

**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**

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**38<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1974**

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**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

**Deputy Prime Minister (1)**

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

**Senior Ministers (8)**

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 (Absent)

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

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

\*The Hon. K.F.S. King,  
Minister of Economic Development

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

\*The Hon. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H.,  
Minister of Agriculture

### **Ministers (6)**

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

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

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

\*The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,  
Minister of Education and Social Development

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

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

### **\*Non-elected Ministers**

## **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

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

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

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

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

\*The Hon. A. Salim,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(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

## **\*Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

**(Absent)**

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

**(Absent)**

### **Deputy Speaker (1)**

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

### **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  
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

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

3.7.74  
2.05 p.m.

National Assembly

2.05 – 2.15 p.m.

**PRAYERS**  
**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**  
**Leave to Members**

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Hon. Member Mr. Carrington to the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1974, and to the Hon. Member Mr. George King to the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1974.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following Paper was laid:

Report and Accounts of the Guyana Airways Corporation for the year 1972. [**The Prime Minister**]

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING**

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Pensions (President, Parliamentary and Special Offices) (Amendment) Bill 1974,  
Bill No. 22 of 1974 .....

[**The Minister of Finance**]

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**  
**MOTION**  
**FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2 of 1974**

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1974 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$41,754,520 for the period ending 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

*Assembly in Committee of Supply*

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

**The Minister of Finance** (Mr. Hope): Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution of Guyana, I certify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of 1974 – Schedule of Supplementary Provisions on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974.

Mr. Chairman, in moving the Motion for the Supplementary Provision that has been laid before this House I would crave your indulgence to make a few remarks to put the Estimates in their proper perspective.

The 1974 Estimates of Expenditure approved by Parliament in December, 1973, envisaged a Current Expenditure of \$222 million and Current Revenue of \$203.2 million leaving a deficit of \$18.8 million – practically all of which was to be finally met by increases taxation, both direct and indirect, estimated to yield \$18.3 million.

At the same time the development expenditures were planned to require an outlay of \$173.2 million. In the financing of the capital programme it was anticipated that domestic saving through investment in Government long-term debentures would provide \$25 million and most of the remaining financing was expected to be secured through external borrowing, that is from both multilateral and bilateral official sources, amounting to \$56 million and from external money markets and export credits totalling \$79 million.

Since the presentation and approval of the budget estimates the world economic scene has changed drastically. The economic crisis which resulted from the massive increases in the price of oil erupted early in January of 1974, bringing with it, as everyone knows, serious

balance-of-payments and financial problems for practically all non oil-producing States like Guyana. Associated with these huge prices for petroleum and petroleum products were steeply rising prices for fertilizers, machinery, raw materials and consumer goods. In fact, the oil prices merely served to aggravate the inflationary trends that were already evident in the international economic system.

Simultaneously with the increased prices of oil, came the crisis in food supplies – mainly grain. This was a world-wide phenomenon; and we in Guyana felt its full impact through the rising prices of wheat for flour, and corn for stockfeed.

The effect of the economic crisis and the general inflation in prices was felt at several levels so far as the operations of the Government were concerned. First of all the budgeted provisions under a number of sub-heads are now seen, in the light of price trends since the beginning of the year, to be inadequate. For instance on the current estimates such provisions as dietary in the hospitals, transport and travelling and maintenance of vehicles, have all been adversely affected by inflation of prices particularly of petroleum.

As the price of wheat sky-rocketed during the earlier part of this year implying, in normal circumstances, a doubling in the price of flour, the Government undertook to subsidise the price of flour, so that prices could remain at the 16½ cents per pound as at December, 1973. This commitment to maintain the price of flour at the 1973 level was originally estimated to involve a cost of \$10 million for 1974. However, it soon became evident that the actual level of wheat prices, coupled with a strengthening of the U.S. dollar following the oil crisis (which made wheat more expensive in terms of Guyana dollars), required a subsidy that was running at an annual rate of \$25 million based on a high and increasing level of consumption of flour.

It has already been announced that Government's policy is now to remove the subsidy and to redeploy the funds into the production in Guyana of substitute agricultural commodities. In the meantime, the consumption of flour appears to have been more restrained in recent weeks,



while increased vigilance on the borders has reduced the incidence of contraband exports of flour into neighbouring countries where flour is an expensive commodity.

In the result, it is now possible to forecast an expenditure on the subsidy of flour of \$12 million, on the expectation that the subsidy would be removed at an early date.

Apart from this subsidy on flour, additional amounts have been provided for a subsidy of \$2 million to the Guyana Water Authority for pure water supply, and \$2.4 million to the University of Guyana to expand its degree courses, bringing the total expenditure on subsidies to \$16.4 million of the total Supplementary Provision now sought of \$23.4 million.

The budgetary projections were also affected in another way. In an effort to close the gap in our balance-of- payments which arose from the high prices of petroleum and other imports and to reduce consumption expenditure the Government imposed a partial and, in some cases, total restriction on certain items of imports. One of the results of these measures was a loss of import duties and related taxes estimated at \$8 million and consequently a reduction in revenue by that amount.

However, apart from certain revenue gains arising mainly from the tax measures forecast in the budget, the government expects that the sugar levy, which was recently imposed, would yield about \$41 million assuming a production target of 360,000 tons of sugar is achieved and price expectations are realized.

In the final out turn it is now anticipated that the expenditure on Current Account would increase to about \$245.4 million compared with the original estimate of \$222 million. Current Revenue, originally estimated at \$221.5 million, is now forecast at \$244.5 million. This leaves, on present expectations, a small deficit on the Current Estimates of something of the order of \$0.9 million, an amount not significantly different from the deficit originally anticipated.

The Capital Estimates, as passed, forecast expenditures on capital account amounting to \$173.2 million. Inflation and the high prices of oil have increased the cost of the projected programme for 1974 beyond the resources available to the country in this year.

In fact, the flow of bilateral assistance is not expected to rise significantly as the capital-providing countries are themselves facing balance-of-payments difficulties. In addition, international financing markets are busy coping with the heavy borrowing by the industrial countries – which normally are not exporters of capital – in order to restore the balance in their international payments.

### **2.15 p.m.**

Therefore, taking into account the foreign exchange resources that are likely to be available to the country as a whole through exports and the large amount of foreign exchange that will be needed to pay for the rising import bill, it was concluded that some adjustment to the original capital programme was unavoidable.

A number of projects appearing in the 1974 Capital Estimates have therefore been halted, while others, reflecting new priorities have either been added or the expenditure provisions increased. The Schedule of Supplementary Provision on Capital before this House reflects some of these modifications.

With regard to the revised Capital Estimates, two points must immediately be made. First of all, the new Capital Expenditure programme for the current year is now fixed at approximately \$138 million.

At this level, the reduction in money terms is not enormous. It is just about \$35 million less than the previously approved Capital Estimates for 1974. The second but more fundamental point is that the revision represents a significant change in emphasis in terms of public sector investment designed to increase output as quickly as possible. Accordingly, certain productive

[Mr. Hope contd.]

sectors have been identified for investment outlays; these are agriculture, fishing, forestry and mineral resource exploitation. The main emphasis will, of course, be in agriculture with the objective of expanding output of corn, soya, and potatoes, as well as the traditional crops.

During the course of the year, the Government-owned fleet of trawlers will be expanded by the acquisition of at least sixteen new vessels, of which ten have already been delivered. A joint venture between the Government and firms in the private sector will provide new freezing and processing capacity to cope with a rapidly expanding catch of fish and shrimp. At the same time, there will be substantial inputs of machinery, including pontoons, for the extraction of timber to meet outstanding orders which the country has for timber, but has not yet been able to fulfil.

The Government-owned bauxite company also proposes to expand output of calcined and other grades of bauxite in line with growing sales prospects. Further, as a result of discussions held recently in Trinidad among the Heads of Government of Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, proposals for the expansion of alumina capacity at Guybau are now under very active consideration.

Infrastructural works – new roads, for instance – have been reduced. Those that remain are mainly sea defence to provide urgent protection to agricultural and residential lands at various points of the coastlands now under threat by the sea and important roads, servicing agricultural and residential areas on the West Demerara, Essequibo, and Leguan.

Increased provisions have been made for the electricity expansion scheme; and an additional provision of \$5 million has been made for the National Service.

Additional sums totalling \$1.3 million have been allocated to land development, including a provision for the commencement of the Tapakuma agricultural project under IBRD financing.

In line with these development priorities, spending on social projects has been given a lower priority this year, even though substantial expenditures will be incurred on the multilateral schools and the pure water expansion scheme, which will require an additional \$1.2 million making a total of \$3 million for the year for the continuation of the pure water supply expansion works.

The supplementary provisions that are now being sought represent in the main the new priorities that have been accorded certain projects. Those to which lower priorities have been attached will not for the time being receive further funding. These latter projects amount to \$53 million. However, \$18.4 million of projects have been added, bringing the total Capital Expenditure for 1974 to a projected \$138 million.

The sources of financing for the programme remain essentially the same as originally projected. External loans and grants including IBRD and Caribbean Development Bank fundings are projected to cover \$41 million, local borrowing is now projected at \$32 million and will be utilised in part to provide the counterpart funds required by bilateral financing. Export credits should also supply \$4 million. This leaves a total of about \$60 million to be met from other forms of capital flows including external money market borrowings.

Before closing I should like to make reference to the National Development Surtax. As this House is aware, under the National Development Surtax Act, 1974, a person with a chargeable income of under \$500 per annum is exempt from the Surtax.

Following representations by the Public Service Association to the Hon. Prime Minister, the Cabinet has recently agreed to exempt from the Surtax the first \$500 of chargeable income of all taxpayers.

The necessary legislation will be introduced shortly in this House and will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974. [**Applause**]

**2.25 p.m.**

*Question proposed.*

**The Chairman:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**The Leader of the Opposition** (Mr. M. F. Singh): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me make my profound apologies for having been late, unavoidably so, due to an emergency that arose at the very last minute. I am exceedingly sorry that I was not here to listen to the opening remarks of the Hon. Minister of Finance in respect of this “mini budget” which is before the House today. I call it a “mini budget” and some may recognize that my words are, perhaps, similar to those used by the People’s Progressive Party in their organ, the **Mirror** newspaper.

Let me say immediately that this does not at all mean that I agree with the P.P.P.’s policies. We have always made it clear on this side of the House that when we agree with something we will have no hesitation in saying so. When we disagree, we will vehemently say that we disagree. Unfortunately, in Guyana the tendency seems to be that when you agree with one side you are branded as an adherent of that particular side and we are recognising that Guyana is polarised into two groups at the present moment. When you agree with another side then they say that you are for that other side.

Again, let me stress that just as we are not P.N.C, when we vote for P.N.C. measures before this honourable House, so we are not P.P.P. even though we agree with the P.P.P.'s allegations that this is a “mini budget”.

What are we called upon to give approval to? We are called upon to give approval to supplementary estimates to the tune of approximately \$42 million. That is a very significant sum of money. As I understand it, the Hon. Minister has attempted to give the reasons why this “mini budget” has been presented before this Honourable House and the reasons relate to the magnitude of this amount. I think, and I am subject to correction, that one may read into his remarks that the magnitude of the amount was precipitated by conditions and situations beyond the control of this Government. But I would want to say that that contention cannot be supported into as a result of a detailed examination of the Supplementary Estimates that are now brought before this House.

I will give one example and it might be said that I have talked far too much about this in the past. Let us take, for example, item “telephones” – and I do not propose to talk on this again. The supplementary provision sought for telephones on page 1, Supreme Court of Judicature, is \$30,750. On page 7, Public Service Ministry, the sum sought is \$8,962; on page 8, Attorney General, \$31,260; on page 10, Ministry of Information and Culture, \$37,557; on page 40, Local Government, \$8,480; on page 41, Labour and Social Security, \$17,102; and on page 43, Ministry of Finance, \$55,000.

How could one honestly say that this has anything to do with outside forces? Obviously it is mis-management, it is a lack of foresight, it is inefficiency on the part of this Government. What is so very terrible is that I have talked *ad nauseam* on this and nobody seems to be paying any attention at all. I have appealed to the Hon. Minister, Dr. King; I have explained that his Corporations cannot possibly pay their way, they cannot possibly meet their expansion programmes, without borrowing if the Government owes this magnitude of money to the Public Corporations.

In the meantime these Corporations have to borrow money and when they borrow money they have to pay interest. Maybe you will say they are paying to the Guyana National Co-operative Bank. But some of them are borrowing not only from the Co-op Bank. We have recently approved loans here to Corporations not only from the Co-op Bank but from the Chase Manhattan Bank, the Nova Scotia Bank, the Royal Bank and Barclays Bank. We are paying money to foreign banks and the P.N.C. has a policy of miniaturising the banks.

The position is that when we come back to the plain and simple business of dollars and cents and of financing – what is Government? Government is big business and any businessman knows that if you are to meet your expenses you must be able to receive money in respect of money owed. If you do not receive money, it does not end there. We will see later an item under the Head “Office of the Prime Minister” for arrears to Guyana Airways. Just imagine what that amount is? It is approximately \$1.5 million in respect of arrears due to the Guyana Airways. How can this Corporation be owed under a Head of this Estimate over which the Hon. Prime Minister has control? The sum of \$1.5 million is owing in respect of G.D.F. travelling, or should I say “excursions” all around the country. Everyone knows that the Guyana Airways Corporation is supposed to be run as a business enterprise.

Corporations are set up so that they may be run along proper business lines. The Government owes \$1.5 million to a Corporation for what services? Not for current expenses, but for arrears of expenditure. When you owe for arrears, what are you doing? You are denying that Corporation the opportunity of being able to make a substantial profit or to have a balance sheet much better than the one it has at the present moment.

Why is it then that this Government cannot be run more efficiently? One would say, in fact, that the word “more” should be omitted. Why is it that the Government cannot be run efficiently. I have been complaining time and time again. I have given the figures and I would not want to repeat them. Every December we come before the House and we debate a whole big book of estimates, and then at the end of the year what happens? These Estimates should be

thrown through the window because they are worth nothing. They bear no reality at all to the factual situation at the end of the year.

**2.35 p.m.**

Mr. Chairman, I believe in Parliamentary democracy, I believe in Estimates coming to this House for debate, but when one sees that there is such a wide discrepancy between what is printed in the Estimates which we debate at the end of the year and what we see towards the end of the following year, we wonder whether, in fact, we should bother to go through that strenuous exercise every December in respect of these Estimates. Maybe the best thing to do would be to throw the whole book through the window and forget about it and let us deal with it on an ad hoc basis because it really is a waste of time for you, Mr. Chairman, for us over here, and indeed, for the Hon. Minister and his staff to prepare these Estimates and then to have the problem that we do have at the end of the year in respect of these increased expenditures.

One would have to reiterate to make assurance double sure to all, particularly to the Hon. Prime Minister and all the Hon. Members of this House: what we have before this House is a “mini budget” in respect of which there can be no justification for this additional expenditure of \$41,754,520. I am reading here from the document before the honourable House.

One other remark I want to make and that is in respect of the re-classification of posts. Again, this Government is not being honest, this Government is not being realistic. What has been put down here is a token amount of \$1 in respect of the majority of these posts that have been regarded. When you regrade a post you are increasing the emolument, you are increasing the amount. If you put a token amount of \$1, you are not being realistic at all. It must cost more than \$1 if you regrade a man’s salary from A36 to A40.

The usual explanation is that the Ministry concerned will be saving in the general vote of Personal Emolument. But the fact of the matter is that the Government has recognised that there



has been a general rise all around. It has increased the staff, for example, in the Public Service Ministry; nine new posts have been created, three top posts have been re-classified. Will the Hon. Minister tell me that \$1 will be enough to meet that increased amount of expenditure? Obviously we are not being provided with realistic figures. In the end there will necessarily be a terrific increase over and above what has provided in the Estimates.

I warned the Hon. Minister on the last occasion. I said: “You will have to come to the House for an increase in respect of telephone bills.” So said, so done. I spoke ad nauseam about it. The Hon. Minister gave me the assurance: “No. Everything is okay; there will be no more arrears.” I spoke of the unrealistic figures being presented as compared with last year. The Hon. Minister said: “Everything is okay, the figures are realistic. Last year the figure was \$X; this year what we have projected is okay.” Yet I have lived to see the day when the Hon. Minister, quite contrary to what he said, has come before the House to ask for more money, \$180,000 approximately, in respect of telephones.

I must appeal to the Hon. Minister to let us be realistic. Do not put the sum of \$1 for increases in personal emoluments. We have no way of knowing what the cost of the increase will be. What will be the cost of this increase in respect of the regarding of the staff? Obviously it could not be \$1. When will we get realistic figures from this Government? Or will we go through the exercise in futility year after year? I appeal to the hon. Minister, in future, to let us have realistic figures.

**The Chairman:** Does the Hon. Minister of Finance wish to reply to the Hon. Member’s remarks before we proceed to the details of the Financial Paper?

*[The Hon. Minister indicated in the negative.]*

**The Chairman:** We will now consider page by page the Schedule to the Financial Paper. I believe, by consent, we have agreed to do the Prime Minister's matters first. Page 4. Will the Hon. Members kindly indicate?

