these people come, and the more dialogue there is between these two, the more it will be to the advantage of the University of Guyana.

This will mean, of course, there will have to be bigger sixth forms and that will mean more money which the Minister will have to think about, but what you lose on the roundabouts you gain on the swings. If it costs more to have bigger sixth forms, and it costs less to do the first year of university work at sixth form level at school, the Government might be able to balance the Budget that way.

On subhead 27, Grants to Aided Secondary Schools, first of all I wish to say that there is a lot of talk nowadays about the grants to aided secondary schools and there is talk too about the

18.12.73

National Assembly

2.15 – 2.25 p.m.

nationalization of schools at the primary level. But there is a lot of talk too about the opportunities at the Government schools as against those at the denominational schools. There is one point I should like to make clear. When one says “denominational”, everyone immediately thinks of the church school, but every aided secondary school, though classified as a denominational school, is not necessarily a church school.

We take this opportunity of giving praise where praise is due, and I think that the people of Guyana owe a debt to the churches in Guyana, of all denominations, more in particular the Anglican and roman Catholic Churches, for the role they play in education. When I talk of primary schools, one will see the number of schools Government has got as against the number of schools provided by the denominations. I am not saying this in any way to deride what Government is doing. I am saying this merely to show that we must give credit where credit is due and recognize what is being done.

2.25 p.m.

In respect of the grants that are given to the aided secondary schools. When I was speaking a little while ago about the Federicks School of Home Economics I talked about the grant that is given to the aided secondary schools for home economics. I asked for consideration that \$600 a year for home economics was not enough.

These grants that are given to the aided secondary schools should be increased all the way around. For example, what these schools get now is \$1,000 a year per laboratory. For home economics classes they get \$600 a year. It is time these grants be increased because of the education that is being provided in these schools.

The Government recognize this. As a matter of fact only last week one of the aided schools, St. Joseph’s High School, was upgraded to grade “A” because of its merit. The Government has another grade “A” secondary school.

[Mrs. DaSilva contd.]

These schools need help. For example, with the increase in the teachers' salaries Government pays 70 per cent and the aided secondary schools pay 30 per cent. These schools cannot afford to pay the 30 per cent of the new salary scales for teachers.

I noticed that the grants to the aided secondary schools – there are only 13 of them – are \$1,536,818 which is slightly more than the revised estimates for 1973 which is \$1,111,440. It is not a big difference. I am wondering if the Government is using this Head to pay the difference that it is paying in the teachers' salaries. It does not seem to be very much but there are only 13 aided secondary schools. I am wondering how the Government has arrived at that figure. How are they calculating to pay the difference between the old and the present salaries for teachers.

If this matter of the teachers' salaries has not been resolved yet as I said the Government is still paying the difference in the increase in the salary scale for the teachers because the schools are not allowed to raise their fees. Until the schools are able to raise their fees they will not be able to pay the additional fees and this falls on the Government. How long it will continue nobody seems to know.

What will happen if suddenly the Ministry finds itself in the position where they will have to call on the aided secondary schools to pay these fees. Some of these schools will not be able to continue. They will not be able to meet the demands if such are made, let alone meet the increase. So this is something that has to be considered.

I am wondering if the hon. Minister would care to make a statement as to how long the Government is prepared to carry on and what is its policy. Are they going to allow these schools to increase their faces or is this not the time to state their policy? Is the Government going to continue paying the difference in the teachers' salaries? Will this be treated as a loan or will it be an outright grant? I would appreciate answer to these questions.

Whilst we are talking about the grants to aided secondary schools, I should like to say that I read a report from one school closing programme on the teaching of creos? Will this be treated as a loan or will it be an outright grant? I would appreciate answer to these questions.

Whilst we are talking about the grants to aided secondary schools, I should like to say that I read a report from one school closing programme on the teaching of creolese in schools as our language. I have nothing against creolese. I am proud to be able to speak creolese. But we have to recognize the fact that English is the language of this country. English is the language that is used to communicate and the hon. Minister herself in this very excellent book speaks of the weak passmarks in English language. Everybody knows, for it has often been said that the examination results are very poor in English Language. Let us keep our creolese by all means. Let us put it with our culture. It is part of our culture. It is something of which we can be proud but we have to communicate. We have to live in a world with other people and the language as is spoken is English. Please let us keep it that way and try to raise the standard.

I come to subhead 29, “Contribution to U.N.E.S.C.O.” The 1974 Estimates is \$42,176. I use this Head not to criticize the contribution. There is nothing wrong with it. I use it because I wish to make reference to the Germanacos Report. I think it was about six years ago that a team under Mr. Germanacos was sent down here under the auspices of U.N.E.S.C.D., hence the name Germanacos Report – to investigate shortages of school places. It recommended that the Government should not close privately owned schools, denominational as such, church schools as such, or otherwise. It suggested that the standard of the Government junior schools be raised so that those schools of lower standard would just fade away, wither away and die and those of a good standard would go on increasing and going up and remain. I think this is something we have to think about very seriously because we have a terrific shortage of school places.

A little later on when I am dealing with the primary schools I shall quote some figures but I recommend to the hon. Minister to bear the findings of the Germanicus Report over before her mind. We cannot do without these schools but by raising the standard of the Government junior schools private schools to a low and poor standard will automatically fade out.

In respect of subhead 32, "Maintenance Charge, Electronic Computer Central Accounting Unit" the 1974 Estimates is \$2,500. I should like to ask the hon. Minister if there is any truth in this and if anything can be done about it.

It is alleged that when the computer was being bought for the Education Department the Ministry was advised to buy 2 computers to take off the amount of work. Maybe for financial reasons, the Ministry could only buy one. This one computer cannot take off the work. As a matter of fact I think in one of the Financial Papers about 2 months or so ago I spoke about the N.I.S., about the problems in the primary schools. The Education department had taken all the N.I.S. cards away to work on them by computer the early part of this year and now, since September the whole pile has been sent back to the primary schools. The teachers had to work on them and bring them up to date. I spoke about the inconvenience etc. Not that the staff minded if they were taking it in their stride as they used to before, but suddenly having 9 months of N.I.S. cards thrust at them to fill out and to bring up to date is rather much. I am wondering what is the position about the present computer. Is the Ministry thinking of getting a twin for it so that work can be carried on successfully?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman on page 116 reads subhead 9, "Expenses, National Council for Education." In the 1973 Revised Estimates the sum of \$100 still appears. In the 1974 Estimates the sum of \$100 is being sought. We still appears. In the 1974 Estimates the sum of \$100 is being sought. We had thought that something would have been done about this National Council for Education. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to make a statement on this proposed National Council for Education. Put us in the picture about this National Council for Education because we have heard nothing about it for some time.

Indeed, I noticed in an editorial in one of the daily papers today they did commend the establishment of such an institution. Perhaps the hon. Minister would welcome the opportunity to let us hear her on this.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education

The Minister of Education (Miss Baird): Mr. Chairman, first of all I want to thank the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva for the tribute she paid to the Ministry of Education.

Her first comments were made in relation to the Common Entrance Examination. The best approach to this question is perhaps to give an insight into the function and role of the Common Entrance Examination as it relates to the educational system.

The Common Entrance Examination is an examination geared to select people for secondary education. In the past, and perhaps we can admit that this is still the case although we are moving on, the Common Entrance Examination selected children with the highest level of abilities and those children went to the schools that are organized to cope with those levels of abilities.

2.35 p.m.

The present situation is that the Common Entrance Examination is to be used to select all levels of abilities for secondary education, from the highest to the lowest level, the whole range of abilities; and that is why that statement was made advising parents of the intention to use this Examination to select all children for secondary education. In this country, any allusion to secondary education conjures up thoughts of what we call the classical kind of education or the traditional education. But I think the time has come for us to accept that there are many forms of secondary education, education of the traditional kind which will prepare people for the professions and the kind of secondary education that will prepare people for technical jobs, for commercial and business jobs.

It is unrealistic to believe that the Common Entrance Examination of 1974 will perform the task that we expect it to perform. Perhaps in the next two or three years it will be geared to do this. We have begun by asking schools to register or to enter all children who are between the

ages of 10 and 11 plus for that Examination. All children are to be registered except those who are handicapped, in which case schools have to produce evidence to show that children are handicapped and are unable to take this Examination. We will use those results for channelling children to the different kinds of secondary schools.

I think it is as good a time as any for me to call the attention of this House to the fact that apart from the senior secondary schools and the junior secondary schools we have embarked upon a programme whereby all children will have an opportunity to receive free secondary education. I am referring to the community high schools, two of which are already in operation. I want to warn, however, that these are pilot programmes. In the community high school we propose to expose children to four years experience in those schools; the first two years will emphasize the teaching of academic skills, and the final two years will be devoted to vocational education.

What we hope to do is to equip all children so that they can become employable, or they will be able to employ themselves. This means that we have formulated for those schools a programme of work that will do the kind of job we want it to do. No longer will the academic side of the school work be divorced from what people call the practical or vocational arts. We have spent over one year working on the curriculum for those schools, and working on the preparation of teachers for those schools.

It is very important that the community high schools succeed, because by September of the next year we are committed to introduce that system in four other areas. The introduction of Community High Schools will be phased; we hope that by the middle of next year we will be able to acquire the funds to introduce it in the national system.

My preference to this innovation in secondary education is to assure the hon. Member that we are considering carefully how important it is to give opportunity to all children to receive secondary education free, but secondary education that is relevant to the level of ability to the child's interest. And to support this programme we have introduced a system of guidance which

begins first as educational guidance as soon as the child gets into primary school to enable him to overcome all his learning difficulties, his behavior problems, Educational guidance will be developed as the child proceeds upward into the secondary school to provide vocational guidance. Already guidance is offered in the area of careers or vocations where officers channel students into jobs and arrange for them to have contacts in industry, and perhaps some other time it might be useful for me to provide this House with the details of the information of the number of students who have been channeled into jobs through Vocational Guidance Officer.

I think some reference was made to large schools, 'A' schools and overcrowding and no space and I want to believe that the hon. Member thought that overcrowding was related to pressure on schools that teach for the Common Entrance Examination, and coaching. I want to correct any misconceptions. He referred to the number 750, but you have to look at it like this, that 750 children is the minimum number for a large school. But as long as the school has space it can accommodate more children and the important thing will be to provide more teachers to ensure a pupil ratio of 1:40. The important thing is that the national building programme is proceeding consistently and this contributes to a reduction of the pressure on space.

With regard to the shift system, I want you to consider the problems that are inherent in the shift system. I think not more than four schools in this country used the shift system recently. But it is common sense to accept that having a shift system in the national programme is fraught with social problems particularly for those children who are out of school in the second session, their parents being at work or attending to other business. We have to look into the re-organisation of the whole system. Therefore, I personally do not advocate the shift system except under very great pressure. We are trying to handle the problem, as I said before, by providing places and I think the Digest will tell you that we are slowly succeeding although it is very difficult to catch up.

18.12.73

National Assembly

2.45 – 2.55 p.m.

[Miss Baird continues]

2.45 p.m.

In connection with the Grant-in-Aid to the Fredericks School of Home Economics, I heard that the hon. Member has no quarrel with that. Indeed, you should not, because this School and institutions of this kind, are helping to contribute to the development of a large population of our girls. There is an increase in the grant to Aided Secondary Schools and in the grant for Industrial Arts and Home Economics. This increase was made, Government has agreed to pay the specialist teachers in those schools and this is another way of subsidizing them.

With respect to the admissions to the University of Guyana, as far as I know the admission requirements have not changed. Students must have five O'Level subjects. In addition, they have to write an examination and some people are interviewed. But what is really happening; as the quality of education improves and as an opportunity is extended to more people to receive secondary education, applicants are equipped with higher level qualifications than the O' Levels, so we have people leaving school with 'A' Levels who apply for entry. Naturally, the competition gets keener and the children with better qualifications are accepted.

As far as I know, some 'A' Level students are granted exemption for varying periods and after all, I think it would be inadvisable to lay down any rules to guide the University about its admission of students. This is a personal matter and this is not to say that the Ministry of Education is abdicating its responsibility to help the University. But what I really mean is that when a student applies for admission it depends on the kind of subjects that the student has, and the kind of course he wants to do and then that student will be advised about exemption, about the time, and in what areas he will be exempted. But I can assure the hon. Member that this is considered, because we have had people who have got the Guyana Scholarship going to the University of Guyana and it would be ridiculous to expect that they go through the whole four or five-year courses. As the University of Guyana gains acceptance in the community more young people who have come straight out of the Classroom will enter the University.

The hon. Member mentioned the problem about the students who write G .C.E. O' Level Examinations and do not get their results in time. This is where, I think, adult education and the guidance programme in schools will help. This is a very common problem. Even students who have applied overseas do not know or they do not appreciate that they have got to apply for entrance and get provisional entrance. They have got to state that they expect their results at such a time and the University or any other institution considers them for entry. When they get their results they report. If they succeed they get in and if they fail they do not get in. So I do not think this is a problem, this is a business of communication and as you can appreciate I do not think that in schools we have a positive programme of guidance, one which we hope to institute now and which will develop as time goes by.

With respect to Grant-in-Aid to Secondary Schools, this was an appeal for an increase in grants I think if the hon. Member looks at page 116 she will find that the total grant increased from \$809,000 to over \$1 million. There was a substantial increase in the grants to aided Secondary Schools. I do not know if the hon. Members knows this, but Government contributes a substantial proportion of the salaries of teachers in aided schools. It used to be seventy per cent and it is now eighty per cent for graduates. Government has paid all the increase in the revised salaries to non-graduates. In addition, we have given other supports by paying for Laboratory Assistants and some ancillary staff. The whole question of secondary education and the treatment of aided Secondary Schools is under review.

I think the hon. Member mentioned something about the nationalization of education. As far as I know, education is not an industry and I do not know if somebody was misrepresented. But, perhaps, what the hon. Member was trying to say – at least as far as what Government has in mind – is that we are attempting to ensure that all schools, whether they are private or aided or Government, contribute very positively to the development of Guyana and to the development of the student population in these schools. By this I mean we have to ensure that all schools follow a curriculum that is geared to do this and all schools have the kind of teachers that can carry out these tasks. So what you will find happening is that more and more we are trying to share our

thoughts in education with people in those schools because, after all, they are aided schools and I can assure you that those schools, as far as I know – because I am in personal contact with them – appreciate this assistance and they participate. Many of them are asked to sit on our Committees to give of their expertise in guidance, in formulating programmes for out-of-school use, in formulating programmes for the treatment of deviants – those people who come under the probation service. A lot of people from the aided schools are contributing to innovations in education.

Indeed, they are now involved in workshops which the Ministry runs. They come to the workshops and I think it would be interesting to note that one member of a Government-aided school was sent on a Scholarship so that that person may be able to improve the quality of work in her own school and the quality of education generally. So I do not think that we have anything to fear about aided Secondary Schools and the nationalization of education and all that. It is that we must see that what experience is given in school is geared to the national interest.

With respect to creolese and talking or writing creolese in schools, the position of the Ministry of Education is that creolese can be used, and, perhaps, in many cases must be used, as a medium or instrument of teaching, but one has to be very careful and has to look at this very carefully. Creolese, I personally think – and there are other people looking at this – cannot be used as a language because we have no dictionary, we have nothing set up. Before this comes as a language we have to have the mechanics investigated and a lot of research has to be done and we have no time to waste, really. Other developing countries have had this problem and they have had to resort to the use of English as the language of instruction while they learn another language.

18.12.73

National Assembly

2.55 – 3.05 p.m.

[Miss Baird contd.]

2.55 pm.

What we have to accept is that people are bilingual, bilingual in the sense that they speak English and they speak creolese. We have to use that facility to teach children English. In some areas, teachers cannot communicate with children because they speak primarily creolese, and so it behoves the teacher, and this is the linguistic approach, to understand creolese so that he can communicate with his pupils. After that, it ends, because it is in the child's interest and it is in the nation's interest to communicate in a language that is international.

I do not think there is any truth in the information that we were advised to buy two computers. This computer was a gift to the Government of Guyana. I think the hon. Member was concerned about the reported delays in teachers' salaries. Inevitably, any transition stage, transition from dealing with teachers' salaries manually to an automated approach, must create problems, and during that time, there were delays. I do know that last month I found out that salaries were paid in time and that is because we made a determined effort to correct all the problems that were facing us in carrying out that arduous task of paying all those teachers.

The hon. Member must remember too, that we have a variety of categories of teachers, acting teachers, who come at all points in the month, and when one uses the computer, one has to have a specified time in which to feed it this information and that kind of thing. I am sure that we have moved to a position where this problem has been corrected. I hope I have answered the hon. Member's questions.

Head 40, Ministry of Education - \$6,818,028 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether you can recommit the last Head. The hon. Minister did not have an opportunity to tell us about the National Council for Education and I think she would want to do that.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head 40 recommitted.

Miss Baird: The National Council of Education is provided for, I think, in the Code, and it is intended to be a body to advise on the national programme of education. It is an advisory body. I regret to say that this body has not been organized as yet. Instead of that, we were working on the establishment of other bodies that seem very crucial to things that we were doing, and I refer to the National Advisory Council on Technical and Vocational Education. We have been working on the establishment of that council for a long time and I hope that we are at the stage where an announcement will be made before year end. That body is supposed to advise on technical education and co-ordinate technical education from primary school to university.

In the meantime, we have set up an ad hoc committee that is carrying out the kind of investigation and the kind of research that will enable us to establish the National Council for Education. We try to identify persons and identify the kind of things we would ask the national council to do.

Head 40, Ministry of Education - \$6,818,028 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

18.12.73

National Assembly

3.05 – 3.15 p.m.

3.05 p.m.

**HEAD 41 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, IN-SERVICE
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Question proposed that the sum of \$239,063 for Head 41, Ministry of Education, In-Service Teacher Training Programme, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 41, Ministry of Education, In-Service Teacher Training Programme - \$239,063 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 42 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – PRIMARY,
MULTILATERAL AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$25,590,442 for Head 42, Ministry of Education, Primary, Multilateral and Secondary Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: On page 119, subheads 6, 9 and 13. First of all, sir, I should like to say that I appreciate the way the hon. Minister answers the questions put before her, her manner of trying to be as co-operative and to give as much information as possible. However there is one thing I should like to take her up on.

I agree with her that when you say “nationalization” it sounds like the bauxite industry or some type of industry and not a school. I should have said “take over of schools”. I should like to quote from the **Chronicle** of the 5th of November, 1973. The Government’s paper - -
[Interruption]

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, this is no opportunity to reply to what the hon. Minister said there. We are speaking now on a different item. Please proceed.

Mrs. DaSilva: Yes, sir. I am going to work it in. As a matter of fact when I am dealing with the primary schools it will fit in. I am just pointing out that it was from a newspaper I got the idea of the nationalization.

To go back to subhead 6, “Grants to Aided Schools.” Again in her reply the hon. Minister laid the stress on the Government’s plan for providing secondary education for as many as possible. This is excellent. We went as many as possible of our children to have the opportunity to get free secondary education. I noticed and I have been advised by many people in the field of education that at the moment the stress seems to be on secondary education at the expense of primary education.

Could the hon. Minister say how many primary schools have been built recently throughout the country, particularly in Georgetown? I think during the last 7 years there has been less than one a year built.

Primary schools are being made to pay the price of our secondary education. Unless these children at primary level get the opportunity which these grants that I am going to talk about would provide them with, especially with the new concept of education of getting away from the old idea of academics and laying stress on industrial arts and home economics, unless the children have a basic foundation at the primary level they cannot go on to secondary schools and be able to cope with and keep up with the courses.

Before dealing specifically with the grants I should like to make a general comment dealing with the appointment of senior teachers. There is no standing Committee for the appointment of senior teachers in primary schools. There is a Committee for the appointment of teachers but this Committee does not meet often enough. I understand sometimes as long as a

year apart the Committee has not met. I understand there has been a White Paper on this asking that there be a permanent Committee appointed. It was shelved waiting for the decision on the unification of employment of our primary and secondary school teachers.

The way I understand it is that senior school teachers at Queen's College and Bishops' High School some under the Church schools. I suggest that until this matter is resolved and they are all brought together under the Ministry of Education this Committee for the appointment of senior teachers' should meet more regularly. The Collins Report recommended that there be unification in the payment of teachers in the administration. We have not got that implemented yet. When and until this is solved and the Ministry of Education controls it, I suggest that this Committee meets more regularly to deal with the – appointment of senior teachers in primary schools which has been fire a long time.

To come to the great dealing with aided schools, maintenance and equipment. Dealing with primary schools it says here \$160,760. The grant for maintenance and equipment for a school exceeding 400 children, the equipment grant is \$294 and the largest maintenance grant is \$441. As I said earlier when I spoke about these schools which I quoted. There are 35 schools with over 1500 children which is doubling up, it were. Thirty-five schools doing the work of 70 schools which the hon. Minister did not quite agree with me but really in point of fact it is so by numbers.

These schools whether they have 400 children or 1500 children get the same equipment grant of \$294 at the highest. For maintenance they get \$441 for a school. When you come down to the lower end at Grade "E" schools all they get is \$63 as a maintenance grant. The hon. Minister must admit that this is ridiculous.

I think, sir, if the hon. Minister would take a suggestion these grants should be revised and handled per head basically, for we have to take into consideration the present value of money. If the hon. Minister considers it this way I think it will be a case for increasing the grants.

Incidentally I should like to make a plea to the governing bodies of the schools. They do the administration of all the schools including those in the interior. There are a total of 51 schools in the interior. Seven of them are Government schools, 44 are denominational schools. They deal with the salaries and so on. All they got is an honorarium of \$23. Could the hon. Minister consider raising that a little more? Twenty-three dollars is not an awful lot of money for a terrific amount of administration.

To come to subhead 9, “upkeep of Schools’ Recreation Grounds.” In 1973 \$3,500 was approved. In the revision, we only spent \$671. Now we are asked for \$3,745. I do hope they will spend every cent of these grants because I am sure the schools need to have their playgrounds properly kept.