**2.45 p.m.**

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Items 11, 12 and 14.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Member Mrs. Da Silva

**Mrs. Da Silva:** If the point is not covered by my Leader, I wish to speak on item 12.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, item 11, Head 9 – Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, subhead 3 – Miscellaneous; the voted provision is \$17,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$9,000. The legend says: "Voted provision inadequate ..." I would presume that the voted provision of \$17,000 was considered to be realistic in December, 1973, when we debated the Estimates for 1974. This additional provision of \$9,000 now sought is more than 50 per cent of the provision already voted. Since \$17,000 must have been considered to be realistic in December, 1973, in respect of expenditure for the whole of the year 1974, one obviously and necessarily has to ask the question: "What kind of unforeseen expenditure could have increased this figure more than 50 per cent of what was originally estimated?" We need some more information in respect of this additional provision now being sought.

We note that item 12 is new and is for Remuneration of Staff – Prime Minister's Residence. The legend states:

"To provide for the remuneration of staff attached to the Residence and other related expenditure ..."

We remember that early this year Financial Paper No. 1/1974 came before this Honourable House and item 4 on page 1 was headed:

“9 – Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 1 – Personal Emoluments, item (24) (New) Domestic Staff – Residence.”

and supplementary provision to the tune of \$2,000 was sought:

“to provide for the payment of staff at the Residence.”

The heading of that Financial Paper was “Schedule of Supplementary Provision – Uncovered Advances from the Contingencies Fund in 1973.” So, \$2,000 was sought in respect of this same thing for 1973 but at that time it was sought under the head Personal Emoluments, item (24) (New) Domestic Staff – Residence.

I see now that we are moving it away from Personal Emoluments where it was in Financial Paper No. 1/1974 and putting it under Other Charges. This here is Other Charges (Item 14) Remuneration of Staff – Prime Minister’s Residence. I wonder whether the Hon. Prime Minister would explain the reason for this change from Personal Emoluments to Other Charges and also if he would explain what this legend “... other related expenditure” means.

Perhaps a further question should be: if, as this Paper says, this is Schedule of supplementary Provisions to meet expenditure in excess of the provisions made in the Current Estimates for period ending 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974,” is this \$23,656 in respect of the whole of 1974 or is it only up to the 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974? We would certainly like to know that. In other words, does this provision now being sought cover the rest of the year or is it only up to the 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974? I think we need explanations to this in view of the fact that Financial Paper No. 1/1974 seems to have painted a different picture. Only \$2,000 was requested, and here we have a legend saying “... other related expenditure” of which we know nothing at all.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, item 14, Other Expenditure \$1,445,842. This is really fantastic. The original provision voted for the whole of the other charges G.D.F. was \$4,453,366, now it states:

“To provide for the payment of arrears to Guyana Airways Corporation for air services.”

I have already spoken on the quantum of the amount but let me supplement that by saying that this amount is more than a quarter of the entire amount provided under Other Expenditure. Did no one at all in the Government Service know about these arrears? Why was this not brought to the House either in Financial Paper No. 1/1974 or in December, 1973, when the Estimates were presented? I cannot understand how a figure like this could have been hidden for so long and yet it is headed “arrears.” Did no one know of these arrears?

Apart from the elections last year, Guyana has never been at war with anybody. Therefore, how was this sum of approximately \$1.5 million expended? Again, how can the corporations run efficiently with arrears like this? What is the reason for this expenditure?

**2.55 p.m.**

**The Chairman:** Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Thank you, sir. Under item 12, on which my Leader so ably addressed this House and to which I give my support, I would wish to get an explanation on a point not covered by my Leader. I wish to talk about the legend attached to these Estimates. They are supposed to give you an indication – and I hope a true indication – how the money is going to be spent, why it is going to be spent and why it was sought.

When my Leader was speaking in reply to the Motion by the hon. Minister of Finance, he talked about our ‘guess-timates.’ We say over and over again that at the end of the year when we come and sit here for hours and hours and go through the Estimates, they are not realistic and do not present a true picture of the story. For example, this legend relates to the “New” item which, as already pointed out, already came in the first Financial Paper. Therefore, it cannot be still new:

“Remuneration of staff – Prime Minister’s Residence.”

Everybody is aware that our Prime Minister must have a Residence. We are proud that our Prime Minister must have a residence. He must have a staff befitting his Residence and, naturally, the staff must be paid. They are not expected to work for nothing.

This legend says:

“To provide for the remuneration of staff attached to the Residence.”

This is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. How were the members of the staff paid until now? Did they not have any money paid before? This is the question that I would like to ask: How was this legend given? **[Interruption]**

May I point out that when we had talks, not so very long ago, of increasing the Contingencies Fund, my Leader explained to the House how the Contingencies Fund operates. It is to meet expenditure, as laid down in the Constitution of Guyana, “for Contingencies.” The remuneration of staff could never, by any stretch of imagination, be a contingency. You take on staff, you must know how much they are going to get every month. You should have known this since December last year. So that is quite out of place there.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister

**The Prime Minister** (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Chairman, so far as item 11 is concerned, the request for \$9,000 is to cover things like pictures and photographs exchanged between Heads of Government. We had to get in a stock as we have been receiving this type of gift from our brother Heads of Government.

With regard to item 12, the staff at the Residence was paid at one time, I think, by Parliament. Then at another time by the Ministry of Works and it was finally decided that it should come to rest here under the Office of the Prime Minister. It is only new in that it is a new head within the Prime Minister's Office. It is not new in terms of either the amount or the purpose. The related expenditure includes feeding because the Prime Minister's staff is fed in addition to being paid. The Prime Minister insists on that.

The sum of \$1,445,842 relates to what is, in fact, a subsidy to the Caribou Aircraft which the Guyana Airways Corporation runs. Ordinarily, it would not be an economic passenger plane and since it is of particular use to the Guyana Defence Force it was agreed, from the inception, that the Guyana Defence Force would carry the difference between what is earned by the Guyana airways Corporation when these planes are utilized and what, in fact, it costs to operate and keep the planes. It is all right to hope that there will be no cause to carry large bodies of fruits or material but it is better to make sure than be cock-sure.

On another item, Hon. And learned Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, did ask: How is it possible with a \$1 provision to carry out what is sought here? But he gave the answer. He knows it and he knew it when once these benches adorned him. Under these Heads there is, so to speak, a certain amount of fat. Not all the posts are necessarily filled. There are sometimes acting appointments and things like that and this is traditional; it goes back far in history and my hon. and learned Friend knows that. I do not think that there is any point which my good friends raised that I have not sought to answer.

**The Chairman:** Page 6 and 7. Items 15 and 16. [Pause] Pages 40 and 41. Items 88 – 91 inclusive.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Thank you, sir. On page 41 there is a small question on item 91 under Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance. I make no apology for bringing this out here again. I have said it before but we have to keep drumming away at these things, maybe to get it, sometimes, through the, may I say, thick skulls of some of the people across on the other side who do not seem to realise that we are here to benefit and help all Guyanese.

It is customary during discussion of the Estimates to use the opportunity to help the Ministers, to give them a little leverage to put forth their plans so that the Nation could know what is happening. We feed them the questions and hope we will get answers.

I am always talking about Social Security and the time taken in processing the applicants who apply for Social Assistance. This happens because that particular Department does not have enough personnel to do the work. The men and women there are very hard-working people and it takes all their time to get through all the work they have. Therefore, people have to wait unnecessary lengths of time when their applications go in for Social Assistance. Could we be told: Is any consideration being given to this business of getting more Social Assistance Officers in order to help the situation?

**3.05 p.m.**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, it is unreasonable that persons who are entitled to receive social assistance should have to wait a long time to receive it. I shall have this matter looked into myself, to see what can be done and to expedite the processing of these applications, on the assumption that my hon. Friend has not departed from the truth.

**The Chairman:** Section “B” Capital Estimates, items 1, 2 and 3.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** I should like to speak shortly on items 1, 2 and 3.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** If the point I wish to raise is not covered by my leader, I should like to speak on item 2.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, we all sat in this House in December, 1973 and we voted. We see that the Government presented cock-eyed estimates for 1974 as we look at them now in relation to this supplementary provision that is now before this honourable House.

We all sat here in December 1973 and we approved of the sum of \$1 million for National Service for 1974. Now we are asked to provide an additional sum of \$5 million. Five times as much! Did the Government not realise that it would need more than \$1 million in respect of 1974? And if it did realise it, then it was being downright dishonest to this honourable House to ask us to approve of estimates for only \$1 million when in truth and in fact it knew full well that it intended to spend, and it would spend, more than \$1 million.

I have talked before about National Service. I have no reason to change my views on National Service: it is divisive in this country. It divides the nation. People have been leaving this country because of the Government's proposals in respect of National Service. Parents have been sending their children overseas because of National Service.

What are the proposals for National Service? I look at the New Nation dated last Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1974, and it sets out the benefits of National Service. National Service will assist in providing training in skills which are consistent with our national needs. We have schools, we have institutions, which can do that at the present moment. Why National Service? That is number one.

Number two, providing manpower for development: Is it not cheaper to pay a reasonable wage to the manpower for development? Are we not reminded of the road to Brazil, where



money was poured down the drain bringing people from all over in order to work on this supposed self-help road? We do not have the figures up to now in respect of the money expended on that road to Brazil. Where is that road? Can we travel? I am really very sorry that I was not in a position to accept the very kind invitation of the Hon. Minister of Works and Communications. I was in the House debating the Estimates at the time when the hon. Minister was on his safari along that road to the Rupununi. I was busily engaged in debating this Book, which is worth throwing away right now because it is so irrelevant to the realities of the situation in Guyana at the present moment. I was debating the budget in December last year, when I could have gone on that safari with the hon. Minister to see how he had to wade knee deep – I understand it was further than knee deep in mud, in order to get through on that road, with bulldozers pulling the vehicles out of the quagmire that is termed a road and on which so much of Guyana's money has been spent. **[Interruption]**

If the members of the Government are so proud of it, why do they not provide us with the figures? We have asked for the figures time and again. Where are the figures of the money spent to bring people from all over the world, almost, on holiday? They worked for one day, they developed a few corns on their hands, and then they stopped working; and enjoyed a holiday for the rest of the time. The doctor was there to attend to them; all the facilities were there, all passages paid, all expenses paid at the taxpayers' expense. **[Interruption]** I did not want a holiday that is why I did not go.

When we think of what we understand was spent on that road to Brazil, we wonder at these sums being voted in respect of National Service. If a man is paid to do a job, will the Government not get more out of him than if it feeds on him, houses him, clothes him, puts him in a camp, and puts a cutlass in his hand? Because when he gets a little corn, he says: "Look, I cannot work any more. I am sick." What are you going to do? Are you going to beat him? Are you going to put him in prison? He says he cannot work because there is something wrong with his hand, or whatever excuse he makes up. If there were jobs provided, then he would be able to

work in a job. If he does not work, he does not get paid. What about the limers and the choke and people. The Government has already got the Youth Corps, in which they can be put.

Are we going to put the limers, the people who choke and rob, the people who are a nuisance at the present moment to the society, because of their criminal activities, in the National Service? They can be dealt with condignly and condignly is a word that the hon. Prime Minister likes very much.

### 3.15 p.m.

Let us look at the other benefits of this National Service: Developing and populating the hinterland. I do not know which one is more important, developing the hinterland or populating it. [**The hon. Prime Minister:** “It calls for certain abilities to populate.”] I am glad to hear the hon. Prime Minister say that it calls for certain abilities to populate because there is a rumour – I do not normally believe in rumours, but one wonders and maybe the hon. Prime Minister may like to deny this rumour – that all contraceptives and all pregnancy kits have been bought out from Bookers by the National Service. I invite the Hon. Prime Minister to deny this rumour and it is a wicked rumour around the place let him say that it is a wicked rumour; let him say that it is not true so that Guyanese mothers and fathers can know that there is a wicked rumour being circulated by people who are antagonistic towards the Government. The rumour being spread is that all the contraceptives and pregnancy kits being stocked by Bookers have been bought out by the Government. [**The hon. Prime Minister:** “What is a pregnancy kit?”] It is a kit that can be used to determine whether or not the particular person, on whom you use it, is pregnant. I invite the hon. Prime Minister to deny that rumour if it is not true.

If jobs are there, if the conditions are right, you do not need National Service to develop and populate the hinterland. If you create the right conditions in the interior, security of tenure for land, if you have the proper schemes going, if the people can have the proper incentives, you

do not need National Service to develop and to populate the interior. It is not necessary to have National Service to do that.

I am quoting from the **New Nation** of Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1974. It states:

“Uniting the various racial, social and economic groups in Guyana for our survival and development.”

Do we need National Service for this? When you have ordinary schools, multilateral schools and all the propaganda which the Ministry of Information is involving itself in at the present moment? Do you really need that? The answer obviously is No.

The last item is National Defence. Against whom are we going to defend ourselves? Our neighbours? Can we match the strength, the expertise, the power, the capacities of our neighbours like Brazil and Venezuela? Of course, we need to develop a nationalistic spirit. We are a small developing nation. What do those people have? They have battle ships, jet planes, they have large land spaces, and they have an army that is more than our entire population. Are we going to say that the Youth Corps, in respect of national defence, will be effective? We have the police, the G.D.F. to look after national defence. If you forget our neighbours, if you accept that, in respect of Venezuela and Brazil, our national defence, if it comes to the crunch, will not be very effective, let us understand that the other area would be in respect of national security and in respect of defence inside Guyana.

We have proved that we are capable of handling the situation. We have the G.D.F. on which we spend a lot of money. We have the Police Force. That is enough for national defence. Do we need National Service for national defence? In times of national disaster every Guyanese will rally to the call. We do not need National Service to justify expenditure of this magnitude. As I said, national emergency will bring out the best in us. It has done so before and it will do so in future. Why, therefore, do we have this additional expenditure to this magnitude in respect of

National Service? More than anything else, what is it doing? It is dividing the nation at a time when we should be building the nation, making it one cohesive whole. We want to build one identity, we want to build one people, we want to be one in every sense of the word and National Service will never help to do it.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, in fully supporting what my leader has just said with regard to National Service, which is something we have repeated before over and over again, I have to say now “I told you so.” When this matter of National Service was being debated in January of this year when the State Paper came before the House, I pointed out that \$1 million was unrealistic and stated that before June was out we would have this matter coming again for additional expenditure. And here again we are being asked – [**The hon. Prime Minister:** “But it comes in July.”] It was printed before July. I told you then that you would come before the House for additional funds. You can check the Hansard and see that it is so.

Here you have come for an additional \$5 million and all we have so far for National Service that we are talking about is the camp being established at Kimbia. We are spending \$5 million plus \$1 million to get Kimbia started and there are other areas, Papaya, Paruima, Mahdia, Tumatumari, Paramakatoi and Kato, still to come. So \$6 million will be spent on one camp. There are six more camps to come making a total of seven camps. Are we going to have \$6 million spent on each camp making a total of \$42 million for the whole thing to get the National Service going in this year of crisis, when we just heard the hon. Minister of Finance talk about the favourite whipping boy we have nowadays – the fuel crisis? The crisis is an excuse for every additional expenditure asked for. As we said then, the National Service is totally unnecessary. We have the Youth Corps. We are trying to talk about conserving what we have and instead of building and expanding the Youth Corps, the Youth Corps has now become the Cinderella or the stepchild.

As a matter of fact, I am still waiting to see the Youth Corps. So many years ago the hon. Prime Minister promised to take me to Tumatumari to see what is happening there. I am still

waiting to go. I wish to point out that this \$5 million is another attempt at fooling the taxpayers of Guyana of how much money is really needed for this National Service and this represents but a drop in the ocean because only one camp is established. This is a serious matter; everybody is laughing over this matter of National Service. \$6 million is being spent on one camp and there are six more to come. Seven camps will require a total of \$42 million.

Of course, this \$6 million being spent on Kimbia does not mean that it is finished yet. The Government will come back in a couple of months for more money to spend on Kimbia. It is totally unnecessary. It is a duplication, apart from all the other faults that we have, to establish the National Service when we already have a Youth Corps that could be expanded and could carry out the same type of training and education that is envisaged for the National Service.

**3.25 p.m.**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I concede that originally when this House was approached the amount approved was \$1 million. That was so because we did not have a proper estimate of what would be the full cost for this year. After the Planning Secretariat has had an opportunity to cost, along with planning, we have arrived at the conclusion that \$6 million should represent the amount to be spent on National Service during this year.

May I point out at the same time that Papaya has been established, Kayuka has been established, Kimbia has been established, but in each case the placement is for a separate purpose. You start first with training at Kimbia, and then subsequently members of the Service remove to other places which are already prepared. I myself have been to Papaya and I have seen forests being cut down with saw and mobile saw mill and boards being processed on the spot there. Papaya is not difficult to reach. The Government runs, through the Guyana Airways Corporation, a service five times a week by plane to Matthews Ridge and Matthews Ridge is just a few miles from Papaya. A young person like my hon. Friend can walk the five miles if a vehicle is not available.

To suggest that it took \$6 million to set up the Kimbia placement is ridiculous and something that one would not have expected from one who has been a Member of this House for a few years. Certainly the Service must cost something to administer, certainly there is staff to be paid and for the whole year. How does the hon. Member come to the conclusion that \$6 million is for establishing Kimbia.

It is in the tradition of our dear leader who comes here with the most vulgar suggestions about a paucity of contraceptives and pregnancy kits. First of all, he must have been looking for them and, secondly, I should like to tell him that I am no expert in this field; I have done many jobs in my time but never have I sold these things.

My hon. and learned Friend – and both those terms are terms of courtesy and not of description – admits that it is only a wicked rumour, he admits that it is a nasty rumour and uses this House to repeat a rumour like that and yet is so impertinent and impudent to be asking the Prime Minister to confirm or deny. I have looked through my list of responsibilities which I have allotted myself under the Constitution and nowhere have I seen that I am supposed to be a huckster of contraceptives and pregnancy kits. I leave that to people masquerading as men to talk about.

Mr. Chairman, I was little surprised to hear my hon. and learned Friend merely referring casually to the limers, the choke and robbers as he would call them and how they could be dealt with condignly. How are they to be dealt with condignly? If he were to consult his Episcopal brother, the latter would explain to him that it is a social problem and to merely deal with them condignly as he suggests is to treat the sore without treating the cause of the sore. One of the purposes of National Service is to give people, who have been disadvantaged, an opportunity for training, an opportunity for associating with other human beings in more pleasant and congenial circumstances and hopefully to make them themselves better citizens.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition mistakes asseveration and repetition for proof or argument. Remembering which profession he belonged to, after I heard him state that National Service is divisive, I sat back to hear the arguments he was going to adduce in support of that statement and all I heard was, his putting it another way. “It is divisive, it divides,” says he. How are we going to be assisted? It is no wonder that sometimes the Leader of the Opposition has to complain that he is ignored. Because a man of his talents ought not to be coming here and making these sweeping statements without producing either logical argument or proof. It is almost unpatriotic, and I use the term “almost” out of kindness, for a Member of this House to get up and say, “Are we capable of defending ourselves? We are a small nation, look at the size of Brazil, look at the wealth of Venezuela.” If he feels that way why on earth does he not follow his other comrades who are over there after we put down the uprising in December 1968 and January 1969?

We may be a small nation. [**Interruption**] We must not take that approach, if I may say so. If you have a country to defend, you have a country to defend, even against the developed. We have seen the mighty United States of America have to settle with the small Vietnamese, small in geographical area, small in stature. It is not the size of the nation or even the size of the person, it is the conviction. It is whether or not you believe in what you are fighting for. When my hon. and learned Friend suggests that we – he is really transposing there, it is really “he” – are incapable of defending Guyana it shows that he does not believe in Guyana, and that he is incapable of fighting for Guyana.

**3.35 p.m.**

Now I am going to deal with another proposition to this effect: it was again disappointing to hear that instead of training people in National Service to fit them to be more competent and qualified workmen, we should take the money and employ people. One of the problems of which my hon. and learned Friend ought to have been aware, is that sometimes there are vacancies but there are no skilled persons to fill those vacancies; and sometimes the absence of

skill is due to dis-orientation, wrong objectives and national Service is intended to help to train people in the relevant skills and attitudes in so far as the national thrust is concerned.

I do not propose to go over the points I made when we debated the White Paper. [**Mrs. Da Silva:** “State paper”] Mr. Chairman, I apologise and I am grateful to my colleague for correcting me; that just shows the need for National Service, so brainwashed have I myself been that I am calling a State Paper a White Paper. I shall content myself with making this point: In Tanzania when National Service was at first introduced, there were several arguments against it. Many people objected; many purveyors of scandals and rumours like a certain friend of mine, prophesied what ruin was going to come to the country; and today in Tanzania, there are people anxious – including University under-graduates and University graduates – to get into National Service for the opportunity it offers them to serve their country and to know their fellow citizens. National Service is a fact, and not even the Leader of the Opposition can stop it. [**Applause**]

**Mr. Chairman:** Page, item 24. I think that completes the Prime Minister’s “Heads.”

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, my apologise, but I am acting Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation.

**The Chairman:** Pages 39 and 40, items 84, 85, 86 and 87. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. M. F. Singh:** Item 84. We note that it is to provide on the permanent establishment – pensionable, for the reclassification with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1973, for one post of Chief Co-operative Officer and one post of Deputy Chief Co-operative Officer. One cannot help noticing that the Chief Engineer (Hydraulics) who is a professional person who has responsibility for hydraulics – such series as water control, particularly drainage and irrigation



and sea defences – throughout the country is on Salary Scale A 36 (on page 25) and the Chief Co-operative Officer is on Salary Scale A 40 which is a much higher scale.

I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister can tell us what is the rationale to put the Chief Co-operative Officer on the high scale of A 40 and yet leave a highly technical officer like the Chief Engineer (Hydraulics) on a much lower scale? Maybe the Chief Engineer (Hydraulics) should go on the scale A 40 and the Chief co-operative officer should go on the scale A 36. I do not know the rationale used; I am certainly at a loss to understand the difference. We would certainly appreciate hearing the reasoning behind it. Also, could the Hon. Prime Minister tell us the rationale for moving the Deputy Chief Co-operative Officer from A 28 to A 33, bearing in mind what I have said?

**Mrs. Da Silva:** On page 40, item 87. I wish to use this opportunity in dealing with Community Development not so much to talk about the actual money sought, although I do note that the voted provision was \$53,500 and now we want \$79,750. I note in the legend that this amount has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. I want to use this opportunity, as we get so very few opportunities to have our voices heard on this side of the House, to ask a question in connection with community Development, and the welding together of our nation. My Leader spoke a little earlier about the divisiveness of National Service and now I am talking about remedies for bringing us closer together.

I was extremely interested a couple of months ago when I was in the United Kingdom and visited a new housing estate, probably known to the hon. Minister of Housing, at Milton Keynes, the Chairman of which is somebody well known to all of us, Sir Jock Campbell. I was very impressed there to see the community workshops in the various sections of the housing areas for the residents of these areas to make use of. The residents were able to use expensive electrical tools that a man could probably not afford to buy on his own.

These community workshops were there in the various communities in the housing areas and a person was in charge. The residents went there and were able to make use of the facilities if they needed to build a cupboard or repair an article in the home or to use some bit of electrical equipment that they could not afford to buy. These community centres stock tools for the purpose of lending to residents. The service was very useful and much appreciated by the people in the areas. I am wondering if consideration could be given by those responsible for community development so that a system rather on the lines of that could be introduced. I shall be interested to hear the comments.

**3.45 p.m.**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, I am quite sure that my hon. and learned Friend, the Leader of the Opposition meant well when he raised the point. First, it is not true that the Chief Co-operative officer's salary at A40 earns him more than the salary of the Chief Hydraulics Officer. The Chief Hydraulics Officer earns, in addition to his substantive salary, a two hundred dollar a month professional allowance which actually leaves him at the end of the month with \$1,294 as against \$1,250 for the Chief Co-operative Officer. The research has not been as deep as it ought to have been.

Secondly, it is wrong to describe the Chief Co-operative Officer as a non-professional. A person who is competent enough and is sufficiently trained to be Chief Co-operative Officer would have qualified to be describes, and does qualify to be described, as a professional. There are some engineers who would describe lawyers as non-professionals and I am surprised that one of the legally trained attempts to say that the Chief Co-operative Officer's post does not call for a professional.

Thirdly, this is the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Can you down-grade the officer who is responsible for assisting in the organisation, the regulation, the running, the servicing of co-operatives and say he is relatively unimportant and therefore bring him down? He (the

Leader of the Opposition) said either bring up the chief Hydraulics Officer or bring down the Chief Co-operative Officer.

Fourthly, the Chief Hydraulics Officer has a line along which he can get promotion because he becomes the chief Works and Hydraulics Officer. Who is the ultimate professional head and whose post does carry a remuneration higher than that at A40.

Fifthly, Mr. Chairman, if you do not want to tempt trained professional officers like the Chief Co-operative Officer or the Chief Community Development Officer to move off into the strictly administrative stream and aspire to being Permanent Secretaries, for which they may have the ability but for which other people have ability – but not so many others have the ability to hold the post of chief Co-operative Officer or chief Community Development Officer – ability by training; I am not saying by intelligence – you must make the posts sufficiently attractive to be satisfying so that there is no urge to seek to become a Permanent Secretary.

That was one of the criteria which led to the Chief Works and Hydraulics Officer, in fact, being on a salary scale even above that of the Permanent Secretary and I would say that we must start de-brainwashing ourselves and cease thinking of professions merely in terms of those that we have known in the past. Also we must understand that if emphasis is to be placed there must be some attraction for those whom you seek to attract.

I have not seen this new Scheme that Jock Campbell is running. I am too busy running my own schemes in Guyana but I remember that at the time when I was an undergraduate in England a coal-miner started at a higher wage and salary level than someone in the clerical service. Why? Because they wanted to attract people to coal mining. On this occasion I say no more except to ask my honourable friend to get his research assistant to go more deeply into these matters in future.

We are grateful for the fine lessons learnt by the hon. Member about this Milton Keynes scheme. I do not know these English names. I only know Ruimveldt, East La Penitence and Tuber. It is my claim to distinction that I am a neighbor of the hon. Member and we live in a relatively disadvantaged community. I would suggest to her to apply what she learnt at Milton Keynes there at Nooten-zuil and I will be with her so that we can improve the community in which we live.

These people, come here and whenever they see anything in England they say “You must do this, you must do that.” When they get home they sit down rocking. They would not even clean the trench outside. I have been cleaning that trench while the same lady drives past. Now she is telling me about Milton Keynes. Physician heal thyself. Put into practice what you preach.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members we will revert to page 1, items 1 and 2. Then we will go over to page 2 and do items 3 and 4.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak on items 1, 3 and 4. First of all, I think it would be enlightening for us to look at page 20 of the Estimates for 1974 which we debated in December, 1973. In those Estimates we see that the commissioners of Title were on salary scale A34 and the Registrar was on salary scale A33. So that the Commissioners of Title, whom we know as the Land Court Judges – there are two in all – were getting more salary than the Registrar who was on A33, the scale just below the Commissioners of Title. But, of course, the Registrar was getting a personal allowance of \$5,616.

**3.55 p.m.**

We note very carefully here that the post of Registrar is being regarded from A33 to a36 and the two posts of Commissioner of Title are also being regarded from A34 to A36, so they are both moving up. Both the Registrar and the two Commissioners of Title are moving up to A36,

[Mr. Singh contd.]

but the Registrar is making that move upwards from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1973, whereas there is no note as to what is the effective date on which the two commissioners of Title are moving up to the same scale A36. One can only presume that they are moving up to A36 with effect from the beginning of this year, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974.

First of all, I should like that to be confirmed by the Hon. Minister. Is there a discrepancy? Is it that both the Registrar and the two Commissioners are moving up to A36 – the Registrar is moving up from January, 1973, but the two Commissioners of title are moving up not from January, 1973, but from January, 1974? One would like to know whether that is in fact the position.

The other point is this: there must have been some reason why the post of Registrar is now being equated with the post of Land Court Judge. In the Estimates, that post is known as Commissioner of title. They are now being so equated in these Estimates. The House certainly would like to know the reason for the equating of the two distinct posts. There must be some rationale for doing this. We must not forget that the Registrar has a personal allowance of \$5,616. This has already been explained to this honourable House. I think the explanation was that he is receiving the salary of a Judge because he could not be released from his present position as Registrar. I am not dealing the personal allowance. I am dealing with the post, whoever holds it. There is a differentiation between Commissioner of Title and Registrar.

Looking again at item 1 on page 1, paragraph (2) of the legend states:

“for the creation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974 of two posts of Confidential Secretary on the salary range A12 in substitution for two posts of Legal Clerk III on the salary range A12.”

There must be a reason for this. They remain at the same salary scale but the designation is being changed. Are these Confidential Secretaries going to be attached to some special posts?

We go further: paragraph (3) states:

“for the transfer from head 17 – Attorney General – Deeds Registry with effect from 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1974 inclusive of:

- (a) one post of Senior Registry Officer on the salary range A20;
- (b) one post of Legal Clerk II on the salary range A9.”

These two posts are being transferred from the Attorney General’s Department, Deeds Registry, to the Supreme Court of Judicature.

I have been told, and I may be wrong, that this refers to the probate and administration section of the Deeds Registry. This probate and administration section is now being moved over from the Deeds Registry to the Supreme Court. If this is so, I heartily agree it is more properly under the Supreme Court rather than the Deeds Registry but I feel that the officer in charge of this probate and administration section should be moved up from the grade of Senior Registry Officer to that of chief Registry Officer, that is, that he should be moved up from the grade A20 to the grade A25.

He is in charge of a section, a very important section, a section which deals with probate, administration and all the allied things, although his section is not large in numbers, but he is required to know his Supreme Court Ordinance, his Intestacy Rules; he is required to know a whole variety of very technical and legal matters. Take for example, the Judicial Officer in the Supreme Court. He is in charge of a section. He has all the Clerks of Court, the Clerks to the Judges under him. I think the tendency has been in the past to look at the salary scale of the sectional heads in relation to the number of people who are under the particular sectional head. They would say that the salary of the sectional head should be increased because he has so much staff under this control.

**3.7.74**

**National Assembly**

**3.55 – 4.05 p.m.**

I respectfully submit that is not the only criteria to be used. One must look at the officer's responsibilities. I respectfully submit that this officer's responsibilities justify his being moved from the salary scale A20 to the salary scale which the Judicial Officer in the supreme Court now enjoys, that is, the salary scale A25. Why can't we move up this officer who is in charge of a section from A20 to A25? I certainly would like to recommend that for the consideration of the hon. Minister, in view of the officer's responsibilities. I should like to give notice that I should like to deal with this more fully on a comparable basis when I come to the Deeds Registry, particularly in relation to the salary scales of the other sectional heads in the Deeds Registry, Judicial Officer and Notarial Officer in the Deeds Registry. They were all equated in the "good old days" from 1951 to 1959, when your humble servant was a clerk in the Deeds and Supreme Court Registry, when it was just one Department, one cohesive whole.

**4.05 p.m.**

I will go on now to item 4, Personal Emoluments under the Head, Magistrates (B). The legend states under (B):

“on the Permanent Establishment – Non Pensionable for the creation of an item entitles “house allowance.”

We know that under Supreme Court of Judicature, Permanent Establishment, Non-Pensionable there is a provision of \$39,000 for house allowance and \$46,200 for duty allowance for the Judges. Presumably this provision will not be for the Chancellor or the Judges. This must be for other than Chancellors and Judges because it comes further down the line in respect of Supreme Court of Judicature. The question is asked: Who are these allowances for and at what rates? We have new Heads, correction of items, house allowances and duty allowances for whom? At what rates are they going to be paid?

(Mr. Singh continues)

Item 3, head 2 – Supreme Court of Judicature, subhead 18, (New) Entertainment Allowance. Again we are not dealing with personalities at all. We are dealing with the posts and the legend states:

“To provide for the payment of an entertainment allowance to the Registrar.”

We note, as I said before, that in these Estimates at the present moment the Commissioners of Title and Registrar are on two different salary scales. Commissioners of Title get more than the Registrar and now we are creating entertainment allowances for the Registrar. What is the position with Commissioners of Title? They are now put on the same salary scale as the Registrar. Will they get an entertainment allowance like the Registrar? Even though the posts have been equated, will the Registrar alone get an entertainment allowance and the Commissioners of Title, who are, in fact, known as Land Court Judges, will not get? Judges of the Supreme Court and Appeal Court get entertainment allowances. Will the Land Court judges not get any entertainment allowance? I merely ask, I do not know what their position is.

In respect of item 4, Head 3 – Magistrates, subhead 1 – personal Emoluments, this is a provision in respect of which I want to commend the government heartily. For a long time now, there has been stagnation and there has, indeed, been frustration among the Magistrates because of the lack of promotional opportunities. I would like to say here and now how happy I am to see that the government has remedied the situation; that the government has, in fact, created opportunities for promotion in respect of the Magistracy. I commend the Government for what it has done in respect of item 4 because we now have one post of chief Magistrate three posts of principal Magistrate and three posts of Senior Magistrate, whereas before we merely had three Senior Magistrates and the rest were Magistrates on Scale A26. Now that we have these promotional opportunities created perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us how soon these new posts will be filled so that we can put an end to stagnation and frustration among the Magistrates.



3.7.74

National Assembly

4.05 – 4.10 p.m.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps this is a good time to take the suspension.

*Assembly resumed.*

*Sitting suspended at 4.10 p.m.*

3.7.74  
4.35 p.m.

National Assembly

4.35 – 4.40 p.m.

*On resumption --*

*Assembly in Committee of Supply*

**The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources** (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, the first question which I propose to answer relates to the change of the salary rate from A34 to A36 with regard to the promotion of Commissioners of title. I am instructed that they also refer to January, 1973, although it is not put down. With regard to the change of two posts from Class III Clerks, that is merely a change of designation. They are confidential secretaries to the Chief Justice and the Registrar.