By way of comparison, without dealing with the secondary schools, we have 388 primary schools in our country. This \$3,745 is to upkeep the schools’ recreation grounds, all 388 of them. I am not saying that we want to have the grounds of our President’s house or our Prime Minister’s house in a way in which we will be ashamed. But it is interesting to note that for Guyana House the upkeep of the grounds is \$5,500. The upkeep of the Residence is \$7,500. That is just for one house in Main Street, one in Vlissengen Road. Yet for the 388 schools, forget the secondary ones, we have been asked to vote \$4,745. So I think something should be done about that. It cannot possibly be enough.

To come to subhead 13, “Supplies and Equipment for School Frames and Agricultural Plots.” The 1974 Estimates is \$60,000. The legend says, “New Subhead.” Bearing in mind the policy of the Government, with which we are in total agreement – the need for the stress now to be on industrial arts and home economics, not everyone can be on academic and have a white-collar job. We support this and we note that the Government aided schools too are supporting the Government 100 per cent in this as well as asking for consideration because they are 100 per cent behind the Government.

I spoke earlier when I paid credit to St. Joseph's High School and the Ministry for having recently upgraded this school to a grade "A" school. I am sure the hon. Minister remembered when St. Stanislaus College opened their new wing and when they spoke of their stress on industrial arts and agriculture not so long ago. I hope the hon. Minister in this \$60,000 grant for supplies and equipment for school farms and agricultural plots will remember St. Stanislaus College and give them their share of the amount.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva referred to grants to aided secondary schools. I should like to make a correction. As far as I see, there are grants to aided schools; and these are primary schools. **[Interruption]**

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, may I rise on a point of correction? If the hon. Minister misunderstood me, I was referring to primary schools because I then went on to say about the grants being \$294 for the largest equipment grant and the largest amount for maintenance being \$441 and the schools, whether they have 400 or 1700 children get the same amount. I am sorry the hon. Minister misunderstood me. I was referring to primary schools.

Miss Baird: With reference to your query about school building programmes I said before in my previous set of answers that we had a consistent programme of building. Building as far as we are concerned is to build for the purpose of increasing the number of school places.

In 1974 – I will begin that way first – we have before us a programme to build 5 new primary schools, 5 replacements of primary schools, 3 extensions and there are now 2 uncompleted projects from 1973.

18.12.73

National Assembly

3.05 – 3.15 p.m.

In 1973 we extended 8 primary schools. We replaced 2 schools and we built or we started building 4 schools. These numbers will increase the number of school places for primary schools considerably.

With respect to the appointment of teachers and this business of a Committee, there is a committee for the appointment of all teachers and it meets as required. Every time an advertisement for teachers is placed in the newspaper and you can see these advertisements appearing very regularly – the Committee meets; it meets according to need or demand. That is how teachers are appointed, by a regular meeting of this Committee.

[Miss Baird continued]

3.15 p.m.

There is consideration of an increase in different kinds of grants. But I want to point out with respect to the business of the upkeep of school grounds. You will agree that we are trying in education not only to provide or to enable people to acquire academic skills but we want to encourage them to help themselves. This is part of the programme and this is part of the non – formal education which comes from activities which foster self-reliance and the spirit of self-help, working together. I do not think that we should at this stage encourage children to rely on the Government to provide funds to maintain their grounds. We will be lacking in our duty to provide the kind of education we want to provide, and to produce the kind of citizens we want to produce if we encourage them to sit by and wait for provision of funds.

Now, there was reference to agricultural farms and plots. These are grants for providing agricultural plots in primary schools and school farms in the primary schools. I think the hon. Member called our attention to St. Stanislaus and asked us to remember it in our provisions. I think St. Stanislaus is a secondary school, and the hon. Member should remember because she reminded me that I was present at that opening. The Ministry of National Development and Agriculture gave a grant of \$5,000 and the Ministry of Education is committed to provide equipment for agriculture and the workshop in industrial arts. This is being worked out by the officers of the Ministry and the people concerned in the school. I do not think that the hon. Member has anything to fear because in these aided secondary schools even if they are schools that do not belong to the Government or to the people of this country we give the kind of help that we see they need to contribute to the Development Programme.

Head 42, Ministry of Education – Primary, Multilateral and Secondary Schools - \$5,590,442, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 120

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,043,718 for Head 43, Ministry of Education – Practical Instruction Centres, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: Subhead 1, items (2) and (3) which I will take together and just a small reference to subhead 3. It is about the Assistant Teachers in charge of the Practical Instruction Centres. As the hon. Minister said, very often we find advertisements in the newspapers for applicants to fill these vacancies. In the Industrial and Practical Instruction Centres they seem to have many more vacancies than anywhere else. I know one particular primary school where there were problems for two years with respect to the Industrial Arts teacher. We do not seem to have enough Industrial Arts teachers and I think this applies to Home Economics also. I am told they do not have enough people to fill these vacancies. What arrangements are being made for teachers-in-training to take part in the courses offered in places, say, like the Technical Institute, and, where the women are concerned in the courses offered by the Carnegie School of Home Economics. What incentives are being given to these people to be trained and specialize in these two fields, bearing in mind the Government's Development Plan of stressing the importance of this practical type of education. Because as I said there seems to be a lack of teachers in this particular area. Could the Government say what is being done?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member observed that there are a number of vacancies in technical education and she wondered whether the Government was taking any steps to reduce the shortage of teachers in those areas. We have realized that there is this shortage. A course for training of sixty teachers will begin in January 1974 and this is a short-term approach to the problem. The University of Guyana is going to undertake another course which will give continuous training to teachers of these subjects. We have used the G.T.T. for training teachers in the past. But the pressure on the accommodation at the G.T.I. and upon the staff of the G.T.I. prevented us from continuing with this arrangement. Those people who are

trained for teaching Home Economics in schools or in centres get their training in the normal initial training of teachers at the Carnegie School of Home Economics. So we have making effort to provide the teachers with the skills needed in these Practical Instruction Centres.

Head 43, Ministry of Education – Practical Instruction Centres - \$2,043,718, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 44 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
GOVERNMENT TRAINING COLLEGE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER
TRAINING PROGRAMME

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,005,999, for Head 44, Ministry of Education, Government Training College, pre-Service Teacher Training Programme stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: On this Head, I should like to make a general observation and an enquiry on a rather delicate subject as it were, because one does not normally discuss religion in Parliament. But we must remember that we have sixteen denominational schools, the majority of them Christian schools providing 388 primary schools. I got these figures again from the very admirable Digest of Educational Statistics. I have been told by people from Church Schools of various denominations that at the Training College there is no syllabus for religious education. Therefore, this presents a problem in the Primary Schools. When the teachers have to teach religion, what syllabus are they going to follow? What is the arrangement?

18.12.73

National Assembly

3.25 – 3.35 p.m.

3.45 p.m.

Miss Baird: As far as I know, there is an arrangement. In the Government Training College or any institution of that sort, people are allowed to go to their Priest of their denomination or in some institutions they prefer the Priest to come to them if they have a large number of people. The College itself does not organize the kind of programme they should have. Students have a freedom of choice, they have a conscience clause and they go to their own Priest or the Priest can come to them. This is part of the provision, but the College itself or the institution itself is not responsible for producing the programme. The programme depends on the persuasion of the students. If the student is a Catholic, arrangements are made whereby he can go to the Catholic Priest. Sometimes a Catholic Priest comes in to the group of people who are Catholics or the Methodist Minister comes to the people who are Methodists or what have you. But religious instruction is not taught here.

Mrs. DaSilva: The point I want to get to the hon. Minister is this: She talks of the students going to the Priest of their choice according to their denominations, but the question concerns the children and the syllabus for them. For example, take Scripture in their examinations. What syllabus do they follow? If they go to a Priest of their choice or a priest comes in to teach them, does that prepare a syllabus?

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, I think the Minister of Education said that no Religious Instruction is given at the Teachers' Service.

Head 44, Ministry of Education, Government Training College, Pre-Service Teacher Training Programme - \$1,005,999 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 45 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TECHNICAL INSTITUTE – GEORGETOWN**

Question proposed that the sum of \$663,890 for Head 45, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, Georgetown, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 45, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, Georgetown - \$663,890 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 46 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$141,576 for Head 46, Ministry of Education, Carnegie School of Home Economics, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 46, Ministry of Education, Carnegie School of Home Economics - \$141,576 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 47 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
QUEENS COLLEGE**

The Chairman: Page 124. There is a slight correction. Legends at 4 and 5 are to be deleted.

Question proposed that the sum of \$434,991 for Head 47, Ministry of Education, Queens College, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: This is not exactly a question on the matter of education, but on a matter of concern because the taxpayers' money is spent so we must be concerned. Could the Minister

tell me what yardstick is used for the use of Queen's College by non-Queen's College people? If an organization applies, how do they get to use Queen's College? What are the requirements?

Miss Baird: Queen's College is used for activities of national significance, [Hon. Members: "Hear, hear!"] activities that could be deemed to be in the National interest. [Hon. Members: "Hear, hear!"] One factor that plays an important part is whether or not the building will be utilized in such a way that we can ensure that no damage would be done to equipment and furniture and things like that. Those are the factors that operate. [Applause]

Head 47, Ministry of Education, Queens College - \$434,991 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 48 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL

Question proposed that the sum of \$331,031 for Head 48, Ministry of Education, Bishops' High School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 48, Ministry of Education, Bishops' High School - \$331,031 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 49 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ANNA REGINA SECONDARY SCHOOL

The Chairman: There is a slight correction under this Head. The figures in the last column of subhead 7 and the legend are to be deleted.

Question proposed that the sum of \$160,826 for Head 49, Ministry of Education, Anna Regina Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

18.12.73

National Assembly

3.15 – 3.25 p.m.

Head 49, Ministry of Education, Anna Regina Secondary School - \$160,826 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 50 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BERBICE HIGH SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$266,372 for Head 50, Ministry of Education, Berbice High School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 50, Ministry of Education, Berbice High School - \$266,372 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 51 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TECHNICAL INSTITUTE – NEW AMSTERDAM**

Question proposed that the sum of \$479,717 for Head 51, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 51, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, New Amsterdam - \$479,717 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.35 p.m.

**HEAD 52 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS**

The Chairman: Page 129. There are small corrections on this page. In the 1972 and 1973 columns under Establishment, the figures “2” and “3” are to be inserted against items (10) and (11) respectively; totals in each column to read “25” and “25”. In this column 1973 Approved Estimates, the figures “2,400” and “3,600” are to be inserted against items (10) and (11) respectively. Total Personal Emoluments and Grand Total, Head 52, in the 1973 Approved Estimates column, should read “\$92,724”. In the last column, the figures opposite items (10) and (11) should read “1,320”, and “1,800” respectively, Total Personal Emoluments should be “37,956” and Grand Total “95,176”.

Question proposed that the sum of \$187,900 for Head 52, Ministry of Education, College of Education for Secondary Teachers, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 52, Ministry of Education, College of Education for Secondary Teachers - \$187,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 130

**HEAD 53 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$446,422 for Head 53, Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Unit, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: Before dealing with this Head, I should like to point out a typographical error which should be corrected. This Head was formerly Head 40, and, sir, if you turn to page

115, you will see where the legend says that the provision has been transferred to Head 52. I think that should be Head 53.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, hon. Member. We will make the necessary correction.

Mrs. DaSilva: To go on with what I wish to speak about, which is subhead 1, item (2), Materials Production Organiser, and generally with the work of the Curriculum Development Unit, I noticed in a report in the **Daily Chronicle** of the 3rd November that parents are taking part in the reading book projects. I wish to comment on this and to commend the Ministry for getting the parents together with the teachers to go into the matter of what the children should read, and taking an interest in it.

I think it is very and that we can say this, but I think it is true that our children in Guyana do not read enough of the right type of books. Give them a comic book with pictures of people talking with little bulbs coming out of their mouths, that is all right, but when it come down to reading, if it is too much fine print, and the paragraphs are long and the letters are not big enough, and there are not enough pictures, they are quick to turn the pages over. So this project of getting the parents together with the unit and going into the matter is an excellent one. They talk, they are going into the question of the books that we are producing locally, and they are going into the fact that they want them to be accurate, to reflect our way of life and all the rest of it, which is fine.

I have heard comments from some parents about some of the books we produce. I am afraid the accent on the two major races of Guyana and not on the other races. This seems awful, especially coming from me. Well, I do not belong to either of the two major race groups, but this is not intended to be anything personal or any criticism against it. The point is that we must reflect the history of all Guyanese and I would urge the Ministry and the unit to take this into consideration very carefully in their books.

In fact, one parent went so far as to say that one of the books illustrated tried to give the impression, which we know is not to their credit, but nevertheless it is part of our history, of the treatment we received under our former colonial masters; that they stressed on this almost to a point, not to the point of stressing and telling us this is what it is – it is a fact, it happened – but to a point where the parents feel that the children are being taught to hate. We must not teach our children to hate anybody of any other race whether it is black as opposed to non-black – one race – Indian against African or black against white, or different shades of brown and different shades of white, all the nonsense that we can go on with in Guyana. The important thing is that we do not teach our children to hate, even though we may feel we were done badly by in the past.

The project of getting the parents involved and of the production of the books locally is an excellent one, and I hope the time will come when we will have all our books produced in Guyana, for our children, with the accent on our area, learning about our people, first in Guyana, then in the region. As I said to the hon. Minister of Information and Culture yesterday, we must extend this across the world because we must not remain isolated in our own little selves but we must learn that we have to live with other people and learning about their way of life, should help us. I hope, too, that in this way we will have books and that the cost will be kept down.

Everyone knows of the high cost of school books. We have not got a system of standardization of school books. There are points for that and against it, but if we can produce our own books locally, teaching our own history, teaching our regional history, and extending it to the world, we should be able to do it on a cheaper basis and thus save the parent expensive costs. Is there any other comment, maybe, the hon. Minister would like to add in relation to this materials production unit?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education

Miss Baird: I should like to thank the hon. Member for commending the Ministry of Education, but I take this opportunity to enlighten the hon. Member and, perhaps, enlighten the

nation on what goes on at the materials production unit. I think I have said in this House before that that unit is concerned with producing material developed in this country, material that will be used in the curriculum of our schools. The books to which the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva refers are books that present material to foster the values which we wish to inculcate in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and, in these circumstances, they are geared to the population of the children in early childhood, because we have got to begin there to foster those values which we want to foster.

Secondly, the material is intended to help us to achieve national goals and, therefore, what goes into that material has the potential to achieve those goals. What goes into that material is carefully examined so that it will have a strong chance of helping us to achieve national goals. I think it will be useful for me to name some of those titles and to point out that we have no apologies for exposing the children to that material that will enable them to first know themselves, to have self knowledge, and to identify with the local environment.

We have books under the caption of *My First Village*, *How the Warraus Came*, that is the Amerindians, but I want to assure this House that, first of all, the books are written to comprise a series to show children how the different groups came to Guyana and the contributions that those different groups made to the development of this country, so that they can understand these things. It is part of a social studies programme. The final book is named *We Are One*. I do not think that is completed, and that book is geared to lead children to see how the different groups contributed to their own place in this country, to the development of all the things that we would like to see in this country. I think this has the potential to foster national unity.

[Miss Baird contd.]

3.45 p.m.

Again the Materials Unit is looking at, as I said, social studies. One of the things that it is projecting is the understanding of the co-operatives. We have a very simple title: “Little Savings Grow.” It describes how people can grow and develop in strength through resort to the co-operative movement or to the co-operative in schools, in clubs and in other groups; how they can be used to the advantage of family life.

I do not think if you read those books you will fail to grasp the significance of that kind of material for the chances that it has in fostering national unity.

Those books are in public demand. The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva reminded us that parents were allowed to participate; they are allowed to examine the material; they were allowed to comment. That was in the pre-testing stage.

We were very careful that we did not foist those books on the public but we asked parents to participate so that we could get their views and what they thought about the value of those books for their children. I am very pleased to say that we have been able to get a feedback from those parents, and this is the structured procedure. It is not left to chance. We have carried out a sort of survey and we have collected information from parents about their reactions to these books.

I think it is a good thing. It was an incentive and it helped the people who produced the books to learn that the parents demanded those books for their own education. Unfortunately we could not produce enough books service the parents and the children.

Indeed, these books are in great demand in countries other than Guyana. Some time ago I participated in a Teacher’s Education Conference in East Africa and those books were on display. They are in demand in the African countries, East and West Africa, in New Zealand.

The people who are engaged in the production of reading material for children, those who specialize in the production of reading material for children, are particularly interested, not for the sort of academic value of what the books can do but they are interested in the kind of material that we have attempted to produce; the kind of material that we feel have the potential for developing a new nation. Some people have expressed the view that now where in a Third World country has that kind of work been attempted. **[Applause]**

The Materials Production Unit continues to do other kinds of work because it is a part of the Curriculum Development Unit. At the moment we are engaged in structuring curricula that will be relevant to our educational goals, to our national goals. We try to produce the kind of programme which means the content of what the children do and it means the approach the teachers use. We are producing that kind of material in the Curriculum Development Unit.

At the moment I think this is very important because we are talking about making children aware of their environment; sensitive to the demands of their environment. We are talking about using education as an instrument for changing and modifying attitudes and developing the kind of behavior patterns that we think we need to have here.

The Materials Production Unit is working on a programme of mathematics in which it seeks to bring together mathematics in the language of the environment. Mathematics that will be related to the vocational activities of the environment, the mathematics used by bankers, the mathematics used by plumbers; by doctors and so on.

We feel that this has a two fold purpose. From the point of view of education it will undoubtedly make it easier for learning; it will facilitate learning. From the point of view of strengthening the nation or producing citizens that are committed to the development of the nation, it will give them the kind of information that will make them aware of what is going on

18.12.73

National Assembly

3.45 – 3.55 p.m.

and perhaps encourage them to choose the kind of occupations that are crucial to our won development.

I think the brief explanation will not leave the hon. Member with any doubt about the importance of the Materials Production Unit in helping to integrate the peoples of this country.

[Applause]

Head 53, Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Unit - \$446,422 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 54 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
GUYANA INDUSTRIAL TRAINING CENTRE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$136,704 for Head 54, Ministry of Education, Guyana Industrial Training Centre, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask for some information about the Guyana Industrial Training Centre which is comparatively new. Only in the Revised Estimates of this year were we asked to vote money for it. I want to know how they are getting on. I want to know too if there is any overlapping between the Guyana Industrial Training Centre and the Technical Institute. How do they work? Could the hon. Minister of Education give us a little indication on how things are going in that area?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, the Guyana Industrial Training Centre is an institution that provides for giving skills for short-termed courses which give skills to young people who are

18.12.73

National Assembly

3.45 – 3.55 p.m.

either in employment or want to go into employment. I think it also channels people into employment that is available.

I do not want to give the impression that it is concerned only with the transmission of skills. I think its programme seeks to foster acceptable work habits in the people who go there. The centre will be used in future. This is the programme for the preparation of out-of-school youths.

We want to get maximum use of the facilities of that institution. The intention is, in 1974, in addition to its existing programme, the institution will be used to give skills to out-of-school youths who did not have the opportunity to be qualified or to be prepared or equipped for employment.

Head 54, Ministry of Education, Guyana Industrial Training Centre - \$136,704 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.55 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 152

DIVISION XXIII – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,594,000 for Division XXIII – Ministry of Education stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: This Division deals with capital expenditure. I wish to speak on subhead 1, Primary, Multilateral and Secondary Schools - \$1 million. I am wondering if it should not read “Primary and Secondary” and leave out the “Multilateral”, because that has its own grant with the I.B.R.D. Project, that then leaves some more money for the Primary and Secondary Schools. I wonder if the hon. Minister could answer two questions. First of all, I repeat and I hope that the majority of this capital expenditure will be on primary schools. As I said, we are rushing ahead to give secondary education to our young people but primary education must not be made to pay for it. If you do not have the basic training you cannot cope with what comes later on. This seems to be the case. On page 17 of this excellent educational book of statistics, from 1966 to 1971 only seven primary schools were built in that period. I hope that consideration is being given to primary schools under the capital expenditure. I wonder if any will be built in Georgetown. Where will they be located? As I said, there is a need for primary education and I wish to quote from the only seven primary schools were built in that period. I hope that consideration is being given to primary schools under the capital expenditure. I wonder if any will be built in Georgetown. Where will they be located? As I said, there is a need for primary education and I wish to quote from the *Digest of Educational Statistics*, page 85:

“English Language remains a weak examination subject with 13.4 per cent passes, with modern language passes as low as 9 per cent.”

So the stress is on the need for our children to learn basic English and to start it in the primary schools. Therefore, we need a great proportion of this grant to be spent on primary schools especially as we are going to build the multilateral schools which will cope with all the different streams and all the projects that the hon. Minister has in mind. I wonder too if the hon. Minister's views have changed since she attended that P.N.C. Congress at Campbellville and I quote from the **Daily Chronicle** of Monday, 17th September, 1973:

“The Minister in a hard-hitting speech at yesterday's annual congress of the P.N.C.'s Campbellville Region declared that a stop had got to be put to a situation in which three-quarters of the nation's children are unable to read and pass out of school not knowing anything.”

Again another boost up to the fact that we need more primary schools. We must not sacrifice our primary schools. Some of this money is to go obviously on Government Secondary Schools because the aided schools are supposed to provide their own school buildings. This might be a bit unusual, but there is talk of matters of conscience – I think it is a phrase I have heard in the Courts of law – where the Ministry of Education is concerned it is a matter of conscience for the hon. Minister of Economic Development and the hon. Minister of Finance, because it is for them to consider. The aided secondary schools are doing a good job for our country. This has been acknowledged over and over again, but they are struggling along, they cannot raise their fees. We have discussed this earlier on in these Estimates and the point is the question of their buildings, they cannot extend their buildings. Could the government not see its way, as a matter of conscience to extend help to aided secondary schools? Will the Government see its way to grant to these aided schools specific amounts of money for capital expenditure to provide more school space and make use of the school facilities? As my colleague and leader has been saying, as the Chronicle mentioned, the government is not using the words “take over” but the word “nationalize”? Will the Government think of doing it that way? Or shall we face the realities of life that the Government cannot afford to do it that way because it cannot ever afford to pay the compensation to these schools?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, I think I called the attention to the fact that a school building programme is going on. I think I gave some indication of the number of schools that will be built and I cautioned the hon. Member not to think of school building in terms of the number of buildings but in terms of the number of places provided. We have new buildings, we have extensions and we have replacements. I want to suggest that the hon. Member might need some guidance to interpret the evidence shown in the Digest of Educational Statistics. I know that she is very interested and perhaps it would be very useful to arrange a meeting with Mr. Critchlow to explain that number seven and that king of thing.