Another question raised was with respect to the upgrading of the post of Registrar to that of the Commissioner of Title. That has, in fact, been done, but the present holder of that post holds the status of a High Court Judge and it is for that reason that one sees included an entertainment allowance for the Registrar which the commissioners of Title do not, in fact, enjoy.

Questions have been raised with regard to the upgrading of certain officers. I think it will be helpful if I remind this honourable House that for over three years we have had sitting a Job Evaluation committee. That Job Evaluation Committee has tendered its report as we all know now and that report has been implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1973. Throughout the rest of the afternoon I am quite certain that with respect to almost every Ministry and almost every Head, there will be notes concerning the change of designation and the change of emoluments and status as a direct result of the job evaluation. Apart from this, however, there is provision for appeal and an Appeals Committee has been set up which Committee will hear appeals where it is considered, by officers or by Ministries, that particular posts have not been properly designated.

[Mr. Jack continues]

4.40 p.m.

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition is prepared to accept this explanation and if he recognizes that these changes are the result of over three years of deliberations, then, I think, without encroaching upon his right and prerogative to ask certain questions, he might be able to accept the new designations pending the appeal which would be in train in many circumstances. It would not be possible either, in answering this particular Head or in answering subsequent Heads which would follow, to give the exact reason which the Job Evaluation committee would have had, because what we face is a total change arising out of this new evaluation. Since there is provision for appeal in proper cases I doubt that it would be very helpful to attempt to explain why A has been moved up, why B has been moved up, why B has been moved down or why C has been kept in the same position.

**The Chairman:** page 2, item 5 and item 6 which continues on page 3. Page 4. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. M. F. Singh:** Starting on page 2, item 6, Head 5 – Audit, subhead 1 – Personal Emoluments. My questions will cover the other pages too.

Last December I had asked, and I specifically remember this, whether this very important Department was adequately staffed. I also specifically remember that the reply given was: “Yes, this Audit Department is adequately staffed.” I also remember the Hon. Minister saying that he had received no complaints from the Director of Audit. Well, something seems to be radically wrong, because it is quite obvious that this Department could not have been adequately staffed when we look at the details of these proposals in this Financial Paper.

If we start at the beginning of item 6, we see the creation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1974 of 9a) two posts, (b) three posts, (c) ten posts, (d) three posts, (e) two posts, (f) one post, (g) one post. There are twenty-two new posts in all. There is one substitution. Then we move on to (3)

which mentions the abolition of two posts. What we have before us, in fact, is the creation of 22 posts some of which are high-salaried posts and the abolition of two relatively junior posts.

I am very happy to see that this Department is receiving more staff particularly because I believe that this Department is most important to the Guyanese people. It keeps an eye on Government expenditure. The Head of this Department occupies a constitutional position in our country and it is only right that he be given tools to do the job. The hon. Minister must convince me to the contrary that this Department was not equipped with the proper tools to do the job before.

To add insult to injury, one also remembers the statement by the hon. Minister when he said that because of various problems the accounts were not submitted by the Director of Audit for audit within the time required by the law. I should like to invite the assurance of the hon. Minister that the Audit Department is now adequately staffed, that audit queries will be answered, and that the late submission of accounts to the Audit Department will be remedied. Whereas at the present moment the last Audit Report is for 1968, five years ago, we hope that we will have a speeding up of this procedure and that the Audit Department will be able to function as it was envisaged under the Constitution and indeed within the general scheme of things within the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Turning to page 4, in relation to the same item, the legend states at (B):

“on the Permanent Establishment – non-pensionable, for the creation of an item entitled responsibility allowances.”

An amount of \$1 has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. Could the hon. Minister please tell us which are the posts in respect of which responsibility allowances will be paid. This honourable House is certainly entitled to know the quantum of such responsibility allowances. Merely telling us that \$1 has been voted for responsibility allowances is telling us nothing. Who

are the officers who will receive the responsibility allowances and at what rate will the responsibility allowance be?

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Hope:** Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member obviously feels constrained to speak even on items which are in accord with his own views. He perhaps did raise in December the question of adequacy of staff of the Audit Department. But as I told him then the Director of Audit did not complain to me. Obviously, from the number of posts included in this Schedule for that Department it must be quite clear to anyone who understands the processes of the Government that that Department was in fact receiving a lot of attention from the relevant Ministry responsible for regarding posts and examining requests for additional posts. I think if the hon. Member knows anything about Government processes he ought to recognise that a lot of work was going on to yield the results recorded on these pages.

**4.50 p.m.**

That apart, I should like to say that we have no complaints with the operation of the Audit Department and if the annual report on the Government accounts is late, it is not the fault of the Director of Audit. The fault lies in other circumstances, which, if we wish, we can get into at a much later time. I think that probably answers the observations of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

With respect to the responsibility allowance, I cannot say off the cuff exactly how much is paid in terms of responsibility allowance. This is not a new head in a sense; it is merely provisions of payment which I am sure has already been made. It is drawn from the Contingencies Fund which will imply that the expenditure has already been incurred and obviously it is related not only to the need for additional posts, but also to the difficulty which the relevant agency has been experiencing in getting posts filled. It is when you have posts

(Mr. Hope continued)

unfilled and they remain unfilled for some time that responsibility allowance has to be provided for an officer who is at a lower category and who might be carrying on those functions. I think this is really the position here. If the hon. Member wishes perhaps I can give him the information at a later date but certainly I do not think he expects me to say at this stage how much has been spent in this connection.

**Mr. Chairman:** Pages 4 and 5, items 9 and 10. Page 7, item 17 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs; item 18; page 8, items 19 and 20; page 9, items 20, 21, and 22.

**Mr. Singh:** I would like to speak on page 9, items 21 and 22. Item 21, Attorney General – Official Receiver, subhead 6 – Legal Costs, Fees, etc: The voted provision was \$24,000, the supplementary provision now sought is \$24,682 and the legend says:

“To provide for the payment of outstanding accounts.”

I am unhappy about this because again I must reiterate that this is the kind of accounting about which we have complained so often in this honourable House. If we look at the Estimates, page 48, subhead 6 – Other Charges, we would see that the revised estimate for 1973 was \$68,000; the actual estimate for 1972 was \$89,549; the actual estimate for 1971 was \$107,979.

This shows that consistently over that period more money was spent than was put in the Estimates. In 1973 the approved estimate was \$24,000. I questioned the 1974 Estimates. I made a note in my copy of the Estimates:

“This seems unrealistic in view of all the supplementary provisions that have been asked for to pay arrears on the basis of increased rates.”

If we keep presenting Estimates to the honourable House and putting forward unrealistic figures we will always find ourselves in trouble, particularly at the end of the year.

Now here it is, exactly what I said has, in fact, happened. We approved \$24,000 in the Estimates for 1974; we ignored the revised estimate of \$68,000 for 1973; we ignored \$89,000 actual expenditure for 1972; we ignored \$108,000, approximately, for 1971 and we continued putting down with monotonous regularity \$24,000. Now we have come to the House to ask for a supplementary provision of even more than we provided \$24,683. When will this Government learn that it must look at the past figures and put down realistic figures in these Estimates. I would certainly like to say that these figures should be upgraded in the light of what has happened in the past. It is no point telling me: “Legal costs fluctuate; legal fees fluctuate, and we never know exactly what it is.” Surely we can have an approximate idea from what went on in the past.

I would like to deal with item 22. I note the hon. Minister’s remarks about upgrading but I cannot help raising this because I would certainly like it to gain some publicity so that perhaps it could go to the notice of the Review Board. I am speaking here of what has happened in respect of the regrading of these posts.

We see that the legend says in respect of item 22, head 17, Attorney General, Deeds Registry, Subhead 1 - Personal Emoluments:

“To provide on permanent establishment pensionable for the reclassification with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1973 of the following:-

- (i) One post of Registrar of Deeds from Salary range A 32 to salary range A 36.
- (ii) One post of Deputy Registrar of Deeds from salary range A 29 to salary range A 30.”

We remember when we were dealing with the Supreme Court on page 1, we looked at the regarding of the salaries of Registrar and Commissioners of Title to A 36. We note with pleasure that the post of Registrar of Deeds has also been upgraded from A 32 to A 36. So, the Registrar of Deeds and the Registrar of the Supreme Court are put on the same salary scale A 36. The Deputy Registry of Deeds has also moved upwards and is put on the same salary scale as the Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court. So both the Deputy Registrar (Supreme Court) and the Deputy Registrar (Deeds) are now on salary scale A 30. Herein lies the anomaly. What about the sectional heads? In the Supreme Court one of the sectional heads is Judicial Officer, and the first of Judicial Officer at the present moment falls in the salary scale A 25, and what is classified as a Chief Registry Officer.

**5.00 p.m.**

Now, Mr. Chairman, there are two other officers, the Notarial Officer and the Conveyancing Officer, who have sections under them. These officers used to be in the old de-combined Deeds Registry and Supreme Court Registry with equal status at one time. I am sure, Mr. Chairman, you would be acquainted with this. The Notarial Officer, the Conveyancing Officer and the Judicial Officer were all sectional heads and they were all on the same salary scale; they were all of equal status. Apparently, now the Judicial Officer has moved away. He has become a Chief Registry Officer and he is classified on page 20 of the Estimates as Chief Registry Officer A25.

What is the position of his counterparts in the Deeds Registry, the Notarial Officer and the Conveyancing Officer? What are they classified as? We look in the Estimates at page 49, under Attorney General Deeds Registry and we see that there is no post such as Chief Registry Officer. Only Senior Registry Officer is mentioned. Therefore, these two posts are now below the post of Judicial Officer. They are merely Senior Registry Officers, whereas the Judicial Officer is a Chief Registry Officer.



(Mr. Singh continues)

I would like to commend this for the consideration the Review Board and I would like to invite the hon. Minister, if there is anything he can do about this, to get us back to the position that obtained in the past where the Judicial Officer, the Conveyancing officer and the Notarial Officer were on the same salary scale. Make them all Chief Registry Officers on scale A25. Let them all enjoy the same status.

What is the position? The Judicial officer may have more staff under him but why does he have more staff under him? Because, technically speaking, each Judge has a clerk and each clerk comes under the Judicial Officer. But, the fact of the matter is he has very little to do with those clerks.

What are the responsibilities of the Notarial Officer? He has to deal with a wide variety of things. He is in charge of companies; he is in charge of trademarks; patents; designs; business names; he is in charge of all Deeds; of all contracts.

I used to be acting Notarial Officer at one time so I know this; he has to have a thorough knowledge of the Deeds Registry Act, as it now is. He has to have a thorough knowledge of the Evidence Act. He has to be able to examine a document coming in the country to find out whether it satisfies the provisions of the Evidence Act in order to know whether it is acceptable in the Registry or not. He has a multitude of things under him.

The Conveyancing Officer has to deal with intestate succession. He is in charge of administering the Deeds Registry Act to the extent that all transports passed have to pass through him to make sure that the law is complied with. He has to know Intestate Succession; he has to know, properly, the Deeds Registry Act. He has to know the Town Council Regulations. He has to know Regulations in respect of health and the passing of plans etc. he has to know a multitude of things too numerous to mention here in this honourable House. I would keep the House

(Mr. Singh continues)

waiting for much longer than it would care to sit, if I went through the list of responsibilities of these Officers.

Let me make a point. For years and years these posts were all classified on the same scale. There was a separation of the two Registries. The Deeds Registry was separated from the Supreme Court and thereafter, apparently, representations were made independently. This, I think, is the problem. I am not saying that any particular officer or any particular person was to be blamed for this. I am saying that when these two Registries became separated then representations were made independently in respect of the staff of the two independent Registries, and somehow the Judicial Officer seemed to have moved ahead of the Notarial and Conveyancing Officers.

I sincerely urge that whatever measures can be taken should be taken to get the situation back to where these officers were. Let me put it specifically. What I am advocating is the upgrading of the posts of Conveyancing Officer and Notarial Officer from Senior Registry Officer on scale A20 to Chief Registry Officer on the scale A25 as is reflected on page 20 of the Supreme Court Estimates.

**Mr. Jack:** Mr. Chairman, with regard to the question of the legal costs, one may very well say that looking at the previous performance we should have had a larger provision made. But the fact is that when the Estimates were being prepared we were conscious of the fact that some expenses such as expenses attached to the Boundary Commission, which we had and which included solicitor's costs, were not likely to be incurred in 1974.

Apart from this, having taken, as you know, the very progressive step of abolishing appeals to the Privy Council we had justifiable reason to accept that costs such as those attendants upon the trial of cases from Guyana to the Privy Council would no longer need to be

provided for. So that it was within the context of these considerations that this provision was made.

However, during this year we have been embarking upon new ventures. This Government is playing an increasing role in economic development and this has necessitated recourse to certain legal opinion from time to time, recourse that could not have been anticipated at the time when the first provision was made.

It is because of this that we have had to come and ask for this provision.

### 5.10 p.m.

With regard to item 22, personal Emoluments, I would have thought when I made my remarks a little earlier, that it was not necessary to go into detail because I believed, apparently erroneously, that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was aware that we did, in fact, have a job evaluation exercise. Since this does not appear to be the case, I must spend just a few minutes explaining what the situation is.

Job evaluation was carried out for the Public Service Ministry, which is an arm of the Civil Service. Consultations took place between the various organisations and workers; representatives, such as the Public Service Association, and a lot of time was spent in a new evaluation. And the whole reason and concept behind the new evaluation was, in fact, changing the relationship of posts.

What the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking, is that because certain posts had a relationship before the evaluation, when he worked at the Deeds Registry, that they should still have the same evaluation. If that happened to be the case, an argument could be put up for all the posts, which were at a certain grade, remaining on the same grade, and we would have had no use for three years of effort which the Job Evaluation Committee put into this exercise.

I do not know if the hon. Leader of the Opposition seriously believes that by an enumeration of the responsibilities and duties of the officer in a particular post, at this time in this forum, some immediate change would take place. I have already explained that there is machinery for review and if the hon. Leader would like, I think that he would be quite in order if he were to send a letter or some communication to that forum, but certainly it will not help to raise the question here, because this is not the proper forum for doing so. And the reason that I stress this is that we might be spared the valuable time, both on this side of the House and on the side opposite us, which would be spent otherwise in going through each post that has been changed, and expecting an answer for that change. That is properly the function of the Job Evaluation Committee and for the Appeal and Review Committee.

**The Chairman:** page 9, item 23. Page 10. Page 11, items 26 to 30.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, on page 11, items 26, 28 and 29.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** if the point I wish to make on item 29 is not covered by my colleague, I should like to speak on items 27, 29 and 30.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Apart from the Estimates being used as an opportunity for the Opposition to voice its opinion and try to solicit information from the members on the other side, particularly the Ministers, this is also a time when the opportunity is taken for the Ministers to give an account of their stewardship. In the Ministry of Information and Culture, the lady Minister is always very happy to use this opportunity as a vehicle to peddle party propaganda under the guise of national propaganda.

Under item 26, Ministry of Information and Culture, Subhead 13 – Operation and Maintenance of Motor Vehicles, the voted provision was \$45,000. We are now being asked to

supplement that with a provision of \$20,000, just under 50 percent, to provide for increased cost of fuel, materials and services to vehicles. I should like to ask the hon. Minister, in her role of spreading information, if particular attention could be paid, not only to the departments of the Ministry of Information and Culture but to all government departments.

We talk so much about saving money, about prices going up, and we use, as I say, the old whipping horse, the fuel crisis, but yet we find people, government officers particularly, treating vehicles in a manner that I am quite sure they would not treat their own vehicles. They do not care less what happens to the vehicles; the vehicles belong to the Government and the Government can pay for them. Cannot the Ministry of Information and Culture use that Ministry to educate all the users of vehicles in all government departments on the proper care of vehicles?

Under item 28, subhead 21 – History and Culture, the legend states: “To meet increase in expenditure arising from the reclassification and regarding of employees of National History and Arts Council.” Although the legend states that it is for that specific purpose, I use this heading to seek some information as to what other plans the Minister and her Ministry have, and how soon will a statement be made in relation to the national monuments named in Guyana.

We had a big build up about two years ago when the Bill about our national monuments was passed. From time to time we hear about them, and from time to time people ask: Where are they, when will they be identified? We talked earlier on about rumours in this House. Well, there are rumours that go around that such and such a building is a national monument. Is it not time for the Minister to identify them? Or is it that she cannot identify them, because, behaving once identified them, the next move would be to keep the national monuments in the condition in which they ought to be, so that we will not be ashamed of our heritage? Is it because we do not have the money to do that that the Minister cannot identify these monuments? Maybe she will give an explanation.

The last item on this page 11, on which I wish to speak, is item 29, Sports Training. We have said before, and probably we will have to do it again, that the Estimates are supposed to reflect as true as is humanly possible a picture of conditions and of the money required. As we have been saying over and over this afternoon – and there are still more pages to come – these Estimates do not reflect such a picture. There is one thing I should like to ask. I notice here at item 29, subhead 25 – Sports Training, the voted provision is \$15,000.

**5.20 p.m.**

I would like to ask a question. I have a note that the sum of \$19,000, not \$15,000, was provided in the Estimates for Sports and Training. I have a note that we were asked to change the \$15,000 to \$19,000. Is that correct or has a mistake been made? Now we are asked to provide a further \$22,720, which according to the legend, is:

“to meet increased level of expenditure due to additional personnel attached to the National Sports Council.”

What kind of planning is this? The Minister and the people concerned for this section of the Ministry of Information and Culture do not plan their sports training properly in advance? Whether the \$15,000 or \$19,000 is correct, we are now seeking as supplementary provision a larger amount than was asked for in the original voted provision. Could we have some explanation please?

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, item 27, Publishing and Publicising. The voted provision was \$214,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$57,200. The total would make over  $\frac{1}{4}$  million and the legend states: “To meet increased costs.” This is a time of crisis; everyone in this country knows that. It has been drummed into us time and time again. Let us do something to show that we recognize the crisis. We have to start cutting down and one of the things we can justifiably cut down on is publicising and publishing which everyone knows is

designed predominantly to meet the propaganda of the ruling P.N.C. party, to enhance the P.N.C., a Party rather than the nation.

I have no quarrel with the members of the P.N.C. enhancing themselves by publishing and publicising, but do not let them do it with the taxpayers' money. Let the Party pay for its own propaganda, not the taxpayers. The people wish a lower cost of living; they do not want propaganda. They do not want to know how glorious life is under the P.N.C. administration when they are short of so many of their essential commodities; when the cost of living is spiraling all the time. What I would like to urge is that we cut down on publishing and publicizing which is now going to be over a \$¼ million and concentrate more on the essentials.

Items 30, Staff – Technical and Development: The sum of \$60,000 was voted. The supplementary provision now sought is \$101,400. The legend states:

“Voted provision inadequate to meet increased payments owing to the reclassification and regarding of staff and increase in number of employees at the Ministry's Film Unit Division.”

Again, the amount being sought is over one and a half time what was provided. When will we be able to give the people bread? If you do not want to give them bread then at least give them cassava bread. But why should we spend this level of money partly on an increase in the number of employees? I am reading from the legend:

“... increase in the number of employees at the Ministry's Film Unit Division.”

How much of this amount is for an increase in the number of employees? What is the increase in staff? Let us know what is the amount that will be apportioned to the increase and then we will know what the remaining amount that will go to reclassification is.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Information and Culture.

**The Minister of Information and Culture** (Miss Field-Ridley): On item 26, I think the question asked was completely irrelevant to the Head. On item 27, it is pointed out that we are asking for a large supplementary in this time of crisis, therefore we should cut down activities under this subhead. The hon. Leader of the Opposition expressed a great deal of concern for the high cost of living. This vote not only pays for the material but pays employees of the Ministry. I am not sure if the hon. Member is suggesting that we should dismiss some of those employees. In addition to which, precisely because it is a time of crisis one needs to have information fed to the public as to how they should react, what they can do to help themselves – propaganda, in other words, giving them the information which will help them to act to their own best advantage. This is the function of the Ministry and we shall not abdicate that function.

Item 28: the hon. Member asked what are the plans concerning the National Monuments. I did, at the time the original Budget was passed, speak about this programme and I do not think it is much use to go into the total plan again. We are working on a digest of these names. As soon as it is ready it will be released to the public, using perhaps the same publishing and publicising vote that the hon. Member complained about.

Item 29, Sports Training: The hon. Member on the other side alleges that last year she saw that \$19,000 was voted. I am not sure what she is looking at because I myself cannot find that here. She mentions Sports and Games. That is not the head we are discussing now but I will direct her to page 52 of the Estimates. The amount stated there for Sports Training is \$15,000 and not \$19,000. I do not know where that figure comes from. The personnel described here are five sports organisers who were appointed at the end of last year.

Item 30, Staff – Technical and Developmental: The film section has been regarded and for the first time the members of this section are getting a salary that begins to be commensurate with the kind of service they render, in addition to which, this section, although in existence for



quite a few years, never had an identity of its own in the sense that members were seconded to the Film Unit from various sections of the Ministry and, in many cases, from outside of the Ministry. It is technically an addition of staff to this Head but not an addition to the amount of people now in the Film Unit. We have for the first time nationalised the employment of all the people who work in the Film Unit and are paying them from one Head at the new rates evaluated by the Public Service Ministry. I hope that the next step will be when we come to Parliament to move them on to the Fixed Establishment.

**The Chairman:** We are dealing with the same page 11, items 31 and 32; page 12; page 13, item 36, Ministry of Home Affairs.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** page 12, item 33 and page 13, item 36.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** It may not be necessary, but just in case item 36 is not covered by my colleague, I will speak on it.

**5.30 p.m.**

**Mrs. DaSilva:** On page 12, item (33). I am not using this item to go into revision of salaries or to deprecate the fact that the Director of Prisons is being removed from A31 to the salary range A32. He is doing a very good job and he is deserving of promotion. But I am doing this by way of soliciting information from the Hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs.

My question deals with the Director of Prisons and, if I remember rightly, it was the Director of Prisons himself I heard speaking about it. It is with regard to the Open Day that was held at the Prisons recently. I heard it as an item on the radio. As a matter of fact, last Sunday I heard on the air the beginning of an introduction to a play which was first produced in the Prisons and then scripted for broadcasting.

I do not feel that once a man has paid his debt to society he should have a stigma attached to him; he has paid his debt and he should be given a chance once again to take his place; he must be trained to take his place within society, and he must be allowed an opportunity to earn an honest living if he has made up his mind that he wishes to go that way. But I wish to ask the hon. Minister, considering the state of affairs in our country right now, where everybody is concerned about the ever-increasing robbery, robbery with violence, choke and rob and that kind of thing, why is this necessary. Does the hon. Minister think that it is in the best interest of Guyana as such to have an Open Day?

Earlier when I talked about patterning a community workshop on a workshop in a new town in Great Britain I was told not to worry with other countries; this is Guyana and we have to look after our own people. That is fair enough, but probably in the more advanced and sophisticated countries of the world that prisons can be open and they can have Open Days, rather like the Open Day at Kuru Kuru College or some high-class boarding school for boys or girls or at one of the top secondary schools. But do we want our people to come to our Prisons and see the people at work and then have the Prisons put up as a wonderful place? Those in prison can have their boxing and recreation; nobody denies this. But are we going to show this side off when people are so concerned about Prisons? A prison is supposed to be a place of correction; you treat people with dignity and respect and you train them to take their place once again in society.

I should like to hear comments from the Minister on this idea of an Open Day at the Prisons and whether he thinks it is really in the best interest of Guyana that this should be done when our citizens are so concerned with people who are daily robbing, choke and robbing, and committing robbery with violence. Are people to be encouraged to do this and say, "I can go to Prison and have a very nice time because it sounds like a rather nice boarding house."

I turn to item (36) on page 13, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registration, Immigration, Births, etc. Under subhead 3, Miscellaneous, we have been asked to vote a Supplementary Provision of \$1,500. We have previously voted \$1,000 and the legend reads:

“To provide for the payment of wages to charwomen and increase in prices of miscellaneous purchases.”

How were these charwoman paid before? Has this been transferred from another subhead and been brought now to the miscellaneous? We are asked to provide a Supplementary Provision of \$1,500 which is one and a half times as much as what we voted in the original Estimates. It seems an awful lot, at least for wages for the charwomen. Were the wages not known at the beginning when the Estimates were being prepared? Or have the prices of soap and Vim and whatever other equipment the charwomen were going to use gone up so much that it warrants asking this increase of one and a half times as much?

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of State.

**The Minister of State for Home Affairs** (Mr. Mingo): Mr. Chairman, I wish to

To inform the hon. Member that Open Days at Prisons are all in the interest of rehabilitation of prisoners. In Prison Reform in all countries of the world this type of activity is encouraged. We are hoping that the observance of these days would not necessarily be disadvantageous to people outside of Prisons but that it would benefit the inmates of the Prison and help them to rehabilitate themselves.

With regard to item (36), which deals with the payment of wages to charwomen and the increase in prices of miscellaneous purchases, I wish to inform the hon. Member that when the Draft Estimates of 1974 were being considered a request for \$3,000 was made to cover this head. At the time it was decided to reduce this provision to \$1,000 because there was an understanding

that the payment of wages to charwomen would be taken over by the Ministry of Works and Communications. This did not materialise, however, so we have come back to get a further \$1,500 to be able to meet the payment of the wages to charwomen and for other expenses.

**The Chairman:** Pages 13 to 20, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture: Items 37 to 42 inclusive.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** You have said pages 13 to 20. I have one question on page 16, one on page 18 and one on page 20. My colleague wants to ask one short question after I am finished. If I could start on page 16, item 37, Head 27 – Ministry of National Development and Agriculture. In the middle of the page the legend carries a heading “Food and Nutrition Development” and we see a large number of new posts here. There is one of Principal Agricultural officer (Food and Nutrition Development), and there is another post of Senior Food Scientist. Then it goes on to deal with food and nutrition development. This seems to be a new section being created in the Agriculture Section of the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture. I was very happy to see it. I hope I am right when I say that it is appearing for the first time. If I am not right it just shows that I am getting older more quickly than I thought I was.

This makes me think of the proposals which were made since 1966 for a Bureau of Standards. We have shabby goods being produced. We do have a Consumers Association, but I think we certainly need expert laboratory services which can do the necessary work in respect of setting up standards. At the present time we are using Jamaica but it involves time, it involves a lot of difficulties. As long ago as 1966 we were promised by the P.N.C. Government that a Bureau of Standards would be set up. I am wondering whether this return is related to the proposed Bureau of Standards.

**3.7.74**

**National Assembly**

**5.40 – 5.50 p.m.**

**(Mr. Singh continues)**

**5.40 p.m.**

Do we have to wait for this Bureau of Standards? If it is related I am very happy, even if it is not related I am still very happy to see it but perhaps if the hon. Minister does have the answer he can tell us what is the position with the proposed Bureau of Standards.

Turning now to item 38 on page 18, there is a new subhead – Contribution to Cane Farming Development Survey. The sum being sought to be provided is \$16,902 and the legend states:

“To provide for Guyana’s contribution to Cane Farming Development Survey. This amount has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund.”

I am sure the hon. Minister would welcome the opportunity to tell us about this Cane Farming Development Survey.

Turning now to item 42 on page 20, subhead 12 – National Insurance in the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture – Land Development, the voted provision was \$7,500. The supplementary provision now sought is the enormous sum of \$20,500 and the legend states:

“To provide National Insurance for the staff of land development schemes.”

Now, we have absolutely no objection to National Insurance being paid for staff. Indeed, under the law, National Insurance must be paid for staff. We read only recently in the newspapers that people have been prosecuted for not paying National Insurance, so one is alarmed to read the legend here.

Land Development Schemes have been in existence for years. Is the Government suggesting that the staff of the Land Development Schemes were not being paid before? There

must be a logical explanation for this. Could the hon. Minister tell us what the explanation is, because the sum here is enormous. Is it being transferred from some other Ministry? If you anticipated \$7,500 and you are increasing it by \$20,500 to pay for staff, then where was National Insurance for the staff previously paid from? I would not like to think that the Government is breaking its own lawn.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** I am asking a general question under the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture to give the hon. Deputy Prime Minister an opportunity to make use of the propaganda machine of the Ministry of Information and Culture to give information which I am sure he would be very proud and pleased to give. The question concerns the much publicized two shipments of potatoes that have come to Georgetown from the interior. This gives the Minister a good opportunity to peddle propaganda. I would not say party propaganda because this should be national propaganda, as we all want to feed ourselves.

Would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister please use the publicizing and publications of the Ministry of Information and culture and also some of the space that is used in the national press to notify the citizens of Guyana where they may purchase these potatoes. Potatoes are not yet in abundance as the cabbages. I am happy to report that last week in Bourda Market I bought cabbages at 20 cents per pound.

I would also like the hon. Minister to tell us in what areas and at which shops the citizens of Guyana can buy these much publicised potatoes that have been grown.

**The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture (Dr. Reid):** Mr. Chairman, I would probably deal with the last speaker first, for sometimes we still observe the rule of “Ladies before Men.”

There is a little saying “Field not to temptation” and I am not allowing myself to be tempted to talk about potatoes because I have not seen any subhead on potatoes. But, I shall

advise my dear member of the Opposition to frequent the ordinary places like the Co-op Complex and the Guyana Marketing Corporation and she will get some potatoes. Before long, Guyana will be able to provide itself with all the potatoes it needs. I am not going to be tempted to talk too much on that. We have no time to deal with matters not listed here.

I notice here a question on the Bureau of Standards. That too is not really part of this business because that is merely a name and I have been finding out over the years that people are deceived by just names. What is important in our Food Production Project is that we produce food of quality and of high nutritive value under clean and sanitary conditions. This is indeed a new development in the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture because it is necessary for us to accelerate the development of nutritious food and this special department of the Ministry has been recently organised to do just that. As will be seen from the legend, it is being staffed by persons with the suitable qualifications so that we can carry on a department of a high standard. It is, as a matter of fact, going to take in what at one time was the Special Projects Unit.

Now in connection with item 38, where there is an allocation for paying for the Cane Farming Development Survey. I would wish to say that after the first project was completed, that is, the project organised by the Government, C.D.C. and the Sugar Producers' Association to work together to develop small cane farmers, there was an amount of money loaned into this project, and at the end of that period it was necessary to make a survey so that those who were involved, especially the Sugar Producers' Association and the Commonwealth Development Corporation could assess whether this project was serving a useful purpose.

This survey has been carried out and each party has to contribute \$16,902. This then, is the share that the Government has to pay and I am happy to report that the assessment was that it was a good project; it was serving a useful purpose. So, arrangements have been made for a further loan so that the development of the small cane farmers can proceed apace.

3.7.74

National Assembly

5.50 – 6.00 p.m.

(Dr. Reid continues)

5.50 p.m.

With regard to the money voted for the National Insurance Scheme, I said in the debate in December, that the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture is very widespread and it would take some time for the officers to do all the work in all the sections so that we can bring up-to-date the contribution to the National Insurance Scheme. The Land Development section has now been worked out carefully with the help of the National Insurance personnel. They have come in to the Ministry to do this work, department by department, and this is the time when they have completed the Land Development section. Thus we have this item seeking this supplementary provision so that we can pay in full monies due to the National Insurance Scheme.

**The Chairman:** Page 20 item 43. Page 21. Page 22. One item

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Page 22, item 43. Under “D” the legend states:

“The creation of an item Pensionable allowance in lieu of consultation practice.”

Just for our edification, I wonder if the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources would explain this pensionable allowance in lieu of consultation practice. To whom is this payable? Is it one person or several persons? What amounts are payable?

We know what doctors get. The hon. Prime Minister told us what engineers get and it is only fair that we should find out to whom this applies, what is the quantum and what amount they receive.

This refers really to the hydro-power division which is now part of the Ministry of



Energy and Natural Resources: It refers to the Chief Engineer, Deputy Chief Engineer and an Assistant Chief Engineer. As you may know some engineers have been given an allowance in lieu of practice not only in this Ministry but in other Ministries. This is rally regularising the position with regard to the hydro-power division which is a recently established Ministry.

**The Chairman:** Page 22 and 23 items 44 and 45.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Sir, on page 22 item 44. In the legend we see:

“A. The creation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974 of one post of Confidential Secretary, on the salary range A12.”

I have not commented on it before but very often in these supplementary provisions we see the phrase “Confidential Secretary” appearing with regularity. I would like to know, to whom the Confidential Secretary is assigned in the Ministry of Economic Development. We recollect that in the Prime Minister’s office there are several posts of Confidential Secretary.

In the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs there were two Confidential Secretaries. The hon. Leader of the House now tells me that there is only one. It seems as though Ministers normally have Secretaries and I wonder whether there is a special category now for Minister’s Secretary and Minister’s Confidential Secretary or whether Confidential Secretary is something else. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would enlighten us on this matter.

Over on page 23, item 45 – Entertainment Allowance, Economic Adviser. Voted provision \$1,800 and supplementary provision now sought \$600. The legend states “voted provision underestimated.”

This is rather difficult to understand and I would welcome an explanation by the hon. Minister. Perhaps there has been a change in the holder of the post or something along those

lines but if one divides \$1,800 by 12 one would get an entertainment allowance at the rate of \$150 per month. Apparently, another \$50 per month is added but what has happened? How has it been underestimated? I would understand if they said that the Entertainment Allowance had been revised but what I cannot understand is the word ‘underestimated.’ How do you underestimate an amount if you know exactly what the amount is and you can multiply it by 12 months in the year to get the exact figure. There must be some explanation.

**The Minister of Economic Development (Dr. King):** For the hon. Member’s information we have in the Ministry of Economic Development three Confidential Secretaries. The Minister does not have three; the Ministry has three. The Minister has one; the Permanent Secretary has one. The third one is for the Chief Planning Officer. We feel that his work is of such a confidential nature that he needs a Confidential Secretary.