I want to invite the hon. Member to accept that performance in any subject-field is not correlated with the provision of schools. We always tend to be preoccupied with quantity and I think we should because numbers are growing, but we must consider the quality of education and perhaps the percentages the hon. Member quoted are in relation to performance in the language of arts, I am sure that has nothing to do with the provision of primary schools. It has to do with the quality of the teaching, the quality of the educational experience received in those schools. We are deeply aware of the need to provide a continuous education programme for teachers. This is not a reflection on the teachers. Priorities change, techniques change, approaches change and we have to provide the kind of experience that will equip the teachers to carry out the task of educating and giving the education that will be relevant and education that will prove effective. That is why we are so concerned with teacher education.

18.12.73

National Assembly

4.05 – 4.15 p.m.

[Miss Baird continued]

4.05 p.m.

I do not know if the hon. Member knows that we held a Conference for Teacher Educators. The reason for this Conference was to call the attention of Teacher Educators to the importance of their understanding of what their roles were in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana; that they were not educating in a vacuum but that they were concerned with the framework in which they operated and that we wanted to call their attention to the fact that they needed to develop the skills that were necessary for them to make the contributions that we expect them to make.

The Conference was geared to initiate the movement to provide continuous education for the people who taught the teachers – the teacher educators. I think you will be interested to hear that in January next year – which for us in education could be called education year – we have a series of important workshops and conferences and meetings geared to develop deeper insights into our educational problems and, perhaps, to give us the insights into the solutions of the problems, how we can solve them. One of these activities will be concerned with Teacher Education where we will have distinguished people who are skilled in Teacher Education Programmes to come to look at our programmes and work out means by which we can improve these things and develop a continuous programme of exposure for teachers, for those who teach the teachers and for teachers in schools.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I just wish to take issue with the hon. Minister on the question of quality and quantity. Whilst appreciating fully what the hon. Minister says about quality, I cannot understand how she does not see that if you do not have the number of schools the quantity is important. If there is overcrowding, as we have in our Primary Schools now, how can you get the quality? If you have vast numbers of children, in order to be able to give the teachers the help needed to train these children properly you must increase the number of primary schools. When you do that it will take care of the quality.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister do you wish to say anything further?

Miss Baird: Yes, sir, I just want to make a comment. I think I made it very clear that we must be concerned with quantity because we have growing numbers of children every year and we are concerned with quantity because the Estimates show that we have made a provision for an increase in school places. I want also to tell the hon. Member that people who are educators know that it is important to prepare teachers to deal with large numbers, if they need to do so. The correction for matters referred to is concerned with the techniques of teaching which will improve the quality of education. That is why I referred to teacher education and I tried to give an explanation that we were concerned with Teacher Education, with the people who teach the teachers and with the teachers who teach in the classrooms so that we will equip them to deal with situations, for example, large classes, that we have in our environment. This is not unique to Guyana, a developing country. In developed countries, you have these problems of large numbers and it is the duty of education to prepare the teachers to cope with problems. Those are educational problems that, I can assure you, are dealt with.

Division XXIII, Ministry of Education - \$3,594,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**DIVISION XXIV – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,691,426 for Division XXIV, Ministry of Education, IBRD/IDA Projects, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to ask a question on the Multilateral Schools which, as I commented on earlier, have their own heading and have their own money

voted for them. I would make a general comment on the whole matter of the Multilateral Schools which is really dealt with under Subhead 1. The legend reads “To continue the construction of multilateral schools and staff houses at Mahaica, Anna Regina, Wismar, Ruimveldt, Vigilance, New Amsterdam I.D.A. Credit.” Therefore, it would leave more of the money to be spent on the Primary and Secondary Schools which, as the Ministers of Economic Development and Finance pointed out, had been increased to \$1 million. This is fine that it should be increased. The hon. Minister pointed out that the Grant had been increased since the Revised Grant of 1973 had gone up to \$1 million. It had been doubled but in these multilateral schools this is looking a little far as they are not finished yet.

I would like the hon. Minister to tell us how they are getting on. What is the position with the first three schools at Anna Regina, Mahaica and Wherefore, it would leave more of the money to be spent on the Primary and Secondary Schools which, as the Ministers of Economic Development and Finance pointed out, had been increased to \$1 million. This is fine that it should be increased. The hon. Minister pointed out that the Grant had been increased since the Revised Grant of 1973 had gone up to \$1 million. It had been doubled but in these multilateral schools this is looking a little far as they are not finished yet.

I would like the hon. Minister to tell us how they are getting on. What is the position with the first three schools at Anna Regina, Mahaica and Wismar? How are they going and how we hope to get on with them? I want to caution the Minister that within multilateral schools the time will come, maybe sooner than she thinks, when there will be the problem of dealing with quantity and producing-quality. It does not matter how much you train your teachers to cope with quantity there must be a saturated point, there must be a limit and this is why I keep on stressing the need for our Primary Schools where you have a school double its capacity. Surely that is more than saturated point, surely that is more than any group of teachers are supposed to cope with. That could happen to the multilateral schools but in the meantime, could the hon. Minister please tell us how they are getting on with the building?

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to tell the hon. Member and this House that we are ahead of schedule in the building of multilateral schools. I think you know that there are six multilateral schools to be built. At Anna Regina, Mahaica, Wismar, Ruimveldt, Vigilance and New Amsterdam I.D.A. Credit.

Division XXIV, Ministry of Education, IBRD/IDA Projects - \$9,691,426 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I just want to inform you that on the resumption we will do the three Motions by the Minister of Finance and then proceed to the Ministry of Works and Communications.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.15 p.m.

18.12.73

National Assembly

4.45 – 4.55 p.m.

4.45 p.m.

On resumption –

SIGNIFICATION OF CABINET’S RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope): In accordance with article 80(2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended that the National Assembly may proceed upon the following Motions:

- (i) a Motion to confirm the Purchase Tax (Motor Cars) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 1973 (No. 151),
- (ii) a Motion to confirm the Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 1973 (No. 152), and
- (iii) a Motion to confirm Customs (Export Duties) Order 1973 (No. 153).

The three Orders, for which we are now seeking confirmation, try to implement –

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, I wonder if we will do them one by one instead of doing them collectively, because they are three separate Motions.

CONFIRMATION OF PURCHASE TAX (MOTOR CARS) (AMENDMENT)

(NO. 3) ORDER 1973 (NO. 151)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 5A(5) of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance, Chapter 280, confirm the Purchase Tax

(Motor Cars) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 1973 (No. 151), which was made on the 10th of December, 1973, and published in the Gazette on the 10th of December, 1973.” [The Minister of Finance]

Mr. Hope: The first Motion is to confirm the Purchase Tax (Motor Cars) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 1973 (No. 151). This Order seeks to impose the purchase tax of 15 per cent, which has been projected in the Budget Speech, for application to motor cars of sizes in excess of 1600 cc. In doing this, we have in fact tried to avoid placing an additional burden on users of the smaller cars and in addition, we have exempted the motor cars which are registered for hire from this extra taxation. I therefore commend the Order for the confirmation of the House. Thank you, sir.

Question proposed.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, this order, and indeed all the other Orders referred to by the hon. Minister, I have dealt with them in my speech on the Budget proposals. I had signified our disagreement with the proposals. I had hoped that I could have prevailed on the hon. Minister to change his mind in respect of these proposals and that better judgement would prevail. Obviously, that hope has not received any reaction from Mr. Hope, so I have nothing further to say.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONFIRMATION OF CONSUMPTION TAX (AMENDMENT)

(NO. 3) ORDER 1973 (NO. 152)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act 1969 (No. 13), confirm the Consumption (Amendment) and published in the Gazette on the 10th of December, 1973.” [The Minister of Finance]

Mr. Hope: The second Motion seeks to confirm certain consumption taxes which had been imposed on certain articles, mainly electrical appliances with the exception of refrigerators, as well as on soft drinks and the other items listed in the schedule. Again, these particular taxes were projected in my Budget Speech, the Order was made, and now we are seeking the confirmation of this honourable House.

Question proposed, put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONFIRMATION OF CUSTOMS (EXPORT DUTIES) ORDER

1973 (NO. 153)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309,, confirm the Customs (Export Duties) Order 1973 (No. 153), which was made on the 10th of December, 1973, and published in the Gazette on the 10th of December, 1973.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

Mr. Hope: The final Motion seeks to impose certain export duties on two items of export. These are shrimp, on which the export duty is being increased from 12 cents to 19½ cents per pound, and on molasses, on which the export duty is being increased from 45 cents to \$4.45 per hundred gallons. Again, sir, like the previous two Motions, this particular Motion seeks to bring into effect finally the Budget projections with regard to these particular items, shrimp and molasses.

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, I think you are going to do the Tax (Amendment) (No, 2) Bill as well.

BILL – SECOND READING**TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1973**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Tax Ordinance.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

Mr. Hope: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with article 80(2) of the constitution of Guyana, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly, the Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1973.

I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled an Act to amend the Tax Ordinance. This is just another variation, but it has the same intention as the three previous Motions, that is, to bring into effect a Budget proposal which I announced in my Budget Speech, and this refers particularly and solely to the question of an additional excise duty on beer. I do not think there is much to be said here except to say that we all know that beer is not a drink exclusive to any income group in this country. We all drink beer and what has happened here is that this is in fact a non-essential. In the cases individual perhaps could no longer afford to drink as much as he normally did in the past, but we do not think we are really creating for him a situation of very grave difficulty. We really think this is an inessential.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

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

18.12.73

National Assembly

4.55 – 5.05 p.m.

4.55 p.m.

**RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE
ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1974**

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(COMMUNICATIONS)

Question proposed that the sum of \$499,177 for Head 34, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications), stand part of the Estimates.

Head 34, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications) - \$499,177 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 35 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(COMMUNICATIONS) – POST OFFICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,787,554 for Head 35, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications) – Post Office, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I will speak briefly on subhead 1, item 26 and subheads 4, 5, 11 and 18. Page 93, subhead 1, item 26, “Postal Agents.” We note in the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum of \$70,000 was provided. The Revised Estimates list the sum of \$39,366, a significant reduction. The sum asked for in 1974 goes back to \$70,000. So that only approximately 50 per cent of what was provided in the 1973 Estimates is going to be spent. What is the problem? Has there been a reduction in the amount of postal agents in the country? Because a vast country like Guyana with 83,000 square miles, with scattered population in the interior areas and indeed in all parts of the country, it is very vital that our postal outposts are properly served. We would like

4.55 p.m.

to know from the hon. Minister the reason for this underspending in 1973 but asking for the same amount again in 1974.

I should like to turn to page 94, subhead 4 and subhead 5. I will deal with them together. I would like to say how pleased I am to notice a reflection in these figures of a reduction.

We notice that under subhead 4 of the sum of \$120,000 was approved in the Estimates for “Telephones” and only \$119,000 was in fact on the Revised Estimates. For “Lighting” the sum of \$60,000 was put under the Approved Estimates and only \$49,800 was put in the Revised Estimates. This is the kind of underspending in “Telephones” and “Lighting” that we are very much happy to see particularly so because almost every other Ministry in this book has overspent. We see it recurring with such regularity. The reason given is increased costs. So it is refreshing to note that here no increased cost is claimed and the amounts are less than were originally provided. I commend the hon. Minister and his Ministry in respect of these items.

Under subhead 11, “Revenue Protection”, the sum being asked for is \$8,000 for 1974. The legend says, “Cost of printing tickets consequent on the introduction of ticket system.” I wonder whether the hon. Minister would like to tell us what is this ticket system for revenue protection. We cannot recollect having been told this before. The hon. Minister may well have said it but perhaps it would be good to repeat it.

Under subhead 18, “Postal Delivery on Sugar Estates”, the sum being asked for is \$42,480. I am not talking about the sum being asked for. I am merely talking about the preparation of the Estimates now and why it is necessary that this aspect of postal delivery should have special treatment. It appears here every year and I am not sure how long it has been appearing like this. It obviously must have had some kind of history. Why should this be so?

Why should not sugar estates be treated like any other area in the country and be absorbed in the general delivery of mails in the country? For example, we do not see any special item for the postal delivery in the Rupununi or Mazaruni areas. It may well be that this Head has something to do with the old days. I seem to remember as a boy coming off the train at Buxton

18.12.73

National Assembly

4.55 – 5.05 p.m.

4.55 p.m.

station and seeing the estate cart being there ready to receive the mails. It may have sort of history like that.

Now that we have scrapped the East Coast railway it may well be that the hon. Minister can recommend to his colleagues, the hon. Minister of Finance, to take this Head out completely as a separate Head. Let it be absorbed in the general delivery of mails throughout the country and put an end to this separate subhead which we have here.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

The Minister of Works and Communications (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, the question raised on subhead 1, item 26, the reason for the reintroduction of the amount of \$70,000 is that last year we had hoped to appoint a large number of Postal Agents in many of the remote locations in this country. We were not able, for several reasons, to make all of the appointments. We do hope to make them this year.

The question on subhead 11, which relates to the ticket system, is easily answered. There has been introduced a system of tickets for people who default in taking out radio licences in the same way as there is a ticket system for traffic offenders. This system enables people to pay their fines and penalties, if they accept liability, without having to line up at the Court and waste the Magistrate's time and their own time.

18.12.73

National Assembly

5.05 – 5.15 p.m.

5.05 p.m.

(Mr. Hoyte continues)

The point about subhead 18 is taken and there may be some validity in the observations of the hon. Member. I will pursue this matter.

Head 35, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications), Post Office - \$3,787,554, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 36 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(COMMUNICATIONS)

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,700,000 for Head 36, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications) – Transport and Harbours, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. chairman, this Head carries a very significant figure, \$3,700,000 for subsidy of transport services. We had always been told that the East Coast Railway particularly was being very heavily subsidized and we had expected that with the scrapping of the East Coast Railway there would have been some room to reduce this subsidy. Instead of that the subsidy appears to be going up. Because in 1971 the actual figure was \$2.5 million; in 1972 it was \$2.4 million; in 1973 it was \$3.9 million Revised, and there is a slight reduction from the 1973 revised amount to \$3.7 million. But it still shows an increase above what we expected after the scrapping of the East Coast Railway.

Perhaps I should ask some other questions. The Transport and Harbours Department should indeed be receiving either capital sums or rentals, because I note that a lot of properties which had originally been occupied by the Transport and Harbours Department are now occupied by other agencies, governmental and otherwise. For example, the Head Office at the head of High Street is now occupied by the Ministry of Finance; and the Georgetown Railway Station, is occupied by the Guyana Transport Limited I think. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us, if he can, whether the Transport and Harbours Department has sold these buildings

and these properties in which case there should have been capital revenue or whether it is receiving rentals as a result of its giving up these buildings to these other people. In fact, not only those that I have called, all the others, the railway stations along the East Coast, some of them are being used for other purposes at the present moment.

I note also that on page 206 there is a very revealing analysis on the Transport and Harbours Department. I have noted particularly that the Harbour and Pilotage Section in 1972 and 1973 made \$½ million profit. Services Not Receipts in 1972 was \$579,268, and in 1973 the Revised Estimates was \$½ million. This Harbour and Pilotage Section has been doing well over the years. It is the only department that has been making profits over the years, but apparently, come 1974, it will not do so well. From the figures shown it appears that from \$½ million profit this section is projected to make only \$7,000 profit. One wonders why this should be. This has always been a profit-making section. If the costs have gone up then maybe the pilotage charges should go up also. This obviously would fall on the private sector, it would fall on international shipping but on the other hand it would cause a reduction in the subsidy which has to be borne directly by the Guyanese taxpayer. If this one profitable section is now not so profitable maybe the hon. Minister should have a look at the desirability to revise the fees and raise them.

As I am on this general business of the Transport and Harbours Department perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us – in any case he would have the opportunity under the Capital Estimates but maybe I can raise it here and then I would not have to raise it under the Capital Estimates. Would the hon. Minister tell us about the proposals to improve the bottlenecks on the Ferry Services in this country particularly at New Amsterdam and Rosignol? What are these plans? How soon these plans will be implemented? What are these plans? How soon these plans will be implemented? Because it is a source of worry and irritation and it has resulted in lots of angry exchanges, it has even gone to our courts. And maybe the hon. Minister would like to tell us something additionally.

Recently we read about a great furore as to whether a Member of Parliament was entitled to priority to cross on the Ferry. I think the nation would like to know whether anybody is entitled to priority crossing. If so, who are the people entitled to priority to cross on the Ferry.

Of course, we hope to get to the stage where we do not have to bother about any system of priority because all of us would be able to get across. For the present moment there seems to be a bottleneck but it would be enlightening to know who are the people, if any, who are entitled to priority.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the question on the size of the subsidy, I would assure the hon. Member that had it not been for the phasing out of the East Coast Railway this subsidy would have been very much larger.

There is a very good reason for this large figure which appears in the Estimates. First of all, for many years the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department used to retire at the age 60. But in the course of this year the point was taken by the Director of Audit, I believe, and the law officers that in truth under the law these people were eligible for retirement at the age of 55.

5.15 p.m.

On closer examination of the actual legal provisionsthis was, indeed, found to be the case. Consequently, many people went into retirement with the result that provision which had not been budgeted for had to be found for pensions and gratuities. In addition, there were the salary increases and these were followed by increases in the several allowances paid to employees of the Transport and Harbours Department which moved in sympathy with the increases in salaries. In addition also there have been steep increases in fuel cost, for example. So the fact that there is this large difference between the Estimates as presented to this honourable House and the Revised figure is very easily explained.

The hon. member did raise a question about rental or capital receipts being received by the department in respect of property occupied by other government Ministries or agencies. To my mind, this is merely a book-keeping nicety or technicality because all the property owned by the Transport and Harbours Department has been acquired by monies provided by the Central Government. I do not think it matters too much in the final analysis whether the Transport and

[Mr. Hoyte continued]

Harbours got the capital receipts or the money remained in the coffers of the Central Government. But I would assure the hon. Member, however, that in respect of agencies such as the Guyana Transport Services Ltd., which is, of course, a Company and expected to operate in a businesslike fashion, there are ongoing discussions aimed at arriving at acceptable payments for the facilities enjoyed by the Company.

I take the hon. Member's point about congestion at Ferry Stellings and on the Ferries which cross between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop, and between Rosignol and New Amsterdam. I did explain some time ago in this honourable House that we are building a relief ferry boat. In fact, it is being built by Friendship Industries Limited which got the contract and which should be delivering that ferry boat early next year. This would serve to relieve the congestion between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop. The Congestion between New Amsterdam and Rosignol will be relieved by the transfer of the pontoon to that ferry crossing. We hope that very early next year the situation would be very much improved.

The other Member raised the thorny question of priority in crossing by the ferry. Let me say unequivocally that certain people must be granted priority on ferry crossings. While, by and large, we hope that persons would be accorded this privilege very infrequently, nevertheless one cannot make a rule that there should not be categories of persons who ought to be accorded this privilege. The New Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce did approach me on a large number of matters concerning the Ferry and the Ferry facilities and this was one of the questions they raised. It was not so much that they were objecting to the fact that some people get priority, but they wanted the matter formalized. I did promise them that I would try, as far as possible, to put out a formal list.

Let me say now that the problem has risen because unauthorized persons have been granted this facility – very often, I suppose, by friends who work on the stellings. We have tried to suppress this irregular practice, but surely we must have some flexibility in this matter. If a doctor has to cross urgently because he is required to save somebody's life; if a member of the Security Forces has to cross urgently; if for some reason of national importance some person has

[Mr. Hoyte continued]

to cross that Ferry at a certain time in the national interest, surely it must be open to the proper agency to accord that person the right and the privilege of crossing before other persons.

The hon. Member did raise the question about the reduction in the Pilotage and Harbour Fees. It is true that there has been a substantial reduction but, here again, this has been due to the salary increases which have been paid to Pilots and the lump sum in lieu of arrears and, of course, allowances which move in sympathy with Revised salaries. All these things come out of the fees which are received. Consequently, there has been a much smaller surplus this year. Whether or not there should be an increase in Pilotage Fees and Harbour Dues is a matter which one has to examine carefully because, in the final analysis, that increase is passed on to the consumer and Government does have an interest in trying to prevent, as far as possible, unnecessary increases in the prices of essential commodities at any rate.

Head 36, Ministry of Works and Communications, Transport and Harbours Department - \$3,700,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(COMMUNICATIONS)

CIVIL AVIATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$881,108 for Head 37, Ministry of Works and Communications, Civil Aviation, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I will deal with page 96, subhead 1 item (13) and page 97, subhead 1, item (17) subhead 9, Search and Rescue, page 96. Subhead 1, item (13), Supervisors of Constables, there is need for an explanation here because in the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum of \$5,688 was estimated to be the amount required to pay four Supervisors of Constables. This sum was revised in 1973 to \$8,832 but for 1974 for the same four Supervisors of Constables the sum being requested is \$16,200. In fact, this is twice the revised sum for 1973. It seems very unlikely that these four Supervisors of Constables could have had a 100 per cent increase in their

salaries. If we look at the bottom, Supernumerary Constables, their figure has not increased to any great extent. The revised figure was \$16,740 and the figure being asked for in 1974 is \$17,800. I wonder if the hon. Minister would give us an explanation for that.

We will turn now to page 97, subhead 1, item (17), Temporary Clerical Assistance. I know that it is so often usual to put in a token provision for Temporary Clerical Assistance and a token provision was provided in the 1973 Approved Estimates. But if we look at the 1973 Revised Estimates, there is a tremendous sum in relation to the sums we normally see for Temporary Clerical Assistance. This sum is \$21,312, so there must have been some particular reason why this great amount of Temporary Clerical Assistance was required. And since we are dealing with Estimates, obviously if we put a token sum of \$10 and we spend \$21,000, it must make the Estimates reflect a certain amount of inaccuracy.