The second question concerns this apparent revision of the entertainment allowance from \$150 to \$200 a month. It is really quite simple. The Ministry of Economic Development created, as you know, the post of Economic Adviser and in an attempt to allocate to the Economic Adviser an entertainment allowance that was not too great, we underestimated his position in the hierarchy of the Civil Service. It was subsequently pointed out to us that a man of his status normally earns an entertainment allowance of \$200 per month and this provision is to rectify this anomaly.

**The Chairman:** Page 23 Ministry of Works and Communications. Pages 24, 25, 26 and 27. Items 46 to 52 inclusive.

**6 p.m.**

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Page 24. I was going to point out that on page 24. Item 48, the Director of civil Aviation is being put on salary range A35 when, for example, most other heads of departments are being put on A40. The Post-Master General for example is on A36. But I am

told it is better to make representations by letter to the appropriate people, the Appeals Committee, so I will not pursue that because it is a waste of time. According to the Minister, it is a waste of time to do this in this honourable House.

On page 27, item 50, the sum originally provided under subhead 28, Subordinate Staff, Gatekeepers, Watchmen and Cleaners, was \$735,000. Supplementary Provision now sought is \$273,000, over  $\frac{1}{4}$  million. The legend states:

“To provide security services at the Ministries of Finance, Housing, Energy and Natural Resources, Office of the Ombudsman as well as buildings in Georgetown.”

It seems as though a little more prudent estimation would have come up with a more realistic figure. It was a very significant sum, \$273,000, when the Government underestimated expenditure under this Head.

Of course, we do know that the Ministry of Finance is in a new building now. **[Interruption]** It was new since last year, so that if the Ministry of Finance was new since last year, then they should have been able – and thank you, hon. Minister – to estimate for gatekeepers, watchmen, and cleaners for that building. The Ministry of Housing also was new since last year so they should have been able to do that also. I stand corrected if I am wrong in that. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources was there since last year; certainly, the Office of the Ombudsman was. I do not know what are the other buildings in Georgetown that are referred to, but one would welcome an explanation of this very significant underestimate or over  $\frac{3}{4}$  million.

Going to item 51, subhead 33, Rental of Premises, the original provision voted was  $\frac{3}{4}$  million. Supplementary provision now sought is \$28,000 and the legend states:

“To meet rental for increased accommodation for Caricom Secretariat in Bank of Guyana Building.”

This is for increased accommodation only and only for the Caricom Secretariat in the Bank of Guyana Building. It is a very significant sum. Is it costing us an additional \$28,000 to provide that little extra accommodation for the Caricom Secretariat? It may be so, but one wonders at the magnitude of this figure and whether the hon. Minister would care to shed any light on it.

In respect of item 52, this subhead 40, Subsidy to GUYWA is a new subhead under the Ministry of Works and Communications. The amount now sought is \$2 million. The hon. Minister of Finance did deal with this *en passant* in his opening remarks. The legend states:

“Subsidy for the Guyana Water Authority: An amount of \$800,000 has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund.”

I seem to recollect that in respect of payment for water supplied to local authorities, there had been a lot of problems. Some of them one can perhaps understand because some local authorities were saying: “We will not pay because we have not been getting proper pure water supply, and, therefore, if we have not been getting proper, adequate and efficient pure water supply, we will not pay.” In some cases, one can understand the arguments, because there had been inefficient supply, and services had been poor in respect of some local authorities. I merely want to ask whether the hon. Minister knows, maybe he does not, maybe it is within the knowledge of the person in charge of GUYWA, Dr. Gibson it was, but what is the position? Are these local authorities paying their way now? What is the size of the arrears?

On previous occasions Government had to write off significant sums of arrears owed by local authorities because it was the only sensible thing to do at the time. The local authorities could never possibly have paid those arrears. Are the local authorities paying up? Are there

significant arrears? What are the arrears in respect of these local authorities? A sum of \$80,000 has been advanced. Does the hon. Minister consider that this \$2 million would be enough to see GUYWA through for the rest of the year, or can we expect further requests for supplementary provision for the Guyana Water Authority? We would be grateful for elucidation on this.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

**The Minister of Works and Communications** (Mr. Hoyte): The hon. Leader of the Opposition raised a question under subhead 28, Subordinate Staff, Gatekeepers, Watchmen and Cleaners. The question he raised has a very simple answer. Up to the end of last year, the Ministry of Finance made its own arrangements with the Commissioner of Police for security services and paid the cost of the policemen provided directly to the Commissioner. The Ministry, in an effort to have these payments centralised this year, requested the Ministry of Works and Communications to be responsible for the payment of these sums. The Ministry did not make provision within its own votes for payment; but, instead, decided that it would have those funds reflected in the votes of the Ministry of Works and Communications.

The Ministry of Housing is now accommodated in new buildings in D'Urban Park and, of course, the services which are required for that new building have been increased.

The explanation which I give for the Ministry of Finance, applies also to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. What has happened here is really a consolidation of individual votes, which were previously reflected under other Ministries, within the Ministry of Works and Communications.

The hon. Member also raised a question under subhead 33, Rental of Premises. I think I should explain that within the past year or so, the staff of the CARICOM Secretariat, formerly the CARIFTA Secretariat, has increased considerably and as a result of the introduction of the

Caribbean Community, it is necessary to provide far more space than the Secretariat occupied prior to the establishment of the Community.

**6.10 p.m.**

As a matter of fact, this increased cost really reflects the fact that the Secretariat has taken over the entire fourth floor of the Bank of Guyana building. But I do not think the hon. Member should be too concerned about this cost because the Bank of Guyana is a Government institution. Payment to the Bank is in a way passing money from one Government hand to the other Government hand and the Bank of Guyana is the one sure enterprise which makes a substantial profit every year.

On the question of the subsidy to GUYWA, subhead 40, I would like to say a number of things. First of all, the hon. member will recall that in October, 1972, the Guyana Water Authority was established as a Public Corporation and staff was transferred from the Old Ministry of Works and Communications to this new Corporation. During 1973, the Ministry of Works and Communications continued to administer the financial and personnel affairs of GUYWA and it was expected that during 1974 monies which formerly were reflected in the votes of the Ministry of Works and Communications would be reflected in the accounts of GUYWA itself. However, this was not done because a number of problems arose with the administration of GUYWA.

The hon. Member will recall that GUYWA was placed under the administration of the Guyana State Corporation. It has been decided that because GUYWA is not really an economic enterprise, in the sense of an enterprise which is geared or oriented towards profit-making, but is, in fact, a service Corporation, it was better to have this Corporation out of the GUYSTAC umbrella and back in the Ministry of Works and Communications directly under the Minister and the Permanent Secretary.

(Mr. Hoyte continued)

The result of all this has been that the monies which GUYWA required to function were advanced from time to time pending a firm decision on the status of GUYWA. That decision has now been taken and I believe that the Bill which will remove GUYWA from the umbrella of GUYSTAC and place it directly within this administrative purview of the Ministry of Works and Communications, was published last week.

The amount of \$2 million is roughly the same amount which was provided during past years under the Ministry of Works and Communications for the maintenance of pure water supply systems in the country. As a matter of fact, during 1973 it was \$2.7 million. So the amount in this Financial Paper is even less than the amount last provided.

The hon. Member wanted to know what was the state of the arrears owing to the Government by Local Authorities. This amount is in the vicinity of \$½ million. It has become virtually impossible to recover that money because since 1970, with the introduction of the new Local Government system, many of the old Local Authorities disappeared. Boundaries changed, and many technical and legal problems arose. In the event, the Government has decided to waive this amount of \$½ million owing as water rates by Local Authorities, some of which exist no longer. Also, this reflects Government's continuing interest in the health of the community. This Government does not look upon the provision of Pure Water Supply in terms of financial returns to the Water Authority or to the Central Government. We accept that the supply of pure water will have to be subsidised if it is going to reach the community in ample flow and at a cheap rate.

The fact of the matter however, is that pure water supply is not cheap; it is a very expensive commodity. That is why it is sometimes sad to hear people complaining that they pay twenty dollars a year and they are not getting their money's worth. Twenty dollars a year is an insignificant sum to pay for water supply.

(Mr. Hoyte continued)

We have spent over the past two years \$15 million in establishing modern facilities for pure water supply from Buxton right down to Soesdyke. We are at present spending \$7½ million on the Linden pure water supply. We are also engaged at the moment in new studies to take pure water from Buxton right down to Clifton in Berbice. We are also engaged, because of the continuing need to review our water supply in urban areas, our storm drainage and our sewerage disposal facilities, in studying the needs of the principal urban areas in this country, to wit, Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Linden. What we are talking about is the expenditure of vast sums of money, something in the vicinity of \$25 million to safeguard the health of the people of Guyana. I believe that that money is very well spent.

**The Chairman:** Page 27, item 53; pages 28, 29, 30, 31; page 32, item 61. Then we will proceed to page 55, item 132; pages 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63 and 64, that is, items 132 to 151, all under the Ministry of Education.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Sir, could you please tell us where you are going to start? You went straight to the end. I have not listed the pages.

**The Chairman:** I am starting on page 27, item 53 and proceeding to page 32, item 61, both numbers inclusive. Then from page 55, item 132 to page 64, item 151. They are all under the Ministry of Education.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, I will deal with page 29, item 54 and 55. Shall I do it page by page?

**The Chairman:** Yes



**Mrs. DaSilva:** Item 54, Ministry of Education, Grant to University of Guyana. We voted provision for \$2,850,000 and now supplementary provision is being sought for a further \$2,400,000. The legend for this explains:

“Additional provisions required to meet increased operational costs of the University in 1974.”

We have heard many times this afternoon of everything going up. Naturally, one is not surprised to learn that the cost has also gone up at the University of Guyana. When members of the Opposition make suggestions to the Government they have reasons for so doing. Everybody knows money is very tight – which is a polite way of putting it – so the Government Members may pass it off with a laugh or something which is colloquial or nonsensical rather than a reasonable excuse. Where the University of Guyana is concerned, during December last year when we debated the Estimates we talked about a grant to the University of Guyana and I made a suggestion for helping to keep down the cost of the University.

### **6.20 p.m.**

I expect that the Minister will tell me that this operational cost is not connected so much with salaries as with the actual running expenses of the building. I expect to get that explanation. But then you have to take into consideration that the total over-all cost includes salaries. I wonder if the hon. Minister remembers the suggestion I made. I want to ask her if any thought has been given to it over these past six months as I am going to come to the next suggestion under item (55).

The suggestion made for the University of Guyana to help cut down on the cost of administration was that thought should be given to increasing the number of sixth forms in recognised Government and Aided Secondary Schools so that students would have an

(Mrs. DaSilva continued)

opportunity of taking Advanced levels in these schools and exemption from the first year at U.G. could result from this.

I asked the hon. Minister to give consideration to this because it is well known that the salaries of the teachers at the secondary schools obviously are not as high as the salaries paid to the teachers at the University of Guyana. This would cut down on the cost of running the University. Students would be given the opportunity of sixth form education to Advanced Level, for which they would be granted an exemption at the University of Guyana. Could the hon. Minister say if any progress has been made on this?

Item (55) on page 29. This is under Head 40, Ministry of Education. It is subhead 40 and reads:

“To provide for the payment of salaries to staff of the Emergency Teacher-Education Programme 1974.”

As this subhead is new, I should like an explanation. Could the hon. Minister say what an Emergency Teacher-Education Programme is? Does this mean that it is the type of crash programme to train teachers hurriedly to fill the gaps that are there because our schools are short-staffed? Can the Minister explain?

Again, could the hon. Minister say if any thought has been given to the suggestion I made last December when we debated the Estimates about the introduction of the shift system in our schools? It is the only answer to solving the problem of our overcrowded schools and our lack of school places. It is time the Government started giving consideration to this very important factor. The hon. Minister herself, and no less a person than the hon. Prime Minister, talk about our having educated people in our country. Fair enough, but if there are no school places, if the

(Mrs. DaSilva continued)

classes are overcrowded, and the Government will not consider the shift system, how and when are we going to solve the problem?

Page 30, items (58) and (59) which deal with the Queen's College and Bishops' High School. The subheads deal with the question of staff salaries which as we have heard so often from the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, come under the salary revisions. I am not questioning the salaries revisions as such; I am asking for information. Can the hon. Minister say if both Bishops' High School and Queen's College have at this moment their full complement of teachers?

I come now to page 59. There are various new subheads under the Probation and Welfare Service. These are very necessary adjuncts to the work in the Ministry of Education. But so many of them are new subheads and for many of them \$1 is sought. I can take them by numbers – items (133), (134), (135), (136), (137), (138) (139), (140), (141), (142), (143), (144), (145), (146), (147), (148), (149), (150), (151). We have had an explanation on this; we know about this provision of \$1. This reflects very poorly on the people who plan these Estimates. They have the various votes; they know what they are going to cost; \$1 is so ridiculously unrealistic. If we had an idea of what they are going to cost we would know what it is about. Maybe I am mistaken and I will get an explanation from the Hon. Minister.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Education

**The Minister of Education** (Miss Baird): Mr. Chairman, in response to the comments made on the University of Guyana I should like to point out that, first, the request for an increase in provision was made because there were salary increases in 1973 and the negotiations were not finalised until early 1974. When we consider increases in salaries, we are also referring to increased allowances and passages for first appointments. I think the hon. Member would realise that now we have moved towards establishing day courses while we are phasing out night

courses and this development has implications also for staffing. Whereas we could have used part-time staff for the most part, now we have to employ full-time staff. Apart from everything else we should consider the educational value of a stable staff situation. We have to decide whether it is in the best interests of student and country to rely heavily on part-time staff, people who work in the day in other establishments and have to just rush into University teaching at night.

There are general increased costs incurred in managing the institutions; as you should appreciate there has been a substantial increase in the cost of chemicals and paper. Then we have new Departments. An important one is the establishment of a Department of Management Studies which you know is very important in our thrust for preparing people for administration and supervision, not only for Government but for the agencies in the private sector. Then we have the need to provide teachers for an expanding educational system, expanding in terms of numbers and for improving the quality of education. We have to cope with substantial expansion yearly producing new school places and catering to new needs.

The University of Guyana established at the Ministry's request, another course for teachers preparing persons to supervise classroom practice of teachers in training; this new group will supplement supervision carried out by staff of the College, thereby providing greater support to the growing number of students in training. In the effort to revolutionise education, we are trying to change and to implement new systems. Therefore, we need closer supervision than we had before and the course for qualified and experienced teachers is intended to prepare persons for supervisory roles.

**6.30 p.m.**

We had a new course for mechanical engineering introduced. New courses, of course, cost money for their preparation and implementation. One important one is a course in which students are being prepared to write history material. They are prepared to research in history

producing information which will be used to produce material and books which we so badly need. The factors to which I referred have contributed to the increased cost of running the University.

I think the hon. Member went on to comment on the Head – Emergency Teacher Education Programme. Perhaps the legend does not really explain what is meant by this. This programme is intended to give orientation to teacher educators – to people who teach the teachers – because we realise that no change can be affected except all the people involved in education understand what is required of them. In times past, education in Guyana was not used as an instrument of national development – in any case we had no nation to develop – all people expected of education was to affect learning; to recall, to remember something. Now education is being used to develop the nation economically, socially and so on. Therefore we have to make sure that educators act with the same intentions and understand their roles.

We have decided that from now on, no one who goes into teacher education institutions to teach teachers will go there before he or she receives relevant orientation. As I said before, we have increasing demands for staff of these institutions, to meet the growing number of teachers in training. In September, 1974, a substantial number of trainees will be enrolled in these institutions.

There are three institutions for teacher training within the Ministry while graduates are trained at the University. I have indicated what is meant by Emergency Training Programme. It is really geared to cope with an urgent current need, but I can assure the hon. Member that the programme initiates a new approach in the preparation of teachers. Before people perform as teachers were are going to give them some king of orientation which will be continued throughout their period of service in the institution.

I think the hon. Member moved on to refer to Sixth Forms. We have decided in Education that we are not going to do anything without giving the issue serious thought. There is

no guesswork in education, and so we have lots of groups of people working on different educational issues and problems. One of the tasks is to find out whether it is worth our while and whether it is valid to follow the hon. Member's suggestion. The hon. Member gave me the impression that she did not think that students who got the advanced level received credits at the University of Guyana. They are given credits. And perhaps this would be interesting for the hon. member to know: Guyana scholars go to University of Guyana and their courses are modified to suit their particular needs, so that they need not spend our years – they might spend three years according to the particular circumstance.

Then the hon. Member went on to comment on the shift system. I repeat what I have said before: we do not think that we have need of the shift system in Guyana. We are finding other ways to cope with the problem. We are finding places for children in schools and children are staying on in schools for longer periods than before. All children can stay on in school until the age of fifteen or sixteen. They are expected to remain because the facilities are provided for them to stay on and most children do not leave before 15. One of the things that perhaps we can try to do – and the hon. Member, I am sure, will help us in this service – is to educate the parents and encourage them to let the children stay on, rather than have them leave school to very early before they are prepared for vocational life.