5.25 p.m.

It must make the estimates not quite as realistic as they should be, so that I wonder whether there was some unexpected and unrecurrent reason for this temporary clerical assistance.

If it is something that will go on, then I recommend that instead of putting a token provision, the Minister should put a realistic figure, as we have done under item (20), Overtime Allowances, for last year. The revised sum for 1973 is \$30,000, and for 1974 we have estimated \$20,000, so it is not too far out in relation to the approved amount, which was \$10,000. I wonder whether the hon. Minister will let us know about that.

Subhead 9, Search and Rescue, and the sum being asked for 1974 is \$100. I do not want to ask about the sum being asked for. We note that the revised sum was \$16,786 and when that came up for discussion when supplementary estimates were being asked for, I did say that I was not talking at all about the amount being spent. Whenever there is a calamity, whenever human life is involved, then no amount of money is too much to help in disaster.

The point I want to make, is the point that I made at that time, but the hon. Minister, unfortunately, was not here. At that time, I recommended to the hon. Minister that he should investigate what had been told to me by a pilot during a discussion, when one of these calamities had occurred. The pilot told me there is an implement, it is called a beacon; it is in a box, a container. It is relatively low cost and it is something which can be put in every aircraft.

If the aircraft crashes, it automatically sends off a signal. The box is designed in such a way that it is not liable to be destroyed very easily at all. In a crash, this little box, which is so sturdily built, will be sending out a signal. It is a homing signal so that any rescue aircraft flying within miles of the vicinity will be able to pick up that signal, and as they pick up the signal, they will be able to fly towards the signal. As the signal becomes louder, they will be able to pinpoint the actual spot where the aircraft crashed.

I would recommend to the hon. Minister that legislation be enacted so that every aircraft in this country is equipped with one of these relatively low-cost devices. I understand they are very easily obtainable. Even if they cost a significant amount of money, what is a significant amount of money in relation to lives that are lost in these crashes? After all, we spent \$16,786 this year searching for an aircraft which was piloted by pilot Michael Rushing, with several people in the aircraft, including the brother of one of our hon. Ministers, and we still do not know where that aircraft is. It is somewhere. If there was this beacon in that aircraft, it may well be, we can never be certain, that that aircraft would have been located.

It is true that with the recent disaster which was suffered by the Guyana Airways Corporation, within a relatively short space of time the aircraft was spotted. It could well have been that the aircraft could have been spotted even earlier. Because it was the next day that it was spotted. It may have been spotted earlier if that aircraft had been equipped with that instrument. I have been told this on the authority of a very experienced pilot. He feels very strongly about it.

A general remark. As a result of the last disaster, it seems quite apparent that there is grave dissatisfaction among the pilots in the Guyana Airways Corporation. I recognize that the

18.12.73

National Assembly

5.25 – 5.35 p.m.

Guyana Airways Corporation has a very good record for safety in this country, but accidents will happen. Let us realise that we can never know when an accident will happen. I commend the Guyana Airways Corporation for its very long safety record but I say this could happen again in a relatively short space of time. I know that one of the areas of dissatisfaction is that the rescue team did not get off the ground as fast as the pilots would have liked it to get off the ground. There was some lapse of time before a proper rescue operation could have been finalized. There was no standing arrangement whereby the Government could have gone to any particular agency right away.

I am recommending that some arrangement could be made with one of those countries that are properly equipped to carry out rescue operations. Perhaps a standing arrangement could be made with some particular country. I understand the last rescue team came from Puerto Rico, and if the Americans have a rescue team based there permanently, at least some arrangement could be made with the United States Government whereby, as soon as we call on them, they can come out right away and start operations. What I gathered from the newspapers was that we were shopping around the various areas to find who could do the job. Some time, obviously, would have been spent in shopping around. We approached our Latin-American neighbours and then we got a rescue team from Puerto Rico.

Is there no way in which some standing arrangement could be made so that the pilots could know? It may not happen again for another ten years but it may happen at the end of this month. Could some standing arrangement be made whereby we can immediately have the expert services of a rescue team to come out as soon as we request their services? I also recommend that legislation be enacted to make it compulsory for each aircraft to be equipped with this beacon with the homing device.

5.35 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, item 13 on which the hon. Member raised a query is very simply explained. If one were to do some simple arithmetic one would see that this

works out at about \$300 per month for a Supervisor, that is, for each of the 4 Supervisors provided for in the Estimates. Scale A10 runs from \$203 to \$338 a month. It means that most of these people are somewhere on average in the middle of that scale.

Last year the situation was quite simple. First of all there was a lower salary scale and secondly there were vacancies. So if you take those 2 things into account you will see that the figures explain themselves easily.

Subhead 1, item 17, “Temporary Clerical Assistance.” Here again it is very difficult to anticipate how much temporary clerical assistance a department would need in the course of a year. The Ministry of Finance proceeds on the basis that this type of employee is employed for a very short period of time. Indeed this is so. That is why actual posts are not set out in the permanent establishment section of the Ministry.

There are several reasons why a large figure might turn up. For example, in the course of this year there was a request from the National Insurance Scheme for certain work to be done in examining the payments by the large number of unclassified people who were in the department of civil Aviation. This meant taking on people to do the job in a certain time.

Again, there were times when the capital programme of the department of Civil Aviation had to be accelerated because of weather conditions. A lot of the work is done in the hinterland; therefore one has to work during certain limited periods of the year. So no matter what figure one puts in the estimates, one is likely every year to be far off the target.

The hon. Member raised the question of providing an electronic device in aircraft to enable an aircraft which has crashed to be easily located. This is a matter which the Director of Civil Aviation himself has raised since the disaster we had earlier this year. This matter is being pursued by him. I am grateful to the hon. Member for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

I am not aware of dissatisfaction on the part of pilots of the Guyana Airways corporation. If there is, the pilots are highly educated, very articulate people. They have a very active

association. I am sure whatever problems they have can be sorted out with the management of the Guyana Airways Corporation.

I should like to say something about the point made by the hon. Member in connection with search and rescue operations and, in particular, with the operations which was mounted by the United States team in the course of our last disaster.

In the western hemisphere there are search and rescue areas carefully demarcated. Unfortunately, within those areas there are countries like Guyana which do not have the expensive and sophisticated equipment necessary for difficult search and rescue operations. So whenever we have a problem we put out an appeal to all of the people in the region who are likely to help. The first people who come, of course, get into the act and then we stand down the others.

In the disaster which occurred earlier this year hon. Members will recall that the people who arrived first and did very excellent work were the Brazilians. We are very grateful to them. Indeed, an American team arrived long after and said that they could not have done anything more than had been done by the local rescue party and the Brazilians. In fact, they themselves went back without doing anything.

On this occasion we did the same thing. The Americans arrived first. They, of course, effected the rescue of the one man who survived the crash. Again, sir, we have indicated to them our won appreciation of their efforts in this operation.

So there is really what one may call “an arrangement”; but we have to understand that search and rescue personnel and equipment are not there sitting down waiting for Guyana to send an S.O.S. Very often when we request assistance the personnel and aircraft are engaged in some operation. Sometimes we do have to wait. I do hope that the time will come, not very far away, when we will be able to have here in Guyana the equipment necessary for search and rescue operations.

Head 37, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications) – Civil Aviation - \$881,108 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**DIVISION XX – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS
(COMMUNICATIONS) – POSTAL AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,340,700 for Division XX – Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications) – Postal and Communications, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I should like elaboration on some of the legends of this division. Subhead 3, Purchase of Tugs and Barges. The legend says, “To complete the construction of a tug and to purchase one self-propelled barge.” We are grateful to the hon. Minister for the information about the proposals for reducing the bottle-neck both at Georgetown and New Amsterdam. I wonder whether anyone of these is involved there. I do not think so. Perhaps the hon. Minister would clarify this. If they are not involved where is this tug to go? It may well be for stone. Where is this self-propelled barge going to be used? Could the hon. Minister tell us?

The next subhead, subhead 6, “Construction and/or reconditioning of ships.” The legend says, “To recondition ships.” Is this any particular ship or is it ships generally? I presume from a statement made in this honourable House previously that it will not be the “Ambrosia.”

Subhead 13, “Dredging Equipment.” We note the legend says, “To provide for the design and construction of a dredge, Foreign assistance anticipated.” Foreign assistance in respect of most of the others is identified. Within the limits of state secrets and everything else could the hon. Minister say from where this foreign assistance is forthcoming?

Subhead 18, “Rehabilitation of Timehri Airport.” The not insignificant sum of \$1,400,000 is asked for the 1974 Estimates. When we look at the legend, depending on what

works are anticipated, the sum may not even be enough but obviously some extensive work is anticipated. The legend says, “To provide for extension work at Timehri Airport.” Could the hon. Minister give us an idea of this extension work? Where is it going to be? To increase the accommodation in what part of Timehri Airport?

I presume that this work would be done by our local people. It may be force account or otherwise local contractors because I am positive in my own mind that our local people are quite competent and they possess the expertise to do any work on that Timehri airport other than to put up radar equipment or anything like that.

5.45 p.m.

Subhead 21, I presume we will need two aircraft instead of one.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the tug and barge referred to under subhead 3; I will deal with that question first. The tug is being constructed by Messrs. Sprostons Limited, the barge is being constructed by Friendship Industries limited. The tug should be delivered, I think, some time next month; the barges should be delivered at the end of this year. These ships will be used as freighters for the Georgetown/Essequibo Coast/Essequibo Islands run. They will do two things. First of all, they will relieve the vessels which ply between Georgetown and Essequibo Coast of the necessity to bring cargo, particularly farmers’ produce. Secondly, they will enable quicker movement of freight between the two points.

Subhead 6: the provision is for the reconditioning of some of the ships in the fleet of the Transport and Harbours Department which are due for re-conditioning now. Unless we do the necessary maintenance work they are likely to deteriorate rapidly to a point where perhaps they would be lost.

Subhead 7, Miscellaneous Equipment. There are items which range from forklift trucks to draglines and power saws, which are necessary to enable the Department to carry out

(Mr. Singh continued)

efficiently the wide range of duties imposed upon it. For example, the Department off-loads cement which comes to this country. Obviously, there is need, if it is going to do its work properly, to have items like forklift trucks.

With regard to the dredge equipment referred to at subhead 13, it is not possible at this stage to state emphatically the source of foreign financing. The hon. Member would know that most of the traditional sources from which we get aid have a financial year which runs differently from ours. In the case of the British, it is after April, in the case of the Americans, it is after June. Even though we have certain understandings, we do not have a commitment which enables us to say that we will get foreign financing from the United Kingdom or from the United States. Whenever the legend does not specify, the reason is that we cannot legally say nor can the country which is going hopefully to give us this assistance legally say that we will get it, because their Parliaments have not yet approved. We proceed on the basis of certain understandings, but, of course, we cannot state details publicly until the formalities, legal and otherwise, have been completed in the country from where we are going to get the aid.

Subhead 18, Rehabilitation of Timehri. This sum is required to improve and extend the parking facilities for aircraft. We lose a lot of revenue because some aircraft would like to overnight here, but we do not have the facilities. We intend in the course of next year, if Parliament provides the sum requested, to extend the parking facilities so that the aircraft can overnight here and park safely.

Division XX, Ministry of Works and Communications – Communications, Postal and Communications - \$8,340,700, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 38 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

(WORK) ESTABLISHMENT

The Chairman: We will do pages 99 to 106. There are some corrections I should like to announce.

- (i) The insertion of “1” in the Column “Subhead No.” and “037,001” in the Column “Code No.” opposite “Brought Forward” on page 100.
- (ii) That the word “Procurement” be substituted for the word “Precurement” opposite item (31).
- (iii) Substitute the word “Technician” for “Technician” in the legend for item (42).
- (iv) Substitute the word “Assistants for “Assistance” in the legend for item (67).
- (v) Substitute “1973” for “1971” in the legend for item (116).
- (vi) Insert “ ...” immediately before “\$677,207” in the last column opposite “Carried Forward” on page 103.
- (vii) Insert “...” immediately before “\$1,121,086” in the last column opposite “Brought Forward” on page 105.

On page 106, the last item should read “..... made under subhead 17 Division XXI.”

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,863,499 for Head 38, Ministry of Works and Communications, (Works) Establishment, stand part of the Estimates.

5.55 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I will deal progressively with head 38, subhead 1, items (11), (12) and (13). They deal with Senior Economist, Economist and Cost Accountant. These are three posts which form the nucleus of what I understand to be the Planning Unit in the Ministry and a look at the figures seems to suggest that there is a vacancy or, perhaps, more than one vacancy. For example, the Senior Economist, the revised figure projected to be spent for 1973 Revised Estimates is only \$3,950. Obviously, unless the Senior Economist came in during the year you could not get a Senior Economist at that kind of figure. I wonder whether the Minister would shortly tell us whether these posts are filled and if this Planning unit is, in fact,

performing its rightful duty in the Ministry of Works and Communications because it is a very vital Unit.

I would like to ask a general question in respect of the Building division on page 100. It is dealing with subhead 1, items (45) to (59). This Division has, in the past, suffered from vacancies and this is understandable because some of the posts here are specialists' post and it is not always easy to get the people to fill these posts. I merely want to ask the hon. Minister what vacancies are there in this Division because we would appreciate that to carry out the Government's professed programme of Feeding, Clothing and Housing the nation. This Division will also have to play a part.

Let us turn now to page 102 and I want to deal generally with the Electrical Inspection Division. It would be items (99) to (105). In 1974 we will see that the staff is projected to be the same as it was in 1973 and, indeed, in 1972. If we look at the 1973 Estimates, in 1971 the staff was the same number. There has been no increase in staff for the last three years, at least, and I rather suspect that there has been no increase for even much more than three years. What has happened within recent times? We have had the Electricity Expansion Programme whereby electricity has been taken along the East Coast, along the West Coast Berbice and to many other areas in the country. There has been a terrific expansion programme by the Corporation under the hon. Minister, Dr. King. They are doing a very commendable job but, concurrently with that, wires have to be run in the homes and the members of this Electrical Inspection Division have to inspect each home in which electricity is taken. Each home that is wired for electricity under the law has to be inspected by this Division, has to be passed Electrical Inspection Division and a Certificate has to be issued before they are within the law.

This is a big expansion programme and not only the Electricity Expansion Programme but let us remember also that we have had houses built in South Ruimveldt by the Guyana Housing and Development Company Limited. In the Lodge area those houses in the big Housing Scheme have been put up by private enterprise, particularly. Guyana timbers Limited did some but the private enterprise did the bulk. All the South Ruimveldt houses have been done

by the G.H.D.S.'s financing. The point I am making is that all those houses also have to be inspected. A Certificate has to be written and after that the people are within the law.

If we have not increased the staff of this department for so many years how could we expect these gentlemen to cope with this increase of work. It must necessarily mean that these goodly gentlemen here are not being given enough attention. I think enough attention is not being paid to this department. If we are to house ourselves by 1976, obviously this department will have to be expanded at a much greater rate. It would have to be expanded because there has not been any expansion. I know for a fact that numerous complaints have been made by people as regards delays in having their buildings inspected and I do not think this is any reflection on the Officers. They just have too much work to do. And in addition to that, my information is that they have only three vehicles and even those vehicles are new. They should have supplemented the fleet but, in fact, the others they were supposed to supplement have gone out of existence and so they are left with three vehicles.

It is true that the Officers have cars and get car allowances but there are certain areas where the Officer cannot be expected to go with his car because the roads are bad, so you would need the vehicles which the Division has to go into these areas and certainly the present complement of vehicles is just not enough. I think I would implore the hon. Minister to give some special consideration to this division in all the circumstances.

I see that even the Chief Electrical Inspector's salary is not commensurate with the other Divisional heads in this Ministry. The Chief Hydro Meteorological Officer, the chief Engineer, Hydraulics and all the other Divisional Heads are on higher salary scales. It may well be that this department needs a complete revision of salaries from the top to the bottom because they have a very important revision of salaries from the top to the bottom because they have a very important role to play in the development Certificates you cannot legally turn on your lights. I would implore the hon. Minister to let us have an increase in this staff, a regarding of the salaries of all these Officers and supplying them with more transportation.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the Planning Unit is suffering from not having both a Senior Economist and a Cost Accountant at the moment. The reason is that these people are very scarce and there is a great demand for their services and so we find a great turnover. People come into the unit, look around quickly and then they are snapped up by some other agency which offers, perhaps, higher emoluments or better conditions. We do hope that in the coming year we will be able to staff the unit properly and get on with the very important work which it is intended the unit should do.

6.05 p.m.

In the Building Division, there are several vacancies among the Architects. There is a vacancy, I think, for Chief Architect. We have people acting up, of course, and we have made an arrangement with the U.K. Government to let us have, by way of technical assistance, the services of an architect. We hope to recruit another architect through the good offices of the Government of India, and we hope to have one of our own people in training return in the course of next year.

In addition, we have an arrangement with the Guyana Architects' Association whereby they are involved in the work of this division, as a result, despite the fact that we do have vacancies, we have been able to get on reasonably well with the architectural work we have to do.

I do not agree with the hon. Member that if we have an increase in the volume of work we necessarily must have an increase in the number of electrical inspectors or other persons in the electrical division. What we have done, first of all, is to have increased the mobility of the personnel and ensured that we can deploy them more readily and more effectively by installing radios in the vehicles which they use. I am not sure where the hon. member got his information from, but it is inaccurate to say that that division has only three vehicles. I do not accept this idea in the Ministry of Works and Communications or indeed in the Government system, that a division has vehicles.

As far as I am concerned, the Ministry has vehicles and all the vehicles must be deployed in the service of the Ministry. That is how the Ministry operates. I have had no complaints from the electrical division about being unable to get transportation to get to any place.

I will say further, that one must look also at other subheads which provide for supporting staff for the electrical division, for example, subhead 1, item (134), which provides for electrical assistants. The work of this division is supplemented by people whom we get from the Technical Institute, graduates, whom we absorb into the system and pay from other votes. These people get additional training; but, while they are getting this higher training, that is, training over and above the training they got at the Technical Institute, they are very useful in doing work of a routine nature under proper supervision.

The hon. Member did refer to the salary of the head of the division. I personally agree with the point of view which he has expressed, and I believe that the officer is taking the necessary steps to have his grading reviewed.

Head 38, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works), Establishment - \$8,863,499 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS (WORKS)
ANNUALLY RECURRENT**

The Chairman: Pages 107 to 108. There is a correction on page 107, subhead 11. The last column should read “-4,000”.

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,892,028 for Head 39, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works), Annually Recurrent, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 8, Lorry Transportation, Recurrent Services. One again, I must congratulate the hon. Minister because I am very pleased to see a reduction in expenditure of \$100,000. It is so very rare to notice a reduction that perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us, and, indeed, to tell his colleagues, how, in view of the fact that we read with such monotonous regularity in these Estimates of rising costs, he has been able to effect a significant

reduction in something like lorry transportation, recurrent services, where instead of asking for \$400,000 as he did in 1973, for 1974 he is asking for only \$300,000.

Subhead 16, payment of Rates on Unalienated State Lands in the Vergenoegen/Bonasika Drainage and Irrigation Areas. The sum sought in the 1973 Approved Estimates was \$43,778 but the Revised Estimates show \$695, and in the 1974 Estimates, the sum has gone back to the figure \$43,778. Obviously, even though it was felt that this money would have had to be paid out in 1973 at the beginning of the year, during the year the figure was revised to \$695 only. Will the hon. Minister tell us why this estimated amount was not in fact paid? I notice in the other subheads all the amounts have been paid out, for example, rates for Potosi/Kamuni, rates for Tapakuma, all those have been paid except this sum for Vergenoegen/Bonasika.

We turn to the next page, page 108, Quarries division, subhead 24, Stone Crushing Plant, Makouria and Teperu, and the sum being asked for is \$1,200,000. For the transportation of crushed stone, the sum being asked for under subhead 25 is \$664,000 so that for that Quarries Division, stone crushing and transportation of the crushed stone is \$1,200,000 plus \$644,000, making a total of \$1,844,000.

When we look at the other page, we see the deduction from the operation of these quarries, and here I am presuming – I may be presuming erroneously – that the value of all issues including issues to the Ministry itself is reflected here in the deduction. And when we look at that, we see: “Deduct – Issue of Stone \$1,199,999” which is \$1 less than \$1,200,000 which is being asked for, and then under the “transportation of Crushed Stone” again we see, subhead 103, “deduct - \$643,999, and we will remember the sum asked for was \$644,000.

[Mr. M.F. Singh contd.]

6.15 p.m.

So in both of those cases the figure project \$1 less in each. I presume it is intended to show a break even in the operation of those quarries. But when we add on the cost of the staff, the necessary supervision by the permanent establishment then it is clear that it is being run at a loss. Will the hon. Minister tell us what plans there are to make this available proposition, particularly when we take into consideration the vast sums of capital money that have been spent on Glasgow/Teperu Quarry? For example, in 1974 if we look at page 110 we will see that \$1.4 million is estimated to be spent on capital works on Glasgow/Teperu Quarry. So for this big investment if it is that the cost of the stone used by the Ministry is also included then the quarries are being run at a loss.

The first question that the hon. Minister would have to enlighten me on is whether the cost of the stone used by the Ministry is included in the sums which are reflected to be deducted. If that is not so then it is an uneconomic proposition on a business basis. There may be a social justification for it. There may be Governmental justification for it. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us a little bit more about it.

One point I have to make on subhead 31. There is nothing provided in the 1973 Revised Estimates in respect of subhead 31, "Special grants to Drainage and Irrigation Board in Lieu of Rates on Area incompletely served in the Mahaicony/Abary Drainage and Irrigation Area." The sum originally estimated to be spent in the Approved Estimates for 1973 was \$3,809. Nothing is reflected in the Revised Estimates but the same sum of \$3,809 is projected in the 1974 Estimates for subhead 31.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, maybe I can answer the last question first. It is the easiest one. This amount was originally intended to be reflected in the Estimates of the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture since drainage, as a subject, has gone over to that

Ministry. It was not reflected there in the end and we have brought it back to the Ministry of Works and Communications.