With respect to Home Affairs – these are all new subheads simply because the function of Home Affairs is transferred to the Ministry of Education. They are all new items under the Ministry of Education. This explains the large number of new subheads under the Head, Probation and Welfare Service.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps before we proceed hon. Leader of the House, it is convenient for us to take the suspension or shall we proceed?

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):** I got the impression earlier on that the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to proceed.

**The Chairman:** It is agreed that we shall continue until the financial paper is completed?

*[Hon. Members indicated assent]*

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

**Mr. Ramsaroop:** In view of that fact, sir, may I respectfully move the suspension of Standing Order No. 9 (2) to permit us to go beyond 6.30 p.m. until such time as we complete the Financial Paper.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

### FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2 OF 1974

**The Chairman:** Page 32 Ministry of Health, item 62; pages 33, 34, 35, and page 36, item 81.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Starting, sir, on page 32. If there are any items that I do not deal with, the Leader of the Opposition would like to supplement very shortly what I have said.

The first question is on page 32, item 62, subhead 1 – personal Emoluments, Ministry of Health. I am not question the procedure of its being done job evaluation wise or anything like that. I am just seeking information.

First of all, we are being asked to provide a supplementary provision of \$34,000 and with a quick addition of the salaries for the three people in (a), (b) and (c), that is, the Principal

Personnel Officer, the Assistant Field Auditor and the Stock Verifier, it seems that their salaries will come to about \$24,000 leaving the \$10,000 for:

“B. for the creation of an item ‘Responsibility Allowances.’”

I wanted to ask about the Responsibility Allowances. The sum of \$10,000 approximately, is almost as high as the A 31 salary scale and certainly it is more than the A 14 and A 16 salary scale. How is it divided and who gets it? Is it divided between a group of people?

Also, dealing with the post of Stock Verifier under this item 62, can the Minister say if there has been any appreciable improvement in the stealing and shortage of drugs? In other words, has this Stock Verifier been able to tighten up considerably on the slackness that has been well-known in the Ministry of Health where drugs disappear and are short? The drugs are now short in the country but if there is a Stock Verifier and he keeps his stock properly he should be able to acquaint those responsible for ordering of the position with the stock of drugs and see that the drugs are here in time. Otherwise, he is not doing his job properly. I am not talking against the person who holds the post of Stock Verifier; I am just asking, for information, how the job is being done.

**6.40 p.m.**

I did ask about the responsibility allowance and that \$10,000 to say how it is divided and to whom and responsibility for what.

On page 33, the legend against item 63, Head 56, Ministry of Health – Medical, subhead (1) – Personal Emoluments states that this supplementary provision of \$270,000 is to provide –

“A. on the Permanent Establishment Pensionable for –



- (1) the abolition with effect from 1.1.74 of the post of Supervisor of Environmental Sanitation on the A19 salary range.”

Then it talks further down about the redesignation and reclassification of one post of the Epidemiologist.

I would like the Minister to explain, because the way I understand it, the Epidemiologist is to do with disease and Environmental Sanitation. Also that supervisor should be concerned with the prevention of the spread of disease. Is that post of Environmental Sanitation being abolished or is it being reclassified or regarded? Has it been put somewhere else so that I have not seen it? How does the epidemiologist fit in with it?

Turning over to page 34, item 68, subhead 12 – Notification of Infectious Diseases. I am pleased to see that at last the sum of \$100 that we have voted annually – I think ever since I have been in this House – has been increased and a Supplementary Provision is now being sought for an additional sum of \$274. The legend reads:

“Token provision was provided only as expenditure under this subhead is difficult to forecast.”

It gives me heart. It makes me feel good because it seems that the Ministry of Health is concerned about infectious diseases. I hope that the Minister may be able to say that one day, in the not too distant future, the Motion that I brought before this house for the immunisation of children, will see the light of day for discussion. Or is it that the Motion, having been brought by the Opposition, everybody blanks his mind whether it is for the good of Guyana or not? They say, “No, it is the Opposition that brought it so we must push it in the dark pigeon hole, leave it and forget it.” I look to the hon. Minister of Health to give some indication that one day this will see the light of day. This Minister is another Minister who always answers very straightforwardly. I await his answer.

On item 71, subhead 10 – Blood Transfusion Service: We voted \$45,000 and we are being asked now to provide another \$25,000. The legend reads:

“Provision inadequate due to increased cost of blood bags.”

This is quite understandable; quite acceptable and perfectly true. Can the Minister say if thought has ever been given to another suggestion of ours on the question of plasma? It is becoming a question of money and we have to watch every cent, which we certainly do. Could the Minister say if we could not supplement some of this blood with plasma? The cost of blood bags alone has gone up by \$25,000, almost 50 per cent. I suppose the Minister might say it is due to the increased cost of freighting but I would like an explanation, please.

On page 35, item 78, subhead 14 – Drugs and medical Appliances. The voted Provision is \$1,700,000 and we are now being asked for Supplementary Provision of another \$800,000, approximately 50 per cent. The legend states:

“To provide for increased cost of drugs, dressings and freight charges.”

Could the hon. Minister of Health please tell us what progress has been made about the question of getting cheaper drugs for us in Guyana. It was brought up some time ago in the time of the former Minister of Health when we had talks in this House about buying drugs under the generic term rather than under the brand name. At that time I did caution that we must be extremely careful. I said it was not a question of what is cheapest being necessarily the best because the manufacturers of well-known brand names in drugs have been in the business a long time. They have got the experience and the equipment and all the rest of it. With these new mushroom companies that have just come up overnight, especially with something as serious as drugs, it could be very dangerous. It might prove a foolish policy to try to cut down costs. But recently I bought, in India, drugs and I heard in Trinidad in a radio news item that consideration is being given to buying drugs for people with chronic illnesses like diabetes and people with

high blood pressure. I heard in a radio news item that Trinidad is making special concessions – I think on the duty – for these people to get tablets or medicines in at a lower rate because those who are suffering must take them daily in order to stay alive.

I was wondering if the Minister has ever made enquiries or if there has ever been any thought of getting drugs from other countries where, for example, they are produced at a much lower cost. I do not mind saying this in the House: I am a diabetic and I am not doing this for myself; I am just thinking of all the other people who suffer and I am pointing out the difference in cost.

In India a well-known firm manufactures diabetic tablets at a manufacturing plant there. I buy in Guyana diabetic tablets at 25 cents each. Other people, including the government, have to buy at this price. Probably the Government gets it cheaper when buying in bulk. In India these tablets, which are manufactured at a plant there, cost 5 cents each.

I wonder if the Minister can explore the possibility of obtaining these drugs in other countries at a cheaper cost to Guyana especially for people with chronic diseases who depend on drugs for their lives and have to take them every day. These are drugs from well-known recognised houses like Pfizer and Hecht and people like that. They are not the new mushroom manufacturers. Naturally if they manufacture under license for a well-known drug-house they must keep up a certain standard. Can the Minister say if any thought is being given to getting cheaper drugs for people?

**Mr. M. F. Singh:** On page 33 Ministry of Health – Medical subhead 1, Personal Emoluments. The voted provision is \$2,743,412. Supplementary Provision now sought is \$270,000 and then it sets out a range of posts to be abolished and redesignations, reclassifications and the sort of things that we have been talking about that appear so often here. Unfortunately, on this occasion the amount to be voted is not \$1 but \$270,000 and I am very happy about this. I am very pleased to see that the Ministry of Health is not getting \$1 but

\$270,000, despite all that was said by the hon. Ministers on the other side about providing only \$1 for this kind of exercise. At long last we have what we hope is a realistic figure. I commend whoever did it. We need realistic figures in respect of this kind of reclassification or job evaluation, call it what you like. The problem is that this Ministry has not in the past been given enough money.

**6.50 p.m.**

I have in fact been very impressed by the dedication of the hon. Minister of Health. I spoke to him privately, and I will say quite openly in the house that I really have been impressed with his dedication, but no matter how a man is dedicated, he cannot do the job unless he is given the tools to do the job. I think the problem with that Minister is that the Government is not giving him the tools to do the job. In this House, I appeal to the members on the other side to give their colleague the tools to do the job in respect of this Ministry of Health.

What are we doing about the staff situation? We are dealing with personal emoluments. We know that within recent times ten doctors have indicated that they are leaving the hospital. Five have come to the end of their contracts, five doctors are breaking their contracts. Why are they leaving? Because of unsatisfactory conditions, conditions generally, conditions in respect of pay. Generally, there is a need for a revision of the situation as regards salaries and conditions of service and allowances. I have had a word with the hon. Minister of Finance and, again, I understand that this is occupying the attention of the hon. Minister of Finance. I sincerely hope and pray that it will not take too long in his Ministry and there will be an alleviation of the dissatisfaction which exists at the present moment in respect of doctors in the Medical Department.

I have been told that at the present moment there are not enough anaesthetists; they are working short staffed. I have been told, for example, that there is no permanent pathologist at the hospital. The hon. Minister can correct me. I read in the newspapers the other day that

people are coming down here on temporary assignments. This is good, but we want our own pathologists. I have been told, for example, that at the present moment, there is no radio-therapist in the hospital so that if a person comes in with a lump, and the lump is taken off, there is no means, a part from sending it abroad, of telling whether that lump is cancerous or not. Perhaps if the growth is on a part that can be removed, the surgeon, to be on the safe side, would remove the whole of that part. On the other hand, if there was a radio-therapist, then, at least, the surgeon would be sure that there is need to remove it, or that it should not be removed. The situation is really critical from what I understand.

Another matter that needs attention is the recruitment of doctors. How are doctors recruited? We know in the past that a member of the Public Service Commission went away and, as a personal exercise on behalf of the Government, did a recruitment of doctors. What is the situation right now? Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to give attention to advertising. I have not seen, within recent times, any advertisements in these papers. It may well be that there are advertisements put into Caribbean and other overseas newspapers. I do not know, but could the hon. Minister say what is the procedure being employed in respect of recruitment of doctors? There is no doubt about it, we are terribly short staffed in respect of doctors. I should like to say first: please, let us give the hon. Minister the tools to do the job, and, secondly, let us pay particular attention to removing the areas of dissatisfaction and providing better service at what we call the national hospital in Georgetown.

**The Minister of Health** (Dr. Harper): I wish to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his laudatory remarks about our Ministry. We are very happy that we have been able to do something that is pleasing in his sight.

I should like to reply to the question of responsibility allowances. A responsibility allowance is an allowance that is given to an officer of the Ministry who is acting on a higher level than his substantive post. This happens very many times in a Ministry like ours, where we

are very short of essential personnel. In those circumstances, we think it is fair to give a person a responsibility allowance.

For example, in Matthew's Ridge we are short of a physician there and the dispenser is given a responsibility allowance when he is put in charge of the hospital which is normally run by a physician. The same thing is happening at Lethem. We feel that whenever health professionals are called upon to exercise duties and responsibilities that are essentially those of people in a higher rank, they should be given responsibility allowances for additional responsibilities.

A stock verifier is an auditor and we are short in this department. Our ministry spends about 12 per cent of the national Budget and the stock verifier, as an auditor, cannot do anything on a day-to-day basis about pilfering and stealing. All he does, I think, is identify the areas in which Ministry of health personnel have not been following the financial management procedures laid down by the Ministry of Finance. It takes him two years sometimes to get around the whole Ministry, all the health centres, and the hospitals, and so forth. Perhaps, what we really need to stop this stealing is more co-ordinators, better supervision and management and better co-operation from the personnel, the unions, and from the public.

The post of Supervisor of Environmental Sanitation has been abolished because it is really obsolete. The duties that were formerly performed by this official are now performed by the Chief Public Health Inspector, so we felt it was no longer necessary.

The post of Epidemiologist is a new one that was created recently. We sent a Medical Officer of health to be trained as an Epidemiologist but in our Estimates, the post was lower than that of a Medical Officer of Health, so we merged the two. The Epidemiologist performs a very important function especially since recently, at the last Caribbean Health Ministers conference, the Cabinet agreed to participate in a system of epidemiological surveillance at a regional level, and also to participate in financial support of the virus laboratory in Trinidad, which, on a

regional basis, will be helping us to identify certain of our communicable diseases not only among men but among animals in the region.

**7 p.m.**

With regard to additional medical assistance: From time to time we have to pay for people who come in to help us and this item takes care of that. For instance, over the last year we have had two pathologists from the Howard University and we had two who came in from Texas. This vote helps to pay for the expenses for items like that.

Page 34, Notification of Infectious Diseases: I think the increased demand for money in this item has been occasioned by the hiring of an Epidemiologist and we are quite happy to say that the legislation for the compulsory immunisation of infants of the pre-school age has been in the hands of the legal draftsmen for some time and we hope that it will emerge soon.

Item 71, Blood Transfusion Service: the increased cost of blood banks has been very high. Early this year, we received a letter from the Crown Agents which told us that the increase in some item like gauze and other essential supplies were going to be up by 250 per cent and it said that they could not guarantee that orders placed in 1973 could be delivered before 1975. The increased cost here is due to facts over which we have no control. We must have a larger sum of money for blood banks because recently we have been approached by Mr. Bunny Fernandes and others who were very active in trying to get broader community support for a more viable Blood Transfusion Service.

Page 35, item 78, Drugs and Medical Appliances: With regard to the increased cost of drugs, dressings, freight charges and so forth, most of us who read the newspapers are aware of what is happening in this regard. We discovered from the Crown Agents that the larger proportion of the gauze and cotton goods that we were buying through the Crown Agents were being bought by them in Eastern Europe. When the Minister of Trade made his recent trade visit

(Dr. Harper continued)

to Eastern Europe we asked him to negotiate with them to see if we could get the cotton goods and gauze directly. We have also been able to get some surplus items of these from U.S.A.A.I.D. But in the normal market the cost will be very much more than it used to be.

We are happy to announce that Guyana has participated in a survey, “The Cost of Drugs in the Caribbean”, which was sponsored by the World Health Organisation and which was headed by Dr. Ross-Chapman of Canada. The team consisted of Dr. Ross-Chapman of Canada and Mr. George Boyd, our Government Pharmacist. They compiled a report which I would be quite happy to share with interested Members of the House. In this report they recommended, among other things, that we should have a regional formulary, that each of the participating countries should have national formularies. They recommended the use of generic goods and they also recommended that we should support a drug-testing laboratory which will be located in Jamaica which will be able to test the generic goods to make sure that the ones that we chose and included in our formularies would be of the adequate potency according to International health Standards. We have reported to the Minister of Trade that 75 per cent of the pharmaceuticals in Colombia are manufactured there and that Mark Shark, Dhome and Feiza and other prestigious American firms have factories there.

The recruitment of physicians is a world-wide problem that plagues not only developing countries, but developed countries. For instance, in the United States of America, the head of Pathology at Howard University told me that 95 per cent of the residents in Pathology in the United States were from India and the Philippines and this created quite a problem in the United States. In the United States today, if it were not for foreign doctors, American hospitals would not have interns. So we are dealing with an international problem.

Recently, Cabinet has authorised the Minister of Finance and the Ministry of Health to re-evaluate the present remuneration of physicians and to try to create better financial incentives so that our salaries, terms, benefits and so forth may be more competitive than they used to be.



(Dr. Harper continued)

We had a meeting recently with the Public Service Commission and I think it was agreed that we would advertise in major international journals.

We are expecting a visit from the President and Vice-President of the Medical University of South Carolina who are coming later this month to negotiate with us about the feasibility of opening a medical campus of their University locally. This we hope will enable us to get our specialists and practitioners post-graduate training and enable us to up-grade our hospital so that we may be able to attract interns from other places to come here and get trained. Hopefully, they can marry local girls and settle because this is one of the problems we have with our young people when they are trained elsewhere –they get permanent visas and find it difficult to return.

**The Chairman:** Pages 37 and 38, Ministry of Housing. Page 42, Ministry of Trade, items 92 to 94.

**Mr. M. F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, page 42, item 94, Head 69, Ministry of Trade, subhead 16, (New) Subsidy – Flour. The supplementary provision sought is \$12 million and the legend is very enlightening. It states:

“To provide for the payment to the National Milling Company of Guyana, subsidy on wheat flour for period 2<sup>nd</sup> August to September, 1973 and December, 1973 and 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974 – 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1974.”

The first thing is that there must be some reason for this. Will the hon. Minister who is answering for the Minister of Trade tell us the reason why this has been split up in such a peculiar fashion “for period 2<sup>nd</sup> August to September, 1973 and December, 1973.” I presume that it is from October to December, 1973.

(Mr. Singh continued)

7.10 p.m.

Then we deal with the whole of 1974, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1974. Can we have a breakdown of this? How much is for 1973 and how much for 1974? Our problem is that so many different figures have been fed to us about the quantum of this subsidy. Now we have in the Estimates a request for \$12 million. What really is the subsidy? Is it \$12 million? Is it \$25 million?

The other point is this: this legend does not say that anything has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. Has anything been advanced? If nothing has been advanced does it mean that the National Milling Company of Guyana is owed money from 1973 up to this time? If something had been advanced from the Contingencies fund then in all fairness to the House it should have been stated here. If nothing has been advanced is it not possible that this National Milling Company has been at a disadvantage and has been operating without the subsidy which is rightly payable to them as promised by the Government? Why does the Government not advance this money out of the Contingencies Fund? Is this perhaps one of the reasons why we have had a shortage of flour within recent times?

Again I ask the question: Why was nothing given to the Company? Why keep them waiting until this time if nothing has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund? The hon. Minister in his address did say that there will be an end to this subsidy on flour. No date has been given. We note that representations have been, and are being, made by various quarters; the trade unions have made representations that there should not be an end of the subsidy. The legend states from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1974 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1974. Does it mean that we can expect that flour would be subsidised up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1974? If it does not mean that when will the subsidy come to an end? The hon. Minister did not say when it will come to an end. All he said, it will come to an end.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

**Dr. King:** Mr. Chairman, there is a phrase which I recall from the days when I had time to read the literature of the English. It is: “sound and fury signifying nothing.”

The hon. Leader of the Opposition spent ten minutes fuming, asking questions repetitiously, questions which he magnified as important to the national development of this country but which were really quite simple and which he could have asked in a few seconds, in as few seconds as I intend to answer them.

The first question was: Why is the legend put in such a way? Why do we distinguish between 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1973, to September, 1973, and the rest? This Government, mindful of the interests of the people of Guyana, disputed for a considerable length of time a very small amount which the Milling Company claimed that they needed as a subsidy. It is because of this dispute that the amount has been paid this year and not last year. Because we were anxious to give this House the fullest information possible the hon. Minister explained that part of this amount is for 1973 and the remainder is for 1974. The same argument applies for the December 1973 distinction.

The hon. Member then stated that he wished to know what is the full extent of the subsidy. I know that the hon. Member has many engagements, perhaps he has more engagements than Ministers. However, the hon. Minister of finance did the house the courtesy of explaining the position with regard to flour in his opening address. If you would permit me, Mr. Chairman, I wish to read the relevant paragraph:

“Further, as the price of wheat sky-rocketed during this year in the earlier part, implying in normal circumstances a doubling in the price of flour, the Government undertook to subsidize the price of flour, so that prices could remain at the 16½ cents per pound as at December, 1973.

This commitment to maintain the price of flour at the 1973 level was originally estimated to involve a cost of \$10 million for 1974. However, it soon became evident that the actual level of wheat prices, coupled with a strengthening of the U.S. dollar following the oil crisis (which made wheat more expensive in terms of Guyana dollars), required a subsidy that was running at an annual rate of \$25 million based on a high and increasing level of consumption of flour.”

An Estimate of what we will have to spend this year on the subsidy of flour if we do not stop the subsidy is \$25 million.

The hon. Member has asked a specific question: When do we intend to stop the subsidy? The answer is: We do not know because we have not decided. It is important to us to assess the full effect of the subsidy (bearing in mind the cost of living) on the economy as a whole. Even if we had decided on the date we could not at this stage tell the House when we intend to stop it.

Apart from the fact that we are mindful of the livelihood of people whose welfare we have the privilege to look after, it is obvious that if we say we are going to take off the subsidy on the 20<sup>th</sup> July or the 20<sup>th</sup> December, business men might buy a lot of flour at a subsidised price merely to make the profit which they will get from the increased price.

I was very surprised that the hon. Member, who I am sure is also mindful of the welfare of the people, asked a question like this. We cannot tell you when we will take off the subsidy. I think I have answered all the questions, and I believe I have answered the questions in a much shorter time than it took to pose them.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, we still do not have the answer. We are still waiting. How much of the \$12 million is for 1973 and how much is for 1974?

**Dr. King:** I am afraid I cannot give the hon. Member the exact figures at this stage.

**The Chairman:** Page 42, Ministry of Finance, items (95) and (96). Page 43, Page 44, Page 45. Page 46, item (114).

**7.20 p.m.**

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, may I ask one general question for information from the hon. Minister of Finance in connection with the statement he made at the introduction to the consideration of this Financial Paper about the 5 per cent surtax?

**The Chairman:** I do not think I will allow my tolerance to extend that far; we are dealing with the various heads now.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Sir, I think the Minister would appreciate being able to explain what he said. But if you rule that it cannot be asked I suppose it cannot be asked. The Minister is going to lose an opportunity to explain something that I am sure he would like to explain.

On page 44, item 103, Ministry of Finance, subhead 12 – Less of Public Money and Stores. Voted provision is \$20,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$10,000 which is half of the voted provision. We are voting a total of \$30,000 for the loss of public money and stores and the legend states:

“Voted provision inadequate to meet increased expenditure which cannot be controlled.”

What a sad admission to come from the Government of a country! If a private firm had to throw away \$30,000 a year on expenditure which cannot be “controlled” it would have to close down. [Hon. Member: “Curtailed.”] Maybe the member would like to read the legend; it says quite clearly “... which cannot be controlled.” That is what is stated in my copy. I would like to have an explanation from the hon. Minister whether the Ministry will just go on increasing the vote

from time to time as the less of public money and stores goes up. We are being asked to put out more and more of the taxpayers' money and nothing is being done to try and harness this problem.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, page 43, item 98 – Entertainment Allowance. The voted provision is \$2,400; supplementary provision now sought is \$3,200 and the legend states:

“To provide for the payment of entertainment allowance to a second officer. An amount of \$1,800 has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund.”

Could we have some information about this second officer whose allowance seems to be more than the allowance of the first officer for when only \$2,400 was provided.

Turning now to page 45, item 113 – Increase in Pensions. The amount of \$900,000 is being sought here under this new head Increase in Pensions which was authorised during late 1973. An amount of \$280,000 has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund.

We all remember quite clearly in December, 1973, that the hon. Minister gave the assurance that increased pensions would be paid out. Early this year, on a question from us on this side of the House, we did hear that there were some difficulties in respect of people who had recently retired and the Ministry was making every effort to speed up this and have them paid as early as possible. Now we note that the amount of \$280,000 has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund so that a significant amount is still to be paid.

I wonder whether this means that some of those recently retired pensioners have still not been paid. I would be very unhappy to know that this is, in fact, the position. Perhaps there are still difficulties. The hon. Minister had given the assurance that these difficulties would be cleared away as speedily as possible. I wonder whether he would say what the position is now,

because I am very unhappy to know that those people have not received benefits which they expected since December, 1973.

The last item is on page 46, item 114, subhead 552 – (New) Thames Guaranty Limited, Interest. The amount sought to be provided is \$58,253. The legend states:

“To provide for payment of interest due on Mortgage Loan on property situated at Lot 3, Palace Court, London for period 1.12.73 to 28.2.74. this amount has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund.”

I presume that there is some reason why we are not making provision beyond 28.2.74. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Hope:** Sir, may I answer the question of the entertainment allowance and the provision now being sought. This amount is to be paid to the Deputy Secretary to the Treasury. When the matter was settled after the Job Evaluation late last year, due to some oversight, this officer did not receive the allowance and this was not brought to attention until some months later when it was decided to give him the allowance. He had to get it with effect from September the previous year, so this is why it appears as though it is in excess of the original vote.

Less of Public Money and Stores: Sir, nobody – least of all the Government – wishes to see stores and money in its keep lost, but the facts are that try as one would there is bound to be, at some point in time, small lapses in security and there will be losses of stores. We do try to control it and we do succeed, I will insist, because the amount we are talking about is \$20,000. With \$10,000 added it is \$30,000 in a total expenditure that the Government controls of more than \$400 million.

In fact, I think this is a very, very small amount that we are talking about in relation to what the Government disposes each year. Small as it is, however, I do not think members should get the impression that we are not concerned. We are certainly concerned and we try to ensure by proper systems that this does not get out of hand. But from the Ministry's point of view, what it really means is that the Ministry of Finance cannot control this vote because it is a vote that arises in a peculiar sort of way. But, in a general way, in terms of security of public money and stores, we do have systems and we do attempt to control it. I insist, as I said before, that we do succeed in controlling the limits of this problem.

The third question was raised in respect of pensions. Now the fact that this item appears here is because all the pensions were not completely paid in 1973 and naturally the money had to be re-voted. In fact, I did assure the house that the Accountant General's Department was giving, and intended to give, extra effort to ensure that the pensioners were paid, but what has to be appreciated is that in many cases the department is going back to records which are decades old and these pensions could not be revised until the records were available.

The officers are really encountering problems of greater magnitude than was originally thought because they could not re-compute these people's pensions unless they went back into the records. In some cases the records are proving not very easy to locate, but the officers are doing their best and, in fact, they are paying and re-computing.

The other issue which must be appreciated is that pensions need re-computation. A substantial amount of arithmetic – and very complicated arithmetic in some cases – I involved and this is a very slow process particularly for those people who retired several years ago. But, I wish to ensure the House that work is going on steadily on this and the fact of the provision here arises because December 31<sup>st</sup> came and we had not completed the payment.



7.30 p.m.

The question of the Thames Guaranty is simply explained. The property had to be bought promptly as it became available on the market. This particular company was in a position to advance the money very readily but on a short term basis to be taken over on a longer term by another Finance House. What has been done, therefore, is that Thames guaranty has, in effect, provided a sort of bridging finance until the real long-term lender was in a position to carry through the documents and take over the loan. This is why it appears as if the payment is only for a few months. In effect, as I said, this is for a bridging loan. The real lender would come in the Public Debt.

**The Chairman:** Page 47 – Ministry of National Development and Agriculture – Hydraulics. Pages 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54. [Pause] Section B, Capital Estimates, page 1. We had completed items 1 to 3. Items 4 and 5, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Item 6, Ministry of Home Affairs. Item 7 and 8, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture on the same page and on pages 2 and 3, items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** Item 9, subhead 28, Agro-Industrial Development. The voted provision originally was \$400,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$800,000 a two hundred per cent increase, twice the amount originally asked for. The legend states:

“To provide for the establishment of by-products and a food canning plant.”

Presumably this means “by-products plant and a food canning plant.” It is an opportunity for the Minister to tell us what exactly this is in terms of the increased amount that is now being asked for. We know he did talk originally about it but seeing that this is now a two hundred per cent increase something must have happened somewhere along the line. Has the programme been doubled up? Is the Ministry so running ahead of its schedule that it did not envisage it would have needed so much money but suddenly it sees itself needing more than double what it had originally asked for? Could the hon. Minister tell us a little bit about this?

**The Chairman:** Hon. Deputy Prime Minister

**Dr. Reid:** Mr. Chairman, our thrust towards the development of food products, even though the thrust was towards agriculture, has had to be accelerated in the present crisis. As we produce more agricultural commodities, mainly in the raw material stage, the next step has to be taken and that is processing. One of the ways of processing food is by canning. Thus we have had to accelerate our programme to make a canning plant a possibility.

Since we have been organising this, prices of equipment, material and machines have all soared and thus this increased amount has to be sought. We are hoping, at the same time, to use the by-products from the processing of agricultural raw material so that we can have livestock feed concentrates. The Agro-Industrial Development has therefore been forced to seek supplementary provision to the tune of twice the original provision voted.

**The Chairman:** Page 2, item 16 – Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** This subhead 14 Forest co-operatives is new and we are being asked to spend \$400,000. The legend reads:

“To provide for the establishment of Forest Co-operatives.”

I am quite sure that the Minister will welcome the opportunity to let us know about these Forest Co-operatives, where they are and how will they work.

We, on this side of the House, are glad of this opportunity to hear something about the working of these co-operatives, where they are and how they are getting on. This is the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. We have heard about co-operatives being established but we can never get a report on the working of these co-operatives. Are they a success? Some of them must be losing money. This is a plain fact of life and is nothing to be ashamed of. The fact is

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that you could learn from mistakes that caused you to lose on one. You learn from that experience and see it does not happen with the other.

We want to know what the position is with the co-operative. We welcome this opportunity of asking the Minister about the new Forest Co-operatives.

**Mr. Jack:** I am sure that the hon. Minister has a particular interest in Forestry and naturally in Forest Co-operatives. As you would know, Mr. Chairman, there is an extremely good market for forest products in the world today.

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We have had a large amount of orders and it would seem that the prospects before us at present are such that, unless we expand our capacity considerably, we will not be able to take full advantage of the opportunities which present themselves to us in the forestry sector. With this in view, we have decided to place special emphasis on the logging sector. With this in view, we have decided to place special emphasis upon the establishment of logging co-operatives.

There are a number of persons in this country who have expertise in logging but who need the assistance of some entity, first, to get them together in groups and, also, to give them the necessary push so that they can establish themselves in profitable enterprises. This provision is expected to assist in the development of logging co-operatives and we expect to be able to organise groups of people and to see that they are provided with logging equipment so that they could help to contribute to the development of forestry in Guyana.

As hon. Members would know, we have a growing trade with China and also with Cuba, and we have been stretched almost to our limit, if not beyond, especially in the logging sector which is the sector that provides the wood for our sawmills and for export abroad.

[Mr. Jack contd.]

During the rest of this year, we will be accelerating this development. I may tell this House that we have already put notices in the **Official Gazette** and in the newspapers inviting all persons who have logging experience to register with the Ministry so that we would be able to have a complete list, so to speak, of persons in various counties, in Demerara, in Essequibo, and in Berbice, so that we can organise people who would have a logging background. We are not proposing initially to take people who are unacquainted with logging and try to turn them into loggers. We feel that we have sufficient people who have knowledge of logging in this country, and who, if properly organized, can make a serious impact upon our forestry development. This, Mr. Chairman, is the purpose of this provision.

**The Chairman:** Page 2, items 17, 18, and 19. Page 3, items 20 and 21:

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Just a short question, please, sir, on item 17. The provision now being sought for subhead 8, New Ferry Vessel is \$625,000, and the legend states:

“To provide for the cost of ferry vessel.”

We are not against this and we are pleased to have a new vessel. We just seek two bits of information. Where will this ferry vessel be operating? [**Interruption**]

For the bright member who said, “in the river”, I would say that I did not think it was in the sky. We are a land of many waters and we have many rivers, and we have all our ferry services, with the people who have to use them daily complaining bitterly of the long delays and the queues. But, of course, the hon. Parliamentarians with their cars would not know, as they can get on the ferries in priority to the others. We want to know particularly where this ferry will operate.

We want to know what is the position with the ferry service that we talked about before, between Guyana and Surinam. Are there any prospects of it ever materialising? Could we know what the plans are? I am reminded that we previously voted money for it.

Lastly, I take it – I am very proud for I am sure it is so – that this sum of \$650,000 for this ferry vessel is staying in Guyana, that this vessel will be built in Guyana by a Guyanese firm. Could we have the answers please?

**Mr. M.F. Singh:** On page 3, item 20, Printing of the Revised Laws of Guyana: the sum of \$632,000 is now being sought. I am a little surprised that this was not provided for in the Estimates. We all knew that the laws were expected to be finished by the end of the year. In fact, we got them at the end of the year. They would have had to be paid for. I am just wondering why it is they were not provided for in the Estimates. I am not quarelling about the money but just the tidiness of our accounting. Obviously our estimates were out by \$632,000 as this was not put in the Estimates.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Works and Communications.

**Mr. Hoyte:** The new ferry vessel is being built by Friendship Industries Ltd. The contract was awarded to this local company last year and in terms of the contract, the vessel should be delivered within another two months. The actual contract price is \$1.125 million of which sum we provided \$500,000 last year. This amount of \$625,000 was omitted from the final estimates by an oversight.

The vessel, which will accommodate 1,000 passengers and thirty cars, will be used as a relief vessel between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop so that for the greater part of the day, the service will be more or less continuous. When one vessel is at Georgetown, the other will be at Vreed-en-Hoop, and during the off-peak hours, particularly at night when there is not a sufficient volume of traffic to justify the use of the larger vessel, then the smaller vessel will commute

between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop. When we put the new vessel into service, the pontoon at present in use between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop will be redeployed to Berbice to help in the ferry runs there.

The hon. Member did ask about the Guyana-Surinam ferry. I would refer her to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, who, as Chairman of the Guyana-Surinam Commission, has the responsibility for fostering this particular joint enterprise.

There was a question on the supplementary provision now sought for the printing of the Revised Laws of Guyana. Hon. Members will recall that this sum was voted last year but was not paid because the volumes had not all been delivered. In other words, when the Estimates were finalised, it was thought, quite reasonably, that this money would have been disbursed last year, so there was no inclusion of any amount for the payment of the laws of Guyana in this year's Estimates. We have since paid and, of course, we seek parliamentary authority now.

**The Chairman:** Page 3, Ministry of Health, items 22 and 23. On the same page 3, items 25 and 26, Ministry of Finance. Page 4, Ministry of Finance.

**7.50 p.m.**

This completes consideration of all the items. I will now put the Question is:

*Question –*

“That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1974 Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$41,754,520 for the period ending 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974.

*put, and agreed to.*

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*Assembly resumed.*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Hope:** Your Honour, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1974 and I now move that the National Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Resolved,** “That this national Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.” [The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House]

**Adjourned accordingly at 7.52 p.m.**

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