In respect of the payment of rates on unalienated State lands in the Vergenoegen/Bonasika drainage and irrigation areas, two things happened in the course of this year. First, there was a waiver by the Government of large accumulations of rates owing by farmers in that area and, secondly, a waiver of current rates until the work which is being done now to complete the drainage and irrigation scheme has been completed.

It is projected that that work would be completed around 1975. The P.P.P. Government did launch that scheme, I think in 1960, although all the infrastructural work was not completed. The people who farm in that area were not able to make a proper living from farming activities. As I said, arrears and current rates in that area have been waived. The Government hopes to put the farmers in that area in a position in 1975 to make farming an economic activity.

The hon. Member looked at a book-keeping point in connection with the quarries division and concluded that, as the expenditure shown here amounts to a certain figure and the deduction of issues amounts to a figure of \$1 less than the expenditure shown, the quarries are an uneconomical and unviable activity. It is not so. First of all, one does not expect that from the capital investment one will get back all the money in a short space of time or right away. What one has to be concerned about is a rate of return over a reasonable period of time.

What is shown here is roughly a balancing item, monies expended, monies received. But there is a proper organisation in the quarries and, although I am in no position to say precisely what the returns from the quarries are in financial terms. I believe that the quarries are not being run inefficiently not are they unviable.

The difficulty here, of course, has been touched upon by the hon. Member; namely, that there is a lot of backup services: Clerks at headquarters, accountants and people like that whose services are not quantified. We really would not be able to do that unless we convert the quarries into a corporation or company of other separate entity and keep the books showing the cost of every item. Whether that is desirable is a nice point; but from the available information and from

the work done by the last Cost Account before he left us for what he considered to be greener pastures in another section of the Public Service, it does appear that the quarries are doing reasonably well.

The hon. Member will be aware that this kind of operation calls for very heavy investment.

Head 30, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works) – Annually, Recurrent - \$9,892,028 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXI – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS – WORKS

The Chairman: On page 110 there is a correction there. Subhead 10 should read, “West Demerara Roads.” Subhead 15 should read, “Government Offices.” At subhead 20 the word should be “Hydrometeorology”.

Question proposed that the sum of \$32,715,700 for Division XXI, Ministry of Works and Communications – Works, stand part of the Estimates.

6.25 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the hon. Minister would welcome the opportunity to tell us of his plans in respect of road building for next year and particularly if he could tell us about the East coast roads where details obviously cannot be given in those Estimates.

I am sure the hon. Minister will welcome the opportunity to tell us where he will spend \$2,800,000 in respect of East Coast roads because the legend merely states: “To provide for construction cost and consultant fees.” It is obvious that he anticipates that road work will be done on the East Coast and he could perhaps identify the areas. Also it may well be Georgetown/Buxton as he is talking about, but we would like to know from the horse’s mouth, so to speak.

Subhead 4, Georgetown Roads. There again the amount is \$2 million and we would welcome details on that. Subhead 5, East Bank, Berbice Roads, \$2,900,000 and then subhead 8, Hinterland Roads, \$9,450,000. Let me say how grateful I am to the hon. Minister for having invited me to go with him on that trip to the Interior and say how sorry I was that it was not possible for me to make the trip with him. I understand that it was really an experience and I am sorry that I was robbed of that experience. I do understand that the opportunity may present itself again in the not too distant future.

Subhead 15, Government offices, \$1 million “to provide for the construction of Government Offices.” Would the hon. Minister tell us what offices and where? Because bearing in mind the shortage of land space round and about Georgetown we would like to know where these offices will be.

We have dealt with the Glasgow/Teperu already so I would not repeat that.

Subhead 27, Memorial to the late Sir David Rose. This is very commendable. The sum of \$50,000 is show in the 1974 Estimates, then the 1973 Revised Estimates I see the sum of \$65,000. I have before me Financial Paper No. 5 of 1973 and in this honourable House we passed as item 18, Code No. 114063 the sum of \$85,000 as additional provision sought “to provide for the construction of a memorial to the late Sir David Rose.” It must be a mistake. Either the sum of \$85,000 mentioned here is wrong – and I doubt it, because we have passed it in this House – or the sum of \$65,000 in the Revised Estimates is wrong. Because if this House approved Supplementary Provision of \$85,000 I would expect to see that reflected in these Estimates. I do not think we got details about this. This is something we are very happy about and the nation would certainly like to know more about this memorial for the late Sir David Rose.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, we propose to continue our road building activities next year, all of which are aimed at ensuring that the economic life of this country is maintained.

On the East Coast of Demerara, we propose to start building a four-lane highway between Georgetown and Buxton. I think the need for such a highway is obvious to anybody who has the misfortune to be on that road early in the morning or in the afternoon between 4 and 6 o'clock. And beyond Buxton to Mahaica we will be widening the road and straightening out some of those very dangerous bends in the road.

In Georgetown we will continue the widening of sheriff Street; we will link up Sheriff Street with Ruimveldt Avenue, and princess Street will be upgraded and tied in with the East Bank network so that people coming from the East Coast and beyond on can get to the East Bank without having to pass through the very heart of Georgetown.

In the East Berbice we hope to continue the work which has already started there right through to Canje to improve the approaches to New Amsterdam, that is, both from the Canje side and the East Bank side, and also to reconstruct the Canje Bridge which is death hazard in Berbice.

Hinterlands Roads. We will, first of all, be starting the road from Wineperu to the Hydropower site in the Upper Mazaruni. That road is an urgent priority because it is along that road that equipment will have to be taken to construct the Hydropower station. As hon. members know, we hope to have that hydropower station commissioned between 1978 and 1979. In addition, we will be starting the upgrading of the Lethem/Annai road up to all-weather standard. We will continue to upgrade the Mahdia/Annai National Self-Help Road and we will start upgrading the Crabwood Creek/Orealla Road, another national self-help road. Now that the self-help effort has been completed. We will be starting work on that road to bring it up to the required standard. Also, we will start upgrading the Kwakwani/Ituni self-help road to all-weather standard. Those are the main hinterland roads we will be doing next year.

6.35 p.m.

The hon. Member asked about the Government Offices we hope to build next year. We will be starting work on a new Customs Building. The present building is very congested and very uncomfortable for members of the department to work in the department has already started

18.12.73

National Assembly

6.25 – 6.35 p.m.

to move to temporary quarters so we hope that during the first week of next year we would start working on a new Customs Building which would give pleasure both to people who work in the department and to members of the public who have to deal with the Customs Department.

The hon. Member asked about the Memorial to the late Sir David Rose. It is a little difficult for me to describe the architectural design, but there will be a Monument with appropriate landscaping built at the place where the late Governor General was buried – at the site of the Seven Ponds. Maybe, what I can do for the hon. Member is to let him have a look at the model which has been prepared by the architect, but I confess that I would not be able to describe the architecture. [Mr. Singh: “What is the \$65,000 for?”] I find that difficult to understand myself and I suspect that there is some error there. It is now being explained to me that originally there was a request for \$65,000, but that was revised to \$85,000 and that accounts

6.35 p.m.

for the figure in the Financial Paper. The explanation for the difference between the figure in the Financial Paper and the figure here is that this figure is wrong.

Division XXI, Ministry of Works and Communications, Works - \$32,715,700 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXII – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS – (WORKS)

IBRD/IDA PROJECTS

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,277,000 for Division XXII, Ministry of Works and Communications, Works, IBRD/IDA Projects, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXII, Ministry of Works and Communications, Works, IBRD/IDA Projects - \$5,277,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

18.12.73

National Assembly

6.35 – 6.40 p.m.

Assembly resumed

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, on the resumption we propose doing the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Housing until they are both concluded. Hon. Leader of the House.

SUSPENSION OF STAND ORDER

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): Your Honour, as we are all aware, the Standing Orders provide that we meet at 8 p.m. It is necessary, therefore, for me to move the suspension of Standing Order 9(2) for us to meet at 8.15 p.m. and continue after 10 p.m. The Standing Orders also provide that we can only go up to 10 o'clock. Of course, it is hoped, if necessary, that we go beyond 10 p.m. to complete the Ministries of Health and Housing. I accordingly move the suspension of Standing Order 9(2) to facilitate those procedures.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sitting suspended at 6.40 p.m.

8.10 p.m.

On resumption –

Mr. Speaker: We will continue in Committee of Supply to continue the consideration of the Estimates for 1974.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

HEAD 55 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

The Chairman: Pages 134 and 135. There is a correction on page 135. The legend for subhead 25 should read “Increased Costs”, the legend for Subhead 26 should read “New Subhead” and the legend for Subhead 27 should read “Increased Contribution due to revised salaries”.

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,018,565 for Head 55, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, page 135. I would just like to ask two short questions on Subheads 5 and 13, and one is more an observation. Subhead 5, Pharmacy and Poisons Board – Expenses of \$35,500. The Approved Estimates in 1973 was \$33,000, the Revised Estimates was \$30,000 and now we are asked to vote \$35,500. The legend says “Increase due to Revision of Salaries” and I hope that the grant will be fully utilised because the Pharmacy and Poisons Board have a big job before them. I was, indeed, pleased to learn this morning when I heard the news that the Ministry of Health is going to run Seminars for shopkeepers in order to instruct them in the sale and the use of weedicides and thinks like malathion and so on. I am very heartened to hear this because I think we have a problem in Guyana where people are careless. We had an incident the other day when a woman sent a child to the shop to buy cooking-oil, the bottle had previously contained malathion or some sort of poison and the family was, subsequently, very ill. They are fortunate that they did not die.

I want to congratulate the hon. Minister. Since this Minister’s arrival on the scene and handling of the Ministry of Health, I have noticed that he is really doing things and going places with the Health Ministry. I feel we are going to make progress now. The past Minister in that Ministry seems to have sat down and done nothing and not bothered so much, but I have found that this Minister has really gone out of his way to try and listen to problems and suggestions made by other people. Listen is what some of you back-benchers must do. So I wish to compliment the hon. Minister and I think that this innovation of the Seminar by the Poisons Board is an excellent one.

Subhead 13, Convalescent Home for Children. I presume that this Subhead refers to the Princess Elizabeth Red Cross Convalescent Home for Children. This grant of \$26,000 has been going on ever since 1971, it does not move at all. This Convalescent Home takes in many of the children who are abandoned at the P.H.C. When some mothers take them there for treatment and

18.12.73

National Assembly

8.10 – 8.15 p.m.

they are admitted, the mothers never go back for them and, consequently, they are foisted on to the Convalescent Home.

8.15 p.m.

This is not the original idea of the convalescent home. It was not built for that purpose but it is a question of necessity being the mother of invention. This home is for children who come out of hospital, and children from homes, who need a period of convalescence.

In view of the increased cost of living, I wonder when consideration will be given to increasing this grant to this convalescent home.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health

The Minister of Health (Dr. Harper): Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the hon. Member of the Opposition for her commendation of the Ministry of Health. Earlier this year a Bill was passed according to the Pharmacy and Poisons Board the responsibility of handling antibiotics, and the Board also will have expanded functions owing to the enactment of the Food and Drugs Act, which we hope will enable Guyana to set certain standards for processed foods and to set certain standards for the storing and the distribution of drugs that will help us to keep abreast of other progressive nations in the world.

The greatest wealth of any country, especially a developing country, is her children, and for the last few years we have been trying to do our best for the children of Guyana with the limited resources at our disposal. For the next two years, our Ministry has set as its priority the programme of maternal and child health in which we hope to produce healthier mothers and healthy children in Guyana.

Head 55, Ministry of Health - \$1,018,565 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 56 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

MEDICAL

The Chairman: Pages 136, 137 and 138. There are some corrections. On page 137, item (41), the figure under “1974 Estimates” should read, “\$121,096.” On page 138, the legend for subhead 20 should read “Expansion of service.”

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,937,822 for Head 56, Ministry of Health, Medical, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: On page 136, subhead 1, I shall take together items (5), (11), (24) and (25); items (27) and (28), items (32), (35) and (36), dealing first of all with subhead 1, item (5), Senior Surgeons, we have been asked to vote \$75,456 and the establishment for 1974 calls for 6 Senior Surgeons. There were 3 in 1972, 3 in 1973, and now there are 6 in 1974. I should like the hon. Minister to tell us if he has been able to get the services of 6 surgeons so that the complement would be complete.

I have a note here from one of the daily newspapers, where there is an article on the shortage of G.M.O.’s at the hospital and, particularly, the article refers to the surgeons in the surgical block. There is one peculiar statement which I do not quite understand and I wish to quote:

“It was understood that the hospital authorities were last night planning to transfer some of the G.M.O.’s from the medical block of the hospital to assist on the surgical wing until the staff could be increased.”

Assist yes, but how does one make a physician into a surgeon without any training. Just go along and see if everyone is all right. Fair enough. But a physician is not a surgeon. I just want to know if the complement of six senior surgeons has been realized for 1974.

Under item (11), Pediatrician, the legend states: “One post of Physician redesignated Pediatrician”. I should like to make a similar comment here. A pediatrician, to my way of understanding, is a specially trained person in the field of looking after sick children. How does one just transfer or redesignate a physician and christen him a pediatrician. It is like a silly joke they used to tell years ago about Catholics, that on Fridays you baptize meat and call it “fish”. It

does not work that way, and I am wondering how the Government expects to do this with a pediatrician and a physician.

Items (24) and (25), Principal Obstetrician and Gynecologists and the Senior Obstetricians and Gynecologist. It appears under these two items that it is a question of, as it were, taking one of the Senior Obstetricians and Gynecologists under item (25) promoting him, and making him a Principal Obstetrician and gynecologist under subhead (24). That may be very well and good for the gentleman if he deserves the promotion and increased pay, but it shortens the number of Senior Obstetricians. It takes them down to two. It seems to me we can do with somebody in that post, a Senior Obstetrician, and by all means have the Principal Obstetrician occupy the post above. I would like to find out if this is proposed or if it is only a temporary measure to have it like that until they can fill the vacancy.

Items (27) and (28), Senior Psychiatrist, and Psychiatrist, similar sort of thing, one Psychiatrist filling a vacancy but the legend to item (27) states: "One post of Psychiatrist regarded Psychiatrist." I do not understand what it means, it probably relates to Senior Psychiatrist.

Then we come to item (32), Medical Officers. I do not want to read Dr. Broomes' "patients be damned mentality" article. We cannot go on with the same story over and over again. However there were some very worthwhile advice and suggestions in the article about the Public Hospital and suggestions for the improvement of it.

To identify the article for the sake of the reporters, the article is written by Dr. E.L.C. Broomes and it appears in the **Guyana Graphic** of Monday, 26th November, 1973.

I want to talk about this business of medical officers being allowed private practice officially outside hospital hours. It is a well-known thing that this is not just outside of official hospital hours that they do this, but they are using the hospital facilities, they are using their position there to do private practice. As a matter of fact, I have a cutting here from somebody called Ivor Gibbs who had written a letter to the **Sunday Argosy**, on October 28th, talking about doctors openly soliciting patients when they attend the clinics, to go and see them privately.

8.25 p.m.

I want to know what is the position. Some hospitals have a worse reputation than others. Unfortunately, I am unhappy to say that in New Amsterdam it seems to be very, very prevalent. It is open knowledge in New Amsterdam.

I should like clarification on this point: If a patient goes to the Mental hospital for shock treatment is he supposed to pay or is it part of the service of the Mental hospital? I know a patient who went there for shock treatment and was asked to give the doctor \$20. He gave the \$20 to the doctor who put it in his pocket and no receipt was issued. I should like to know what really is the position.

The last 2 items under subhead 1, items 35 and 36, the Health Engineer and his assistant. I am not quite sure what a Health Engineer is. Would the hon. Minister please explain?

Mr. Chairman: Do you want me to go on or shall I allow the hon. Minister reply to questions on this page?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, please continue.

Mrs. DaSilva: To come to page 137, subhead 38, "Health Education Officer." I am glad the hon. Minister of Information and Culture is here. I spoke earlier this afternoon and yesterday about her working in co-operation with the Education Department and the Ministry of Health for publicizing and making use of all the facilities at her disposal.

There is a School Health Education Committee which is going to work in collaboration with the Health teaching curriculum in an effort to show that health education activities are relevant to present day health needs and problems. The committee is also engaged in the revision of the health guide. I hope the hon. Minister of Health will be able to tell us that he will make full use of the facilities offered by the Ministry of Information and Culture to help with his work because I think this is exactly how it should be: working in co-operation with that Ministry.

Coming now to page 138, subheads 12, 17, 21 and 23 which have to do with health education. Dealing first with subhead 12, “Notification of Infectious Diseases.” I notice we have been voting for years only \$100 for this subhead. I should like to ask the hon. Minister if anything has been done to tighten up on the notification of infectious diseases now that we have a new broom sweeping clean through the Ministry of Health.

We in Guyana are very casual about this. As a matter of fact it has been said, for example, referring to people who have tuberculosis, that if you know the right doctor and you know the right ropes and strings to pull you do not have to notify the Ministry of Health. They were very careless about doing the notification. The Ministry of Health is equally slack in checking up on them. Health is not a question of whom you know or what godfather you have got or what a strings you can pull. In a matter of infectious diseases it is very important that a check is kept on them and that they are notified to the proper authorities.

As I said, here in Guyana I think because we are blessed with God’s sunshine, never mind we are having the rain now, we are very fortunate. We do not suffer, here people with the infectious diseases up not to stay at home in quarantine when they have an infectious disease. Here we go around and pass our germs on quite happily to other people.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Health if anything will be done about the tightening up on the notification of infectious diseases.

Whilst dealing with that I should like to pay a public tribute to the immunization centre in Camp Street. That will tie in too with the quarantine and court health which together ought to do with the opportunities of bringing infection into the country. If the Public hospital, Georgetown, was run as that particular branch of the medical department is run I don’t think we would have many causes for complaint. And the reason behind that, I fee, is because the people at the top recognize their responsibilities. They take their job seriously. They set the example to the junior staff below them. There is a certain amount of discipline in the place and they do the correct thing and see that it is done. I wish to commend to the hon. Minister that particular department and single them out because I feel they deserve it. Only too often we come here, as I said before

when I was talking about the P.H.G. and say what is wrong. I think when you find that something is right you ought to give credit where it is due.

I did have the pleasure of talking with the hon. Minister and I wonder if he would allow me to say this. He had spoken and I wish to support him on this. We were discussing this immunization centre and he said that he had an idea of charging a small fee from the people who go there for small pox vaccination and turning that money over to buy vaccines for the children. This, I think, is a very commendable idea. I am sure when that time comes he will get support from us.

I should like to urge him not to use that money to buy the triple vaccine which has been done now. Which is provided for already. We have the money for the children to have it. I should like to ask him to use it to buy the SALK vaccines to immunize our children against polio.

Incidentally, talking about immunization, the time has passed now. Dr. Marchant had been calling on the parents to get these children along to have their triple vaccines done. I think the last day for the last one was on the 10th December and that is passed. I should like to ask the hon. Minister how that operation has been going on. Have parents been responding? It is no good having one shot and not going for the follow-up.

There is a Motion before the House about the triple vaccine; about making it compulsory for children at school to produce the necessary document to indicate that these have been administered. It will be a way of ensuring that the parents who do not bother and who are careless to see that the children go for the follow-up do this because the child could not be admitted to school unless he has had the shots. I should like to hear from the hon. Minister how the programme is going and if the parents have been responding. If the parents have not responded or have not done so sufficiently, is he going to give consideration or would he give consideration to doing something about making it compulsory for the children to have the necessary documents before they go to school? It would be a means of checking.

18.12.73

National Assembly

8.25 – 8.35 p.m.

Subhead 21 deals with the B.C.G. programme. Mr. Chairman you have just told us to change the legend of subhead 20 to read, "Expansion of Service." Subhead 21 is a ditto under subhead 20 so obviously subhead 21 should be for the expansion of service for the B.C.G. programme.

It must be time to start the B.C.G. programme again. Is that why we have been asked to vote \$17,000 for 1974? We have been voting \$1,895 for 1972, the approved Estimate for 1973 was \$3,000 and the revised Estimate for 1973 was \$2,800. I hope it would be as successful as the last one. I am not sure what the period of time is but it has been, at least 5 years or more, since the B.C.G. vaccine was in full swing. On the last occasion it was quite widespread. I even remember them doing it in shops in Camp Street. I hope this time it will be on a similar scale, even bigger now that the housing areas are expanded out to South Ruimveldt Gardens and Nandy Park. I hope they will have people in those areas to facilitate the people who live there to make sure they come forward for their B.C.G. tests.

And the last point on subhead 23, Health Education just ties in with what I said earlier about the health officer.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health

8.35 p.m.

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the hon. member Mrs. DaSilva for her complimentary statements concerning certain aspects of the work of the Ministry of Health.

The first question asked was with respect to the six senior surgeons. We have five of these posts filled, and we expect an extra one, a Guyanese trained abroad who would like to return home.

A G.M.O. is not a Consultant. Before a physician or doctor can describe himself as a surgeon he has to undergo specialized training which takes from three to five years after completion of Medical School, and a G.M.O. is not a surgeon. In the Surgical and medical Blocks of a Ward there are G.M.Os who are recent graduates of medical School who are being

supervised by Registrars who are supervised by Consultants. The fact that we are transferring G.M.O.s from a Medical Block to a Surgical Block does not mean that the G.M.O.s are transferred to perform surgery. They are there to help to take care of surgical patients who have been operated on by the Consultants. In Guyana, which has copied much of her medical practices from England and to a lesser degree from the United States of America, no surgeon is allowed to perform an operation in the Public Hospitals except he is fully qualified to do so. A G.M.O. is not qualified to perform surgery.

The word physician has two meanings. Physician spelt with a common letter “p” means a graduate of a Medical School, M.B., B.S., meaning Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of surgery. He can call himself a physician/surgeon. But if he writes physician with a capital “P” it means that he is a specialist in internal medicine in England, and in the United States of America he is called an Internist. Therefore, a paediatrician is a specialist in children’s diseases. Technically speaking, a physician could not be classified as a paediatrician. [Interruption]

Let me explain that. As I said before, the Ministry of Health has made a conscious decision that for the next two years the top priority for medical services for Guyana is maternal and child health. For this reason we are bolstering up the number of Paediatricians we have, the number of obstetricians and Gynaecologists we have, and the number of nurses trained in paediatrics so that we may devote our attention to maternal and child health. Now, why are we doing this? We are doing this because we have limited funds and a programme of maternal and child health which reaches 65 per cent of the population. For a developing country with limited funds, if you want to get the best value per dollar invested, you invest it in the maternal and child health programme because it reaches 65 per cent of the population.

Also our reason for this is that we conducted a Food and Nutrition Survey a year or two ago which disclosed that about 50 per cent of the infants under two years of age born in Guyana suffer from protein-calorie malnutrition. This is true through the entire Latin American and the Caribbean region. So we felt that in order to produce healthier Guyanese citizens we should concentrate on better maternal and infant care.

I think it is good for the House to know that if a baby before the age of two years suffers from protein malnutrition the brain would never be fully developed and therefore he would not be able to avail himself of the educational system. We felt that in the interest of the future citizens of Guyana and our Development Plan this programme must have top priority.

Item (25), Senior Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. I should like to draw the attention of the hon. member to item (26), where we have two Supernumerary Obstetrician and Gynaecologists. The promotion of one of the three Senior Obstetricians to principal Obstetrician I think would not give us the diminution of obstetricians/Gynaecologist in the country. But what happens with highly trained Consultants is that after working for several years like many other human beings, they would like to get recognition for their services. So we promote the most competent and the most experienced one to be the chief of the service.

Item (27), Senior Psychiatrist. We only have one Psychiatrist in the country, Dr. Horace Taitt who has been working very hard with very little encouragement and under very distressing conditions. Since he has had to be called upon to represent our country at international conferences it is only fair since he has stuck with us through all these difficult years that we should promote him to the post of Senior Psychiatrist. If any other psychiatrists are hired they would have to be accountable to him. I am sure that most of you would agree that whenever Guyanese are well qualified they should head the Services in Guyana.

Item (32), Medical Officers. The Medical Officers who are the lowest people on the *totem-pole* in the Hospitals are not permitted to do private practice. Private practice in our Ministry of Health is only granted to Consultants.

Now, a statement was made about the situation in New Amsterdam where doctors are reported to have exacted fees from patients. This practice, according to our information, is not confined to New Amsterdam, it might be more prevalent, there, but it is endemic in Guyana. The Minister of Health and the Permanent Secretary have had several meetings with the Consultants. We have encouraged them to form an organisation and we are hoping that in the near future we can get them to organize an Ethics Committee and Professional Relations Committee. I have an appointment with Dr. Bettencourt-Gomes tomorrow. I have spoken to

18.12.73

National Assembly

8.35 – 8.45 p.m.

most of the other members of the Guyana Medical Association and we are trying to see if we can get the professionals themselves to police their own profession. As a professional person, I feel professional people should police themselves and I feel that if we can get the doctors to do this we can get some improvement in the situation. We are not happy about it; we are aware of it. But I feel that there are signs that some of them at least are concerned about this and are making efforts to restrain the more unethical members of their profession.

8.45 p.m.

Subhead 1 items (35) and (36), Health Engineer and Assistant Health Engineer. If the hon. Members of the Opposition had remembered certain sections of the National Health Plan, they would have noticed that a large percentage of the money allocated to the Ministry of Health was allocated to the Pure Water Supply Development. A health Engineer is concerned with sewerage systems and the point at which health services most engineering services in sort of designing pure water supply system and effective sewerage systems. I am very happy to report to the House that Guyana is the only Caribbean country that has trained Health Engineers
[Applause]

In co-operation with the University of Guyana, we took a group of twelve Engineer Graduates of the University of Guyana, who had taken a special course of training, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, and they were all employed in the GUYWA. We hope that in the near future we will be able to train Health Engineers and other professionals for other countries in the Eastern Caribbean. The Assistant Health Engineer is the Assistant to the Health Engineer.

Health Educators. In a preventive Public Health programme, which is what our National Health Plan calls for, is the Health Education Programme. For many years people in Guyana, as in many parts of the developed countries of the world, only thought of medical care in terms of crisis care and people only went to the doctor when they were ill or when they were hurting.

What we try to do through Health Education is to try to educate people into the aspects of preventive Medical Care where people will go to the doctor to find out whether they are ill.

Preventive services are cheaper. Therefore, we consider our Health Education Programme a very vital part of our National Health Programme.

We are very happy to report that our health Education Department has got excellent supportive services from the Ministry of Information and culture and we are at present making a film that has to do with Nutrition in Guyana and we are deeply indebted to the Ministry of Information and culture for their patience, their assistance and co-operation in this matter. As some of you are aware, Guyana has signed an agreement with other members of the Caribbean in order to join the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute. This Institute has carried out experiments in which we endeavour to discover what local foods are capable of providing nutrition according to the accepted standards of International Public health. We have had three seminars so far, we have conducted several surveys and we are now making films which will be shown to Guyanese educating them and encouraging them not only to eat better but to eat better by eating Guyanese grown foods. [Applause] So this programme is merely a programme in which there is collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ministry of Trade.

Notification of Infectious diseases, subhead 12. Theoretically, \$10 is payable to a doctor for each notification of an infectious disease, but doctors never claim the \$10. I am happy to report that. At least, there is one good thing we can say about our doctors in this respect. Perhaps, I do not need to and that is why that sum is so low, but I must say that in fairness to our Ministry much of the basic work is performed by Public Health Nurses. I think we have the best trained in the Caribbean. They perform services and engage in many activities which in many other countries are performed by physicians. I think a lot of our reporting comes to us through the Public Health Nurse, the Medical Office of Health and the dispenser, who is a much under-rated Health Professional in this country.

It is very heartening to hear the kind words from my friends on my right about the immunization centre and we hope the spirit that is engendered there will continue with the rest of our Ministry. I would like to assure the hon. member that we have no intention of charging citizens of Guyana for giving immunization shots to infants or children but we were suggesting

that Guyanese adults who are intending to emigrate to Canada, the U.S.A. or London should pay a small fee for immunization which they require and this money we get could be used to buy immunization which is given free for the children.

A question was asked about the public response to booster shots for small pox. In most of these cases our statistics seem to show that we get a very good response for this. But I agree with the hon. Member that, perhaps, if we made it compulsory as a prerequisite for entry into Primary School we can get better results. What we notice is that there is a falling off in the booster shots in immunizations that require more than one visit. This happens everywhere in the world and only Health Education, an enlightened public and the more concerned mother will correct the situation. We do agree that that would be a very desirable step to take.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I would like to add a few comments. I want to thank the hon. Minister for his courteous manner in handling the reply to the questions with patience and efficiency. I hope some of the people over there would take good note and follow his example. As I say this I remember that we had a previous Minister of Health who started off this way – with great hopes. I felt that we were going somewhere but, unfortunately like everything else, that Minister got political and things got difficult. From the conscious manner in which this Minister deals with it I do not think it would happen this time, and from his lips we heard the support of what we have been saying here. Somebody from across the table – I think it was the hon. Minister of Information but I may be wrong – said it was not true when we spoke about malnutrition in Guyana and about Dr. Harry speaking about this on the air. I would say that I am pleased to hear because I am sorry to know that we have malnutrition as high as fifty per cent up to two year old children. It is not that we have not got the food but we are not using the right types of food. We are eating too many starches and not enough greens and proteins and I think that is where the Health Education would come in and will help with the prevention of the malnutrition. That is the way I understand it. If I am wrong I stand corrected.

I am happy to know also that positive steps have been taken to deal with these unethical doctors. Over the years it has been brought before this House. Some people over there might be saying that I am saying the same thing again but some things have to be repeated over and over

18.12.73

National Assembly

8.45 – 8.55 p.m.

and when you have unethical doctors fleecing the public you have to keep on about it and I am pleased to hear that positive steps are being taken and I am not being told this year as in the past years, that nothing can be done about it.

8.55 p.m.

One final thing about the health engineers. I am glad to hear that Guyana leads the way in this. I have before me here, and it would be of interest to read, a report from the Caribbean Health Minister's Meeting in Trinidad, the comments that were made. I am very proud that Guyana leads the way in providing these people who will be able to help others. They said here and it would be very interesting to note:

“Because of not giving sufficient priority to water supplies in former times, the health authorities of our countries now have to be ready at a moment's notice to deal with outbreaks of cholera.

Let all West Indians note well that the Factors that now spread gastroenteritis in all the countries are the same ones which will spread cholera if we do not act soon.”

And sir, he said that there were also risks of dysentery, typhoid, and other diseases, but added that the problems could be prevented or corrected at reasonable cost since the remedies were within the reach of the West Indian Governments and the people. I am very proud that Guyana is a West Indian country that is leading the way to help with this problem. Incidentally that was taken from the **Guyana Graphic** of 30th October, 1973.

Head 56, Ministry of Health, Medical - \$3,937,822 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 57 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

BACTERIOLOGICAL

The Chairman: Page 139. There is a correction under Explanatory Notes. It should read, "Division XXV."

Question proposed that the sum of \$615,483 for Head 57, Ministry of Health, Bacteriological, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: One general question and then subheads 10 and 12. Would the hon. Minister tell this House what is the position with regard to the Principal Government Bacteriologist? Have we got one now?

With reference to subhead 10, Blood Transfusion Service, in the past I have asked if the Ministry of Health will give consideration to using plasma, because of the problems with the blood transfusion service always needing and not having a sufficient supply, and I have been told we cannot afford it, that the matter ended there. I wonder what is the thinking of the new Minister on this. My hon. Colleague and Leader is reminding us that I was told by a former Minister that we cannot afford to make it in Guyana; we must import it. It is expensive and we cannot afford it.

I want to know. Now does the Government reckon the cost of a person's life? We may not be able to afford to make it here in Guyana. We may not be able to afford to import all our requirements in plasma, but I wonder if somewhere along the line, to assist the shortage of blood, we could not buy some plasma. [Interruption] Yes, hon. Minister of Housing. There is always a problem to get blood in the blood bank.

The last item subhead 12, Training of Technologists. This is money being requested, \$46,240, for the training of technologists. I wonder if the hon. Minister could give us any enlightenment about the technicians at the bacteriological laboratory. I go back to a subject I often talk about, what arrangements are being made for people to be trained in the taking of the smear test. That is not so difficult, but the processing of the paps test.

I often ask this because it is well known in this House that there is a big cancer drive on by the women's cancer detection centre. This subject is of special interest to women, and should be to the women parliamentarians in particular. We have the centre set up but if we do not have

the people to do the job, what is the point? We are raising the money and we need the people. I understand there is only one man at the moment who is qualified in this field. Has anything been done to have other people trained? How soon, will the Minister say, will we be able to get this plan off the ground?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, in reply to the question about a bacteriologist, we do have a bacteriologist now in the Ministry of Health.

The Blood Transfusion Service. I am not aware that our Ministry has found itself unable to meet the demands of blood transfusion in the hospital. I am not saying it does not happen, but it has not been brought to my attention. We have had several discussions about developing a blood bank and we do hope very shortly, in discussions with the P.S.A. and the unions and hon. Members on my right, to see if we could develop in Guyana a blood bank through a community drive.

The training of Technologists. We train technologists and we have recently awarded a fellowship to one of the members of our laboratory staff to attend a course of study at the University of Guyana, which will equip her to train technologists more efficiently. The course is for a year.

We have a cytologist who has been trained in interpreting panicolaou smears, and we will be sending another to be trained shortly.

I have met with certain of the leaders of the cancer detection committee and I discussed this group with some of the consultants. I got the feeling that some of the consultants, the obstetricians and gynaecologist especially, felt that they were not included in the initial planning. Apparently, the only consultant who was included in the initial planning was a radiologist, who, I think, was more interested in getting the equipment for identifying breast cancer. From what I have been able to gather, some of the obstetricians and gynaecologists were not happy about the focus that was put in that direction.

I should like to suggest to the ladies of the Cancer Detection Committee that they will have to do more public relations work with the obstetricians and gynaecologists. I am very surprised at this because there are quite a few women doctors in Georgetown who could have advised them in this direction. We have one man who was trained as a cytologist in Trinidad and we are getting ready to send some more people there, but as I said, when we are planning in the Ministry of Health for the needs of the people of Guyana, with the limited resources that we have, we have to give priority to the needs that are indicated to us by the data at our disposal, and so perhaps we will be able to do something about this.

One of the questions we have to ask ourselves at the Ministry is, why should we set up a hyper-efficient cancer detection service, if we do not have the facilities for treating cancer? Is it fair to a person to tell her, "You have cancer", and then when she says, "O.K. let's treat it", you say, "We cannot"? This is one of the problems we have here with this cancer detection. Should we develop a sophisticated cancer detection service before we develop an effective structure for treating cancer?

9.05 p.m.

Dr. Alexis, who was here recently, has assured me that he will send to Guyana Dr. Ulric Henchky, who is his chief radiologist and who is also a world famous international expert on cobalt treatment. He has designed several heads. We had a talk with Dr. Lowe. I feel that after our radiotherapy department is properly equipped to treat cancer then we can set out on a cancer detection programme. I do not think it would be fair to the Guyanese public to screen and detect cancer before being able to treat it. **[Applause]**

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank the hon. Minister for talking about the establishment of a blood transfusion service. If ever I can help I certainly will do all I can.

I should like to tell the hon. Minister that there were many problems when a blood transfusion service was in operation 25 years ago by the Red Cross Society. Maybe he was not here when it started. The Red Cross had worked in collaboration with the public hospital,

Georgetown to get a blood bank going and it had to be stopped for various reasons. These same reasons, I am afraid, might cause this to fail. However, I do hope that it being 25 years later, people are more enlightened, things are different, maybe we will have a better chance this time. I would wish it every success.

I also thank the hon. Minister for his frank talk about the Cancer Detection Centre and the needs for it. There has been a lot of controversy about it. There have been articles in the newspapers about it. Actually, I am personally concerned with it because I am Treasurer of the centre. I know how much money the centre has in the bank. We do not want to go on collecting money from the public to have people asking what is happening to the money that is collected and when is this getting off the ground. I appreciate the point the hon. Minister is making the may not have the facilities yet to treat cancer of the breast and cervix. There is a vast programme in connection such of the detection of cancer. We are talking particularly of breast cancer which isit originally started.

The hon. Minister said quite correctly the radiologist wanted it. Breast cancer detection and cervical cancer detection should go hand in hand. As a matter of fact it has been generally felt and it has been put in many of the newspapers that there is more need for early detection of cervical cancer in Guyana than an early detection of breast cancer. They feel there is more cervical cancer in women than there is breast cancer.

The hon. Minister has been very frank in his disclosures in what he has had to say. I should like to ask him if he could do all that is within his power whilst this is going on. I think, maybe, the women involved in the cancer detection centre may not be equipped and qualified to argue with the doctors. With the support of the hon. Minister of Health I do not see why we cannot have a word with them and see if we really could get this thing going. We have the money. I understand the mammography machine is on the way. Let us get it off the ground. People have contributed very generously to this cause. I think they feel that it is time we get this thing going.

This is another instance where there will be need for a massive education programme. I look to my friend, the hon. Minister of Information and Culture, across the way once again to help and get started and not to wait, as the hon. Minister says, until we have the treatment. Let us get started with the education; with the people coming forward for checking and for testing. I feel then the Guyanese public would feel they have given their money and they are getting somewhere and they are not just giving their money to build a bank account. That is not the idea behind it.

Head 57, Ministry of Health – Bacteriological - \$615,483 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 58 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH – X-RAY

Question proposed that the sum of \$295,407 for Head 58, Ministry of Health – X-Ray, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 58, Ministry of Health – X-Ray - \$295,407 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 59 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH, HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES ETC.

The Chairman: There are some corrections on pages 141 to 145. On page 141 in the Explanatory Notes substitute the words “DIVISION XXV” for “DIVISION XXIV”.

On page 143, Head 59, substitute the following for the legend for item (67): “Formerly Office Assistants and General Hospital Assistants.”

On page 144 substitute the following for subhead 31: “Occupational Therapy.”

On page 145 insert the word “Deduct” immediately before the word “Issues” opposite subhead 101.

Question proposed that the sum of \$11,746,720, for head 59, Ministry of health, Hospitals and Dispensaries, etc., stand part of the Estimates. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 141 subhead 1, items (16) and (22) for item (16), “Physiotherapists” an amount of \$15,108 is sought under the 1974 Estimates and there are 3 on the establishment. Item (22), “Occupational Therapist” there is one person on the establishment. Although they are not the same thing, obviously, I should like to group them together, as it were, for the point of my remarks and in the interest of hurrying things up.

The point I should like to make is that we have only 3 physiotherapists and 1 occupational therapist. That is a very small amount in this day and age and in the accepted practices of medicine. The work of the physiotherapist and the occupational therapist is widely recognized as being of great importance.

I appreciate that we have to consider that we are governed by the money we have to spend and also, as I said, the Ministry of Health is never allocated enough money. This is one of the priorities we have not established. We do not seem to be able to establish our priorities. We do not seem to realise and accept the fact that if we do not have a healthy nation whatever we do for the country is a waste of time. However, bearing in mind that we can only presumably afford three physiotherapists and one occupational therapist I should like to make a suggestion to the hon. Minister and ask him if he has had any thoughts on the matter. Is one physiotherapist sited in each county or are they all sited in Georgetown? I should like to know how the three physiotherapists and one occupational therapist are divided up.

In both instances they are trained people. I am not trying to pull down anybody’s professional qualifications or professional standards but we are now training auxiliary nurses, nurses aides, could physiotherapists through the education department, in collaboration with the people whose duty it is to do physical training, have an auxiliary unit, as it were, of people who can be taught simple exercises for patients who are bed-ridden for a long time to do in bed to keep their fingers and toes in particular moving, to keep the circulation going and that sort of thing.

[Mrs. DaSilva continued]

9.15 p.m.

Could any thought be given to this? Has the Minister thought of this, where auxiliaries along the lines of nurses-aides could be trained? An occupational therapist is not professional in the sense say a medical person. With our stress now in industrial arts we could have again on similar lines nurses aides as it were, but in the Occupational Therapy Department, who can go around to the various Hospitals in the various counties and provide patients especially those who have been in bed for a long time with occupational therapy which as I said earlier, in this day and age is recognized as very important in the quick recovery of the patients lying in bed for a long time. They get bored stiff with nothing to do. As I said this afternoon, it is so unfortunate that our Guyanese do not read more, they only read the funny papers and the comic strip, and so the occupational therapist, besides being good for their fingers supple and give their minds occupation. This could probably be done in collaboration with the people who have been trained in industrial arts, things like soft toys and needlework and so on, and soft slippers that could be made. This I would advocate could also be extended to the male wards, not just for the females.

On page 142, subhead 1, items (41), (43), (46), (64) and (65). There is one Dental Mechanic for the whole country. This has been going on for the longest while. Are we not making an attempt to get at least one for each county? If three were employed each country could have one. There are too many people in Guyana who perform as quacks and people spend their hard-earned money which they could ill-afford to do when this it is a service that should be provided by the State. Could we not train some more dental mechanics?

With regard to Ward Sisters, there has been a comment in the article by Dr. Broomes to which I referred before. It is about the lack of responsibility of the Ward Sisters, the lack of example of those at the top. I would ask that due thought be given to what Dr. Broomes has said and to see when you come further down to the nursing students, the staff nurses, that proper care be given to the selection of these people who apply to look after the sick. They are not applying for another job to sell tins of banga mary behind the counter or years of cloth; they are taking up a vocation. Being a nurse is more than just a job, and it is generally felt that many of the people

who go in for nursing are going in there because they think that it is a little better than going into the domestic service. Therefore more and careful screening should be given to these people who are taken in.

Subhead 1, item (46), Mechanic-Janitor of the mobile Dental clinic. It is not really the Janitor I want to talk about so much as the Mobile Dental clinic. There are two of them according to the notes under the Establishment. I personally know of one that I see every day of my life stationed at Golden-Grove, it has been there years, it does not seem to move. I do not know how mobile it is, so you had better call that one a stationery dental clinic. I commented on it last year and said that it really could do with a bit of cleaning up and a cost of paint. I should like to know where the other one is. If it is mobile why is it not doing what it says, being mobile and going off to another area. I sometimes see as I pass by – Thursday is the day when the dentist comes there – I see the long queues of children, you can hear them shrieking too as you pass by, standing out there in the sun or rain as the case may be. Could these mobile dental clinics not be moved along their wheels or whatever drives them along to Community Centres or some place where the people waiting could sit until the dentist is able to see them?

I should like to ask what is the policy in these dental clinics because everybody speaks about going to have a tooth extracted, very few, if any talk about having the cavities filled. Surely we should be trying to save the teeth of our young people, not just automatically yanking them out.

Items (64) and (65) deal with the nursing students and the nurses-aides. I have made some remarks before when I was talking about Ward Sisters, about consideration of the type of persons being accepted, and the suitability of the applicants for the job, and it is just not another job. I know there is talk of having people trained to go out into our country areas as in China where they are called “barefoot doctors”, we can have doctors go out and help people. There is a lot that the nurses-aides can do under proper supervision. I am particularly reminded that during the last War in Britain that they practically staffed the Hospitals in Britain under supervision and we have been told here I think it was the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the other day who said that we are at War in Guyana meaning economically, of course and we can use the same tactic and

18.12.73

National Assembly

9.15 – 9.25 p.m.

learn from other people and learn to our advantage. If we can increase the number of these people, raise their standards have the suitable ones there is no reason why great help should not be given to the health services.

On page 143, Item (81), Plaster Technician and item (91), Trade and Responsibility Allowances. There is only one Plaster Technician in our country. He must have a terrific task. What exactly does he do?

Item (91), Trade and Responsibility Allowances. I might be able to appreciate the responsibility allowance but I am not quite sure what the trade part means. Could the hon. Minister explain? What sort of people gets it?

Still dealing with Head 59, on page 144, subheads 21, 22, 32 and 33. Subhead 21 deals with Allowances to Patients and Discharged Inmates of Mahaica Hospital.

9.25 p.m.

In 1973 \$11,000 was approved. The Revised Estimates show that only \$9,000 was actually spent and now we are being asked for \$11,000. I am not complaining about this, I am urging that this vote be used to the fullest capacity. Mahaica Hospital is the only hospital I know of where the number of staff and attendants exceeds the number of patients and it is not a place where you can say you are giving jobs for the boys either. Any money spent on this Mahaica Hospital for the inmates there is money well spent. Those people are virtually cut off from the rest because of the nature of their sickness, they are virtually cut off from the rest of the country and they work up there; they have got their own little community; they perform very many services up there and they are to be paid for it. So I am asking that this vote of \$11,000 be used to the fullest because it is money well spent.

Subhead 22, Inmate Labour – Mahaica Hospital. We are being asked to vote \$272,000 which is an increase over the Revised Estimates for 1973 which was \$252,000 and it is stated in the legend: “increased due to the revision of wages for inmates.” Again, I am particularly pleased that their salary scales have been revised and have gone up.

I am wondering if the Minister can tell me if it is commensurate with people in similar occupations in life away from the hospital. For example, I am thinking, particularly, of the printing department of the Mahaica Hospital which does very excellent work. It is a very well-run department. The Guyana Printery seems to be extremely busy because judging from here very often we cannot get the Bills before the House and when we come here they are on the Order Paper but not ready for us. So presumably they must be so busy that they cannot get them printed. Use should be made of this Printery at the Mahaica Hospital which does some excellent work. It is a little small to go into that or it is and I hope it will be extended. I hope, too, that the wages of the staff there – and I would like clarification for all the staff – are on par with the wages of categories of workers elsewhere.

Subhead 32 deals with the Expenses of the Mahaica Hospital Farm and the 1974 Approved Estimates is \$39,600. They have got a little increase and that again is due to revision of wages. This farm on which they also have a section of pigs and some poultry could also help to support them to a great degree with the produce of their farm and they can sell this produce to the other institutions and this will again bring in money. I hope this will be encouraged by the Ministry to go from strength to strength. I hope they will do all they can.

Subhead 33, Medical Services at Matthew Ridge/Port Kaituma. There is an increase from \$95,000 to \$100,000. There is no legend which says that this increase is due to wages increases and so on. I was wondering how that increase has come about and I should be interested to hear for what purpose it is here.

If we turn to page 145, we will see Subhead 36, Expenses – Security of Best Hospital. I am not dealing with the security section so much, as with the Best Hospital. Last year we were told that plans were getting on with the turning of the empty wards at the Best into an Auxiliary Hospital because of the new approach for the treatment of T.B. There are not many T.B. patients and those they have are being treated. The accent is now being laid on domiciliary treatment. Consequently these wards are left vacant and, indeed - I commented on it before – the doors were hanging off, the windows were hanging off and they needed general repairs and so on. I was told last year by the Minister that this is being done to form a small Auxiliary Unit. I

wonder what is the position there. If it is functioning now it certainly is a very worthy cause and would certainly do a lot for the residents on the East Bank and the West Bank. As I often say here, when there is an emergency case or an accident, when a baby is being born, you cannot wait for the Georgetown ferry. If you miss the boat you may die. This depends on what the case is. So an Auxiliary Unit is certain needed over there. I wonder if the Minister could tell us if it is finished, if it is functioning and how things are going in that particular area.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 143 subhead 4, Dietary. The amount being sought for the 1974 Estimates is \$1,400,000 and this is primarily to provide food in the hospitals. It is very important and I am sure the hon. Minister would agree that the right kind of food is provided in these hospitals and in this connection there was a seminar. I understand that last year the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute met here in Guyana in a seminar and the recommendation was for the establishment of a National Nutrition Commission. These recommendations were forwarded to the Ministry and one would have thought that the recommendations would have been implemented by the Ministry. It is to do research on the nutrition content of local foods since the professed philosophy of the Government is to replace the imported stuff with local foods, and we certainly all agree with that. But it would certainly be a good thing for us to know the relative and nutrition values in the local foods and since such a body as the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute made the recommendation, then one would have expected that something might well have been done by this time to put the recommendations into operation. Perhaps the Minister would tell us what plans have been made and if the National Nutrition Commission has been set up then we would be put in the picture.

Turning over on the other page, page 144, subhead 15, Fodder and Harness for Draught Animals, the sum asked for in the 1974 Estimates is \$1,000. It is obvious that the Ministry of Health does keep animals and, therefore, one is immediately reminded that there was a release by the Government some time ago which said that a Veterinary Health Unit would be set up very shortly and the purpose of this Veterinary Health Unit was to investigate the passing on of diseases in Guyana by animals unto human beings. So I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us whether anything has been done in this direction and what are the plans in respect of setting up the Veterinary Health Unit.

9.35 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member of the Opposition was inquiring about the number of physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The physiotherapist concerns himself mainly with helping people who are ill, or who have lost the use of their limbs, to regain normal function. The occupational therapist concerns himself really with helping a person to perform the activities of daily living. We need both of them.

We agree with the hon. Member that there might be a need for a greater number of physiotherapists and occupational therapists but if the hon. Member were to visit the quarters that are now devoted to the Physiotherapy Department, he would agree with me that it would be very difficult for us to accommodate more people in such restricted quarters. In our plans for next year, we are hoping to enlarge this department, especially since this year we have acquired responsibility for the Palms.

We are happy to announce that we have on Guyanese citizen now being trained in the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, as a physiotherapist so we are aware of this, and, in future, we plan to send more to be trained there in this field.

I do not think it is possible to equate a physiotherapist with a nurse's aide because, as simple as the exercises that a physiotherapist performs on a patient, who is bedridden after an operation, may appear, those exercises, in order to be effective, require a knowledge of anatomy and physiology. I do not think that a nurse's aide would be able to be entrusted with that responsibility, especially since most of the time the people are older people who could be very easily hurt by a zealous, ignorant person.

I should also like to remind the hon. Member that our Ministry has been well aware of our needs in terms of projecting and expanding our physiotherapy department and for this we got permission from the Cabinet to send two patients and one of our physiotherapists to the Wheelchair Olympics in November. Now, why did we do this? We did this because we

discovered that in Guyana there are very many people who are in wheelchairs, who have been led to believe that to become a paraplegic is to reach the end of the road and we felt that if we could send some of our wheelchair patients to a Wheelchair Olympics, they would see that many paraplegics conduct normal lives and compete.

I know at least one Guyanese who was able to finish law school in New York after losing the use of his four limbs. He became a lawyer. He has partial use of the limbs, he learned to drive a car, and he became a very successful real-estate entrepreneur.

We have recognized this and we have got some citizens like Bunny Fernandes and others who are working very hard with our group in order to get people more interested in some of our paraplegic population. We hope we will get the hon. Member's support when we come next year to ask for more money for this department.

Dental Mechanics. Guyana is short of physicians, but we are even more short of dentists, and I do not think it would be in our interest to hire more dental mechanics until we have more dentists who could supervise them. We are working on this and we hope to improve this very shortly.

Ward Sisters. Unfortunately, most people who belong to professions have had the experience, that the public never seems to remember their good deeds, only the bad ones. Every lawyer know this, and every other professional person. The nurses are no exception to this. There are some of our nurses who do not have the correct attitudes, but I do not think any human being likes to be judged by his worst performances. In spite of some of the negative things that have appeared in the press, I think that we have some dedicated nurses in our hospitals, who succeeded in doing a job in spite of some of the conditions under which they have to work, which are not ideal. Our Principal Nursing Officer and our Matrons are working on this.

It might not appear this way to some of us who have had unhappy experience but the Guyanese-trained nurse is as well trained if not better trained than most of her counterparts in the Caribbean and other parts of the world. The quality of nursing students might appear not to be as good as it was thirty years ago but I think this is part of a general decline that is happening all

over the world, because our entry point criterion for training as a professional nurse is four G.C.E. “O” level subjects while in England it is only two. The Guyana Nursing Council is making a very determined effort to improve the caliber and the quality of the nurses that it trains, but the problem seems to be more attitudinal rather than academic and we are making efforts in order to correct this.

The mobile dental clinic. If what the hon. Member says is true, our mobile dental clinic no longer justifies this appellation. I think this is due to the fact that both of our mobile units were donated to us and I do not think that we had the financial resources or the technical expertise in order to keep them running as they ought to, but our dentists are mobile even though the units are not.

In the last month, I am proud to announce that for the first time in recent history, we are filling children’s teeth. We started in the Campbellville area and we are going to extend this to other areas. We have just begun training dental auxiliaries and when the training is complete we will be able to extend this service, which is in keeping with our national health plan of preventive health service to the people of Guyana. But you cannot drink champagne on mauby money.

Now Plaster Technicin, item (81) is a professional who assists the orthopaedic surgeon in making casts.

The Trade and Responsibility Allowances really sounds very esoteric but it is really a device that we use in order to remunerate patients at Fort Canje who are convalescing while they are learning a trade or a skill that would enable them to be self-supporting and a help towards their convalescence.

Those hon. Members who read the papers will remember that recently, Sir Lionel Luckhoo completed a report after a hearing conducted at the Mahaica Hospital. Our Ministry is quite aware of some of the problems that have been occurring there and this is one of the campaign promises that were made by the Prime Minister during the last campaign. We at the Ministry are quite aware of some of the problems concerning inmate labour, but those of us who are familiar with Guyanese history would know that very many of the Guyanese who had the

18.12.73

National Assembly

9.35 – 9.45 p.m.

misfortune to need the treatment that is accorded at the Mahaica Hospital are not readily welcomed back in the average Guyanese community, so for most of them it means that they have to spend the rest of their lives in the orbit of the Mahaica Hospital.

9.45 p.m.

At our Ministry a lot of our printing is done at the Mahaica Hospital. In our Budget for next year we are trying to include sums of money that will enable them to purchase better printing equipment so that they could be more efficient and productive in their printing activities.

I do not think they are being paid union wages but I do not think they are paid starvation wages either. I cannot give you the answer for this. I presume for the printing they do for us we pay them what we pay the Guyana Printers Ltd. who are printing our papers.

The increase in the sum of money requested for the Matthews Ridge and Kaituma hospitals is due to the increase in transport costs. Those of you who have been there will realise that it is a very difficult and hilly territory. Our vehicles there take a savage beating and every now and then somebody topples over a ridge.

At the Best hospital the structural work is proceeding according to plan in order to convert the Best hospital into a general hospital which will be serving the residents of the West Coast area.

I am sorry I cannot discuss the Luckhoo Report with you at this time because it has not been approved by Cabinet. I will be quite happy to do so at the appropriate time.

With regard to the National Nutrition Commission, the hon. Member did not understand me. I had mentioned the fact that I am very unhappy to notice that the hon. Member on my right did not attend the agricultural exhibition held in October. If he had gone there he would have seen that the Ministry of Health had an exhibit which was completely devoted to the National Nutrition Commission's activities and nutrition policy.

At our exhibition we had a booth with pictures, posed for by a Guyanese model, about breast feeding and done in colour by local photographers and local artists. We had on the walls paintings of popular and easily obtainable Guyanese foods and their nutritive components. Every day we prepared meals with foods which are obtainable in Guyana markets and which also meet the standards of international public health nutrition. We did not only put the cost of the meals but we also put the nutritional protein calorie components which I think was a break-through for us. It was very well received by the Guyanese public. Next year we would like to invite the hon. Member to visit our agricultural booth at the permanent agricultural site at Plantation Sophia.

The National Nutrition Commission sets the policy. We have had a national food nutrition group which is working very hard. This group has done a lot of research. We have done research in trying to develop blends of soya bean flour, cassava flour and rice flour which, buy sing local foods, we could substitute efficiently for Glaxo and other imported baby foods. We have done research on popular local foods like ochre, pumpkin, green pepper, bora. If you come to the Ministry we can show you some of the posters we had at our booth and you will see that lots of people in Guyana has been working very hard at this. We are still doing work in this regard. A lot of this work is being done at the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture with whom we are collaborating on this.

The Veterinary Public Health Unit has been recently formed in the Ministry of Health. We have attended meetings in Latin America having to do with the zymosis, that is, the diseases of animals. We are active members of the foot and mouth disease group in Latin America.

Some of our future plans are to train Meat and Food Inspectors and to set up a Veterinary Public Health Laboratory at Mon Repos where we will be doing research in some of the more common diseases affecting our poultry and animals so that we will be able to develop livestock and poultry for export.

We have also been working on foods and drugs in order to meet recognized international standards in these respects. This unit has been formed and it has been developed. **[Applause]**

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make three short comments by way of clarification. I should like to make it quite clear both to the hon. Minister and the Press that not for one moment am I suggesting that anybody but a trained person should be in the physiotherapy department. I appreciate the smallness of the area. The suggestion I made and used for want of a better term of explanation along the lines of nurses aides is to have auxiliary physiotherapists. You cannot call them physiotherapist because they are not professionals. They are people whose duty has to do with physical education.

In view of the fact that the hon. Minister has just told us that The Palms now comes under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health I think it could still be considered to make use of such persons in The Palms to help people who have had no operation or anything like but who are simply bed-ridden. I hope the hon. Minister will consider that.

I am very pleased to hear that our paraplegics are taking part in the Wheelchair games. I did read about it. I hope to hear shortly, maybe next year, that they will go to Stoke Nandeville in England – they are the people who started the Wheelchair Olympic – and be able to compete there against other people in similar condition to themselves. I think not only is it good for them to see but they will realise that they may be bad off but there is somebody worse off than they are.

I should like to make the last point as we are dealing with the hospitals. Maybe it is a little difficult. One of the suggestions of Dr. Broomes is about a Watch Dog Committee. That is the trouble with we Guyanese. We grumble, moan and groan and blame somebody else and say “they” must do it. Usually “they” means the Government. But we do not bother to take the initiative. If we bothered maybe we would not have half the problems we have. I think if this Watch Dog Committee is formed although we have to very careful, we cannot have people indiscriminately trailing into the hospitals and making themselves a nuisance but people going into the hospitals and being able to see and observe what is going on, it might as it were act as a deterrent to some of the bad practices, the malpractices, the carelessness, the rudeness and all the

18.12.73

National Assembly

9.45 – 9.55 p.m.

other things we have said about the hospitals. Maybe the hon. Minister could think about having a Watch Dog Committee.

Head 59, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries, etc. - \$11,746,720 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.55 p.m.

HEAD 60 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ANALYST

The Chairman: Hon. Members, please make the following corrections:

- (i) Substitute the word “Deputy” for “Geputy” at item (2).
- (ii) Substitute “A13 for “A12” at item (12).
- (iii) Substitute “DIVISION XXV” for “DIVISION XXIV” in the Explanatory Notes.

Question proposed that the sum of \$208,576 for Head 60, Ministry of Health, Analyst stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, just a short question under this Head. About two years ago we had a great deal of publicity and a lot of noise made about dealing with food handlers not only in restaurants about women who sell sweets and fruit outside of schools. There was talk that we would have these people checked upon by the Health authorities. I think there was even talk that they would be given a little button to show that they have been checked. I want to know how this is going on. We do not hear anything more about it. I should like to say that I am very pleased to see the process of grading restaurants – where you can go into restaurants and see the grade put up – is being carried out and I feel it is a great step forward to encourage restaurants of a lower grade to raise their standards and try and get into the grade ‘A’ area. But the food handlers I wonder what is happening there. Are we still getting behind them? If it has been started, are they being followed up year by year to see that they are keeping up the required standards?

I am told to ask about the Bureau of Standards. We have been promised it for so long. But I have said that I know this Bureau of Standards is a very expensive item for us to take in and until such time could we not make use of the one that there is in Jamaica. Because I know it will take quite some time for us to get our own. But we should, especially with Caricom and closer Caribbean relationship and the local canning industry too, send item from time to time from Guyana to Jamaica for testing.

Also the contents of the cans should be clearly stated as is customary in the United States of America. I am not sure if it is so in England if you have a can of beef stew and you may have a lot of stew and four small bits of beef. According to the Laws in the United States of America you have to state in order of the contents there. So if the can has a lot of stew and little bit of beef you put gravy, tomatoes, onions and what have you and then the beef underneath. I am wondering whether we could get that clearly stated when our canning industry is started so that we know exactly what is in the can, also wish to know whether we will make use of the Bureau of Standards in Jamaica.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health

Dr. Harper: Hon. Chairman, I should like to assure the hon. Member that the responsibility for examining the food handlers of Greater Georgetown is the responsibility of the Municipality.

Our Government Analyst has been working together with the Ministry of Agriculture to develop a viable Food and Drugs Act, and not only legislation but to develop standards which would enable Guyana not only to export a high quality of merchandise to Caricom and to other parts of the world but to keep the standards of the export merchandise the same as that prepared for the domestic market. I can assure hon. Members of this House that the standards we have set for Guyana are quite comparable with those in developed countries.

I should also like to report that three members of this Analyst Department have been trained in Washington at the Bureau of Food and Drugs in the procedures, legislation and the practices that their responsibilities will require for developing a similar structure here in Guyana.

I can assure you that the standards we have set here to be followed in the manufacture and processing of food and of meat products and so forth will enable us to meet the highest regulations in international circles in and out of the Caricom area.

Head 60, Ministry of Health, Analyst, \$208,576, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 61 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PALMS

The Chairman: There is a correction on page 148. Head 61. The legend for subhead 12 should read: “Previously shown as Tobacco and Extras”.

Question proposed that the sum of \$707,636 for Head 61, Ministry of Health, Palms, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: May I respectfully point out before asking a short question, I do not know whether your Estimates are the same as ours but the legend for subhead 12 does not say previously shown as “Tobacco and Extras”. Anyway I wanted to ask a question now that the Minister has said the Palms is coming under his control, away from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Could the hon. Minister say what plans the Ministry has? We talked over and over that the Palms would be re-sited, taken out of the middle of the City as it were right there in Brickdam into an area more suited for an institution of that sort. Particularly too, we hoped that there would be small institutions, hospitals, really settlements, for these people in the areas near to where they live. At that age you would particularly like to see your friends and your grandchildren and it would be a little easier for them to visit. Instead of one large institution out of Georgetown, have one in Essequibo, one in New Amsterdam and you would not have to bring them all to Georgetown. Could the hon. Minister say how plans are progressing with this? I understand that the Senior Citizens Home is going to be at Goedverwagting. Will people from the Palms be considered for admission to the Senior Citizens Home? Could the hon. Minister tell us something, please?

10.05 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, if you look carefully at Subhead 12 I think you will see that there is a correction, unless mine is wrong as you are saying. If you look at the word “Tobacco” it is incorrectly spelt. Hon. Minister of Health.

Dr. Harper: Hon. Chairman, early this year The Palms were transferred from the Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health has decided that The Palms should become a Geriatric Unit of the Public Hospital. As most of you know, many people thought that The Palms was a place where the aged, non-sick remained. I am very sorry that the Minister of Labour is not here to explain what the Ministry of Labour plans to do about the inmates, but according to what I have been told, the Ministry of Health will only be responsible for people who require Geriatric care and according to what we have been told people who were there using The Palms as a hotel were to be housed in other facilities which were to be built in different localities.

I am not in a position to give you details about that, but what we are planning to do with the Geriatric care for people in The Palms is to see if we could put in a Dental Unit and try to get more occupational Therapists in there because we also have plans to develop a mental health programme. Many programme will be able to help them to re-enter the social milieu as normal citizens. As you know, a programme like this would require personnel and financial resources which, I think we will have to convince the Members of Parliament should be necessary in order to make this possible.

The treatment of older citizens is a problem that plagues even very many developed countries and I think in Guyana before we enter into ambitious programmes for older people we should have a good, hard look at what the Guyanese people want to do about this because I think and from my observations – I might be wrong here – that most Guyanese people have a very high sense of responsibility towards the older members of their families and I do not think we should attempt to model our programme for our geriatric people on what is being done in other parts of the world. Instead we should look at our Guyanese situation and try to develop a Guyanese solution which would meet the needs of the people of Guyana.

Head 61, Ministry of Health, Palms - \$707,636 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXV – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

The Chairman: There is one correction on page 149. The “Total division XXX” should read “Total Division XXV”.

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,727,200 for Division XXV, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: I would like to ask a final question on the Capital Expenditure, Ministry of Health, Subhead 1, Rural Hospital, Health Centres and Dispensaries, Subhead 10, Construction of a new Medical Training Centre at U.G. and something on Subhead 3, the New Georgetown Hospital. Subhead 1. The Minister might be able, quite fairly, to give me the reply that this is not his concern as he did with the food handlers and said it was the concern of the Municipality. But because food handlers concern health, as this one does, the question I am going to ask the Minister must concern him in some way. This is reflected in the legend for Subhead 1 which reads “To provide for extension and improvements to the Skeldon hospital, the construction of a quarantine ward at Timehri, and health centres at Skeldon, Bartica, Grove and Kurupung”. The legend does not say anything about the hospital at Wismar but, as I said, the Minister can quite rightly say that this is not his concern because I understand this is Guybau’s business. But because it has to do with health it must be the Minister’s concern too.

There was a report that work was suspended some time ago because of the shortage of cement and a report also said that work was stopped because the contractors had not completed, in time, the second phase of the job as they were supposed to do. Whichever is correct or whether both are correct is not the point at issue at the moment. What I would like to know is whether the work is progressing at the Wismar hospital because the people who live in that area find that there is need for a hospital in addition to the one at Mackenzie. Could the Minister rely, in view of the fact, that it is under the Public Health Department?

Subhead 10 deals with the construction of a New Medical Training Centre at U.G. In the 1974 Estimates we are asked for \$100,000. \$50,000 was in the Revised Estimates in 1973, now we ask for \$100,000 and this whole project is going to cost the nation, as mentioned in the Development Plan, \$1 million. When this is completed will it help us to have a proper Medical Faculty whereby we can start training our Guyanese doctors in Guyana? And thirdly, could the Minister give some indication on the work of the Georgetown Hospital? We note that the doctors' flats have been pulled down, or in the process, and new ones have been built in Waterloo Street for the doctors to be housed there so that the hospital extension plan can continue. Could the Minister say what is happening, how they are progressing? I hope that any money to be spent for repairs to the Georgetown Hospital is not going to be spent on buildings that in another couple of years will be pulled down. So could the Minister tell us exactly the progress he has made.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health

Dr. Harper: Hon. Chairman, I thank you. I would like to remind the hon. Member of the Opposition that we are concerned but as I pointed out, the responsibility is not ours. Work is proceeding at the Wismar Hospital.

At U.G. there is being planned an Institute of Health Sciences which will be devoted to the training of para-medicals which is being sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme in which Guyana is being considered as one of the locations for training paramedical Personnel for the Eastern Caribbean. As I told you before, Guyana has a history which cannot be equalled by any other Caribbean nation, for training its own health professionals for more than three or four generations. [Hon. Members: "hear, Hear!"] The Guyanese dispenser, I think, is a unique health professional in the world. There is no such animal anywhere else and as I told you before we train Public Health Inspectors, we have trained health Engineers, we train Public Health Nurses, we train medical Technologists, we train Professional Nurses, we train Assistant Nurses, we are now training medical Auxiliaries and we are planning to train Dental Auxiliaries. This building at U.G. will be concerned with this.

18.12.73

National Assembly

10.05 – 10.15 p.m.

You will notice that we are suggesting that it should be called an Institute of Health Sciences so in the later years if this body decides that we should train our own physicians it would be possible for us to do so without changing the name any further; we would just expand our functions to include that.

We have been authorized by the Prime Minister to enter discussions with the University of the West Indies to see if it will be possible for us to develop a Campus here that will be part of the University of the West Indies Complex for training Medical Students in the Caribbean areas and these negotiations are still proceeding.

10.15 p.m.

This, I think, would be a wonderful opportunity for Guyana. I think the hon. Member should know that two-thirds of the Faculty of the U.W.I. are Guyanese and I think that if half of the Guyanese who are qualified abroad return home, we could have in Guyana one of the most outstanding medical centres in the world.

The new hospital. Our flats for the doctors are complete, and doctors have moved into the flats, but the flats at the hospital are not empty. As most hon. Members know, the housing situation is rather acute and, apparently, some of the doctors in our employ were living in the city in very unhappy conditions; the new flats did not relieve the congestion at the hospital as much as we hoped. Also, we are short of about fifty doctors for our health service needs and new doctors are arriving every day.

Our new hospital plans are in a state of abeyance because if we are at present talking about negotiating with the U.W.I. about constructing a facility here, that would be the Eastern Caribbean Centre for medical education, I think we would have to modify some of our original plans. We do know that whatever happens we will have to rebuild our casualty and out-patient departments. With assistance from the Ministry of Works and Communications, we are rebuilding the sanitary blocks of the paediatric ward and other wards.

Our national plans call for a regionalization, a hospital in each of the regions. These will be reference hospitals to the regions and each hospital will also be a training hospital where nurses and other para-medical professionals will be trained for that region, so I think that we will have at this point to table any announcements about our new hospital until our course of action becomes clearer, in view of what is happening around us. I can tell hon. members that we have made plans with the “Project Hope” ship which will be coming to Guyana very early next year, and they will be helping us to train some of our nurses and some of our technologists so that we will have the staff prepared and when we get our new equipment, they will be able to use it more effectively.

Mrs. DaSilva rose - -

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, I do not like to interrupt you but you have not been asking further explanatory questions; you have been making comments on the Minister’s statements. I hope you will keep the matter in hand and ask further questions or elicit further information, not comment on the Minister’s statement.

Mrs. DaSilva: yes, Mr. Chairman, but I hope that you are not going to deprive me of the opportunity. As we are coming to the end of this Head, I wanted to use the opportunity to thank the hon. Minister for the way he handled it, for his courtesy, and his conscientious way. You nearly deprived me of doing that, sir. I am very glad that I was able to attract your attention.

I do want to comment that I was very upset to learn of the plans for the hospital being in abeyance, considering that we are paying fees to the architect to the tune of \$250,000 and everything is just standing still, but look forward for the help. I am glad about the “Hope” ship coming next year.

As I got up to say, I wish to thank the hon. Minister for his honest and conscientious approach and straightforward replies. I am sure many of our members were, I am sure I was, surprised and pleased that some of the replies were so candid and so straight forward, I was very surprised to hear them. I appreciated them, and I am sure everybody who reads whatever the

Press has decided to report on these proceedings tonight, will also be surprised. I wish to thank you, sir, and look forward to having you as our Minister for many long years. [Applause]

Division XXV, Ministry of Health - \$1,727,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 62 – MINISTRY OF HOUSING

The Chairman: Pages 150 and 151. There are some corrections to pages 150 and 151. On page 150, under item (12), Clerical Establishment, substitute “7” for “9” and insert “2 Confidential Secretaries A12”, item (18) should read: “Architect/Assistant Architect A26/A24”, under “Explanatory Notes” should read: “Division XXVI” and again on page 151, under “Explanatory Notes” should read: “Division XXVI.”

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,855,002 for Head 62, Ministry of Housing, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, obviously, the time of the night has caused you perhaps to go so fast that I missed the corrections, but I did catch that we were to insert “2 Confidential Secretaries” somewhere.

The Chairman: I will repeat it for your benefit. Under item (12) on page 150, Clerical Establishment, “2 Confidential Secretaries A12” should be inserted. Item (18) should read: “Architect/Assistant Architect A26/A24.” Under Explanatory Notes should read: “Division XXVI.” On page 151, under “Explanatory Notes” should read: “Division XXVI.”

Mr. M.F. Singh: perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us what he does with two confidential secretaries, but if I may ask some general questions, these are very serious questions. I have been asking them for some time in respect of this Ministry of Housing. This Government has so often repeated its policy to house the nation by 1976. We have three years remaining up to 1976 – 1974, 1975 and 1976. Will the hon. Minister give us a progress report, has the Government really calculated the figures? How many houses are really needed to house

18.12.73

National Assembly

10.15 – 10.25 p.m.

the nation by 1976? How many have been built so far? How many of these houses have been built, (a) by the private sector, and (b) by the Government?

10.25 p.m.

Because I have been asking these questions for some time. If the hon. Minister cannot answer them then we will have to put them in the form of Questions. [Interruption] I would prefer the hon. Minister to answer rather than the jokers at the back. Can the hon. Minister tell us how many houses were built in the year 1973, not by the private sector but by his Ministry, and also how many are planned to be built in 1974 by his Ministry?

Turning now to the Housing Division Subhead 1, items (14) to (25), I wish to ask a general question with respect to vacancies. A look at the Revised Estimates for 1973 reveals substantially reduced figures in respect of some of the posts. For example, Quantity Surveyors the Revised Estimate is \$3,192 whereas the sum asked for in 1973 is \$6,384. I can go through the same way but the question is: How many vacancies are there in this Housing Division? There are vacancies. Is the Quantity Surveyor's post vacant? Is the Estate Manager's post vacant? Are some of the building Supervisors' and Community Organisers' posts vacant? If there are vacant posts how does this fact affect the efficiency of this Housing Division in its drive to house the nation by 1976?

Subhead 7, "Rates and Taxes Local Authorities." Under subhead 7 the sum approved in the 1973 Estimates is \$40,000. The Revised Estimates have listed \$28,215, a substantially reduced amount, but the 1974 Estimates have put the figure back to \$40,000. Will the hon. Minister tell us why the estimated amount was not paid and why it was reduced from \$40,000 to \$28,215? Obviously they intend to pay it in 1974 but did not do so in 1973.

Then we turn to subheads 9, 10 and 11 which I can deal with all together. I will deal particularly with the legends in respect of these Heads. The legend for subhead 9 says, "Increase in cost of building materials and increased materials for maintenance of additional Estates." The

legend for subhead 10 says, “Increase cost of supply water to additional Estates.” The legend for subhead 11 says, “Increase electricity for new Estates.” I do not know but presumably additional estates and new estates may well be the same thing and it is just the particular preference of the individual dealing with the preparation of the Estimates but will the hon. Minister tell us what and where are these additional and/or new estates?

Subhead 13, “Transport and Mortgages.” This is a small item but there is a point for clarification. The sum of \$5,000 is provided. It has been provided for some time now and some years it has been spent. What is this amount used for in respect of transport and mortgages? Is it transport and mortgages of properties? Where are these properties which are the subject of these transport and mortgages? Are these lawyer’s fees or are these registry fees? Particularly where are these properties that attract these transports and mortgages?

Subhead 16, “Expenses – Processing Unit.” This is a new subhead. The Revised Estimates for 1973 provided for the sum of \$38,000 to be spent on a processing unit. I may be wrong but if my memory serves me well this was an operation mounted after the squatting exercise on the lands particularly along the East Coast. One would have thought that with the mobilization of the people at that time and with the lessening of the tensions the work may well have been completed and it would not have been necessary to vote more money. If it is in respect of this perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us what the \$40,500 would be used for in 1974.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Housing.

The Minister of Housing (Mr. Naraine): Mr. Chairman, the first question the hon. member asked was about two confidential secretaries. I should like to tell him that actually we need 3 confidential secretaries. One attached to the Minister, one to the Permanent Secretary and one to the Parliamentary Secretary.

On the question of the number of houses constructed, I did mention at the time of last year’s Estimates debate that the number of houses constructed and housing units provided by extensions to houses and housing units rehabilitated are all part of the housing programme.

18.12.73

National Assembly

10.25 – 10.35 p.m.

There were approximately 5,000 in 1972. This was in keeping with the Development Plan. In 1973 the projected number of housing units was 8,000.

Because of the reasons, which I think we all know, shortages of cement and inclement weather, we have not been able to reach this target of 8,000 in the physical construction of houses. We have surpassed this number in terms of housing applications and in making house lots available to persons to build houses. So although we have not been able to build the number of houses physically we have been able to give house lots to people who are now arranging and applying to put houses. This will make the task of 1974 a lot easier. Hopefully if everything goes as planned, it should be possible to expedite our programme.

The year, of course, is not yet finished but since the hon. Member asked about numbers. I would try to accommodate him. The number of units is estimated and not based on a physical count because for one thing the year is not yet finished. It is based on applications which have been approved for housing and based on houses which have been constructed in the rural areas and the hinterland areas; some of these are not recorded and on this figure we had to make an estimate. The other figures I will mention are figures of applications approved for people who have applied and who have intention of building. From our knowledge and inspection of these buildings we know the majority, if not all of them, have already been started and many of them completed.

The figures that I have are as follows: Greater Georgetown 1,280; New Amsterdam 240; Pomeroon to Essequibo 260; Essequibo islands 175; Essequibo to Demerara 740; East Bank Demerara 330; East Coast Demerara 900; Mahaica to Abary 115; Abary to Berbice 350; Berbice to Canje 280; Berbice to Corentyne 840 and Upper Demerara 240.

10.35 p.m.

In many areas people are allowed to put a house on a farm plot without applying. People along the Highway have been allowed to build in this way. Houses have been built in the North West

and other areas and which are not recorded; these are estimated at about 500. When we add all together we get approximately 6,250.

In addition to these, the Ministry has made lands available to co-operatives and to people who have applied for house lots and this accounts for a very large number. I do not have the figures here. But just to give the hon. Member an estimation of how these may be going; in one area alone, in the Port Mourant/Albion area, a number of people have been selected in that area where land development is taking place in relation to 2,000 house lots.

On the East Coast Demerara, on Thursday morning we will be setting up a branch office to look after the high demand of house lots in that area. I hope to make public, information on the quantities on Thursday morning; I do not have them here with me but again they must be in several thousands. These are lands available, where plans have already been prepared, where surveys have been done in many cases and where people have been selected and offered lots, while in some cases work has already commenced. We are very optimistic in the programme and we see no reason why we should not be able to keep pretty close to the projection in the five-year plan.

On the question of houses built by the private sector and the public sector, the projections were that for the first three years the private sector will be building more houses than the public sector, but from the third year to the end of the programme the public sector will be making facilities available for the building of many more housing units than the private sector.

I think I ought to explain what I mean by this. It does not mean that the Government will necessarily be building all these houses. Government has set up an institution, the Guyana Co-operative Mortgage Finance Bank, and loans will be made available to persons who wish to build their own homes; they could borrow money from the Bank to put up their home and the government will assist in giving the lands cheaply, developed either on a co-operative basis or developed by the central government or the local government.

The sugar industry, as you know, through the Labour Welfare Fund is also taking part in housing development and they will be carrying out an expanded programme in the future. The Ministry of Housing, through the Housing Fund, will be also building houses for rental, for rental-purchase, and houses for hire-purchase. There is a distinction between rental-purchase and hire-purchase in our definition, in that hire-purchase is the house that will be to the applicant on completion, while rental-purchase will be those houses where a person will be allowed to live in the house on a rental basis and will be given a period of up to about five years during which they can opt to purchase that houses. For people, who may not have the income capacity at this moment to own their own houses the Government is gearing itself in such a manner to assist them so that they can within a reasonable time, be the owners of their homes which they would be renting initially.

In addition to providing nearly all the lands required for housing development throughout the country, the programme for 1974 includes for the Ministry of Housing, through the Housing Fund, to be directly involved in the construction of approximately, 3,000 housing units. Further, through the Guyana Co-operative Mortgage Finance Bank we hope to have a substantial number of housing units provided through loan facilities to be made by that Bank. We also hope that the private sector, which has been providing approximately three to four thousand housing units, would improve on what they had done in the past, in the coming year, 1974. Because of the backlog of approved 1973 applications money authorized but could not be used because of inclement weather and shortage of cement, that they would be able to mobilize financing for probably six to seven thousand housing units for 1974.

You will also note, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has just set up an advisory council so that there will be monitoring of the entire housing development for the whole country and this would involve private sector, public sector and the co-operatives. In this way we hope to have our resources, particularly our financial resources, mobilized towards the real needs of housing in so far as the community is concerned. We hope by this means to reach very nearly the target which has been set for 1974, and that is 13,000 housing units. If the hon. Member would like any further information I should be happy to give him on some other occasion.

18.12.73

National Assembly

10.35 – 10.45 p.m.

In so far as the Housing Division is concerned, there are vacancies and I think probably the most significant one is that of Quantity Surveyor. This post has been vacant for several years and it has just been impossible to recruit someone, we are even finding difficulty in getting a youngster interested in taking a scholarship to do this training. I think it is a long course and there are not too many of this type in the country and maybe people feel because there are not too many bodies of this type around that this sort of profession should not be the one they should engage in.

10.45 p.m.

Quantity Surveying is nothing mystical and we can use other disciplines to get the work done and this is what we have been doing.

We did have, also, vacancies such as Senior Housing Officer. People have been acting up in these posts, in the case of Senior Housing Officer I think the superintendent of Works and Buildings. There have been quite a few acting appointments and bodies have been occupying most of the posts in an acting capacity. My information is that the Public Service Commission is in the process of having most of these vacancies filled on a permanent basis.

A question was asked on subhead 7, Rates and Taxes Local Authority, where the sum of \$40,000 is asked for. The position here is that we would have spent \$40,000 but it was anticipated that the municipality would have taken over certain areas which are presently maintained by the Ministry of Housing. This has not yet happened and it is anticipated that it will now start as from the 1st January, 1974. I am seeing the madam Mayor about this matter tomorrow. If this does transpire, then the \$40,000 will be utilised for the paying of Rates and Taxes.

The question was asked on subheads 9, 10 and 11: Where do we have these additional Estates and so forth? The position is, for instance, right now at Tucville the Ministry of Housing is in the process of putting up fifty rental units and these properties have to be lighted and have to be maintained. Also, the bulk of the increases here have been due to the increase in wages and the increase in the cost of materials. But we have had, also, additional areas to maintain. The

part in Tucville is one but we also have in some of the new Housing Estates where there is a transition between the construction of the houses and the time at which the actual mortgages are passed and during that period maintenance of these Estates take place. This vote has catered for some of those charges. I should mention that during the time that the estates are in this state, that is, before transports are passed, the occupiers pay a hire which goes partly towards the payment of the mortgage. Part of it is for maintenance of the estate and this goes towards revenue. It is, therefore, not as if we are giving something free. We recover it and it is passed back to revenue. This is why we have been spending it out of the Current Estimates.

Subhead 13, Transport and Mortgages. The amount under this Subhead is used for paying certain salaries to Officers who prepare the Mortgages and Transport on behalf of the Government. I think there is one Mr. Kerry engaged in this operation.

In relation to Subhead 16, Processing Unit, it is not true that the Processing Unit started with the squatting exercise. The Processing Unit which was always in the Ministry became an expanded Unit when the squatting exercise took place. The reason for it was obvious that we did not intend to have squatting perpetuated as a part of our living pattern and we had to deal with a very large number of applications which I described earlier. What is happening now is that the Processing Unit has now been identified as a separate section; its importance is more or less made very apparent as it is no longer linked to Women Investigators and people like that. So it is now as a separate unit within the Housing Division and this is how we want to keep it. Because of the useful work it did during this past year, we would like to retain it in this present form until we are able to break the back of the housing needs. Therefore, we can see this Unit probably going right on to the end of 1976 when we hope to fulfil all the needs of our programme. After that, we may look at it again to see if it could be brought back into the common stream because, by that time, the work may be sufficiently advanced and it could become just a normal routine operation. At the moment, it is a special operation and it has to be treated as such. Mr. Chairman, I hope that answers all the questions asked.

18.12.73

National Assembly

10.45 – 10.55 p.m.

The Chairman: It has been brought to my attention that there is another correction on page 150. Immediately before the insertion of two Confidential Secretaries, the nine Stenographers should be changed to read “seven”.

Head 62, Ministry of Housing - \$1,855,002 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

10.55 p.m.

**HEAD 63 – MINISTRY OF HOUSING
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING**

Question proposed that the sum of \$264,258 for Head 63, Ministry of Housing, Town and Country Planning, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Just a short question. What are the vacancies in the top echelon of this section, and what are the prospects of filling these vacancies, Town and Country Planning Officer, Deputy Town and Country Planning Officer?

Mr. Naraine: There is a vacancy for Deputy Town and Country Planning Officer and a recommendation has been made to fill that post. This will then create a vacancy of Chief Planning Assistant. This will then be advertised. The other vacancies we have are, Assistant Draftsman, two vacancies; and, in the building inspector grade, of eight posts, there is one vacancy; and for surveyors, instead of five we have four; but steps are being taken to fill all these vacancies very shortly.

Head 63, Ministry of Housing, Town and Country Planning - \$264,258 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXVI – MINISTRY OF HOUSING

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,560,000 for Division XXVI, Ministry of Housing, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, Purchase and Development of Land, \$100,000 being sought for 1974. Can the hon. Minister tell us what areas, if any, have been identified and where these house lots will be purchased? In terms of purchasing land, it is not a very significant sum of money, so we wondered whether the money was provided generally or there is an area identified to be purchased.

In respect of the next subhead, subhead 2, Housing Fund, \$4 million, the legend states, "To provide finance for land development and house construction." The hon. Minister did say earlier that the Ministry hopes to build 3,000 units. I recollect that the hon. Minister said that the Ministry hopes to build 3,000 units during the year 1974 and I wondered whether this money was going to be channeled to be used in conjunction with the housing bank or whether the Ministry would be using part of this money to build these 3,000 units that the Ministry proposes to build.

Mr. Naraine: In relation to the purchase of land, it is true that \$100,00 is not a very significant sum of money when you think of the very large house building programme that we have in mind, but I think the hon. Member should appreciate that the Government was able to acquire about 7,000 acres of land from Bookers. This has been at no cost and therefore there are very large areas of land throughout the country which are being developed for housing.

In relation to this \$100,000, we have in mind certain areas on the East Bank and certain areas in Greater Georgetown that we intend to acquire. We are hoping to have these lands acquired probably on the same basis that the Bookers' land has been taken over, whereby the cost will not be much but even if it becomes necessary to purchase land, it is anticipated that the land will be at minimal cost and, therefore, although the sum appears low, this sum can probably take us a very far way.

With respect to the land so far taken over and being developed, I think one ought to appreciate what an area of 7,000 acres of land means. An area of 7,000 acres of land means that if we have even five lots per acre, there could be developed 35,000 lots of land, and that is more than half of the target that we have set for the 5 years. This sum of money, although it seems

small, if used intelligently in the manner in which we hope to use it, can probably acquire quite a large area of additional land.

The one on the Housing Fund, I think that is a very good question and what I should like to explain is that this is not intended to be run as part of the Guyana Mortgage Finance Bank arrangements. They have been able to secure \$3½ million from the Caribbean Bank for housing and the Government last year provided \$2 million. This year, under Finance, I think, one will see there is another \$2 million so they have their own money.

We also have our own money and, although we may go for some of the mortgages from that bank, we will be going to other lending institutions also to take up mortgages on the properties that we will be building. What we plan doing is to spend approximately \$13 million during the year. This \$13 million will comprise in part money already in the Housing Fund. Therefore, we will utilise the balance in the Housing Fund, the proceeds from the sales of houses that are already completed, an initial deposit of 10 per cent on each house that we build and mortgages which are already arranged for 90 per cent of the costs of the houses. [Interruption]

We have to. This is a Government that is very efficient and this Government has to make the best use of its money. I am glad that the hon. Member appreciates this and understands it, that we mean business in this housing scheme, and we intend to build all the houses we say we are going to build, by making efficient use of all our resources.

In this way, we will be able to mobilise \$9 million. Therefore, the Government has voted in this year's estimates, the additional \$4 million that will be required and when added to the \$9 million, will give us the \$13 million we need for the programme.

Division XXVI, Ministry of Housing - \$4,560,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. members, this concludes tonight's session, but tomorrow, we will do the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and, if time permits, the Ministry of Finance.

18.12.73

National Assembly

10.55 – 11.05 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 19th December, 1973, at 2 p.m.” [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 11.05 p.m.
