

T H E  
P A R L I A M E N T A R Y     D E B A T E S  
O F F I C I A L     R E P O R T S  
VOLUME 107

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION (1983) OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE  
CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

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45<sup>th</sup> Sitting                      14:00 hrs    Monday, 1985-03-18

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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (74)

Speaker (1)

\*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,  
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (61)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P., (Absent - on leave)  
Prime Minister

Other Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,  
Vice President, Social Infrastructure and (Absent)  
First Deputy Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

\*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,  
Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and (Absent - on leave)  
Attorney General

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,  
Vice President, National Development  
and Deputy Prime Minister

Other Deputy Prime Minister (1)

\*Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P., (Absent)  
Deputy Prime Minister, Planning

Senior Ministers (9)

\*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent - on leave)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,  
Minister of Home Affairs

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,  
Minister of National Mobilisation

Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,  
Minister of Energy and Mines

\*Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P.,  
Minister of Finance

\*Non-elected Member

Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P., (Absent - on leave)  
Minister of Forestry

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,  
Minister of Health and Public Welfare

\*Cde. M.L. Parris, M.P.,  
Minister of Education

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,  
Minister of Transport (Absent - on leave)

#### Ministers (5)

Cde. Urmia Johnson, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of National Development (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of Education

\*Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.,  
Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives

Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,  
Minister of Youth and Sport within the  
Ministry of Education

\*Cde. Dr. S.P. DaSilva, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture

#### Ministers of State (3)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of  
Internal Trade and Consumer Protection

Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.S., M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of  
Regional Development

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,  
Minister of State in the Ministry of  
Education

#### Parliamentary Secretaries (2)

Cde. Agnes W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P., (Absent - on leave)  
Parliamentary Secretary, Housing, within the  
Ministry of Health and Public Welfare

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, National Development

#### Government Chief Whip (1)

Cde. Bidiawattie Tiwari, M.P.,  
Government Chief Whip

#### Other Members (24)

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.

Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.

Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.

Cde. Philomena A. Rayman, M.P.

Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.

Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.

Cde. M. Armogan, M.S., J.P., M.P.

\*Non-elected Member

Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad, M.P.  
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.  
Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.  
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.  
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.  
Cde. Patricia Fredericks, M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.  
Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.  
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.  
Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. Y. Khan, M.P.  
(One seat vacant)

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. Dianne Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni) (Absent)  
Cde. W. Bipat, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)  
Cde. Nellie R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)  
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)  
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)  
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent)  
Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)  
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)  
Cde. Cora A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)  
(Vacant) (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P., (Absent)  
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P., (Absent)  
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P.  
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,  
Minority Chief Whip  
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent)  
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.  
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P. (Absent)  
Cde. H. Nokta, M.P. (Absent)

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly - Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A.

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cdes. Hoyte, Shahabuddeen, Jackson, Salahuddin, Johnson, Bhaggan, Patricia Fredericks, Gilbert and Mr. Singh for today's Sitting; to Cde. Seeram Prashad to the end of March, <sup>to</sup> Cde. Melville to the end of April and to Cde. Bishop to the 22nd March.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Report was laid:

Annual Report of the National Insurance Scheme for the year 1982. The Minister of Finance

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER No. 1/1985

"Be it Resolved that this National Assembly approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1985 - Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$25,819,116, for the period ended 1984-12-31 (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1984). The Minister of Finance

The Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimate Financial Paper No. 1/1985.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Cde. Greenidge.

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Greenidge): Cde. Chairman, in accordance with Article 171(2) of the Constitution I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1985, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ended 1984-12-31 and totalling \$25,819,116. I now move the Motion.

Question proposed.

The Chairman: We will consider the Paper as usual, that is, the items will be taken from both the Capital and Current Estimates in the order for which the Ministers are responsible.

On the Current Estimates, page 1, items 1 - 4; page 2, items 5 and 6. On the Capital Estimates, page 1, items 1 - 4.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, page 1, item 1. The legend states: "To provide for the recruitment of professional personnel". We would like to know from what profession- I suppose in general - and how long more the recruitment will continue. From where they are being recruited? Are they Guyanese and has the Government given consideration to carrying out a survey to ascertain the kind of skills we have got right in this country to reduce this expenditure considerably. Have they given consideration also to the fact that people who are proficient in certain disciplines have been choosing to go out of the stream of Government for reasons they have been alluding to, some being very reasonable. One can well understand their decision to opt out of the system because the general feeling is that recruits, non-Guyanese, get better conditions, better salaries and are allowed a number of facilities which the Guyanese with equal qualifications, probably more experienced in the particular area in which they are serving, do not enjoy. This is a very sensitive area and I think we have a duty this afternoon to draw it to the attention of the Assembly in view of the fact that this item keep recurring all the time. So far we have not received any profound response from the Government as to what it has in mind to do to move towards using our own resources in terms of manpower and skills. Keep them here and ensure that their facilities and conditions are not less in terms of salaries and facilities and conditions, less attractive that is, than those of expatriates from whichever country.

Page 2, item 6. The legend states: "to cover expenses of the Geology and Mines Commission." The explanation is very vague. Is it money for administrative purposes for the Commission or is the Commission involved in any activity that will be productive. If so, what are those activities, not the generalised activities, they might be dealing in general terms, but we want to know specifically for what purpose the money will be used. I pose that question for a specific reason because the original vote was \$560 and then there was a supplementary.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, when we hear the Minister if there is a need for you to ask a supplementary question I will permit you.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sure. I think those are the two items that are affected at this moment. Page 1, under Capital Estimates, item 2, subhead 12,001, Buildings. We have voted before for this particular building. The legend here states: "To defray the cost of Electrical, Guttering and other works done at the Residence." I notice we are asking for \$396,985 more. Is this all? Will this

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complete the building? As I understood it, it is only certain repairs that had to be carried out and the sum keeps increasing all the time. I also understand that the total spent under this vote is \$1.2 million, \$1,267,000. We are not a new structure. talking of repairs/ This is really an astronomical sum of money and we need more than the legend. It means the total that has been expended on a building merely for repairs is taking the sum of \$1,267,000.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, I do not know if you were here, but I seem to recall the Prime Minister answering this question, that when you start out repairs you do not really know what to expect --

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: You mak have a point there but I am raising it because I am still of the view that the sum is extravagant for the repair of a building.

The Chairman: When last you built anything? I could tell you.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I suppose they will answer so that we can really know. The question which I pose, and I want to pose it very clearly, is if this is the final sum or they will come back for more money under this particular subhead.

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Cde. Greenidge: Thank you very much Cde. Chairman, in relation to item one of the current estimates, head code number 0001, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud asked several questions on that item. Just as I think you observed a while ago that answers were sought to some of these before, this also applies to this one. I think when the budget for 1984 was being discussed - - -

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud said he did not get a profound answer on the last occasion. He is seeking that profound answer now.

Cde. Greenidge: I am afraid Cde. Speaker, I am not in a position to give any more profound an answer than was given the last time, merely to say that amounts that we had budgeted for recruitment of skills which were essentially Sri Lankan skills in the area of accounting and related professions. It turned out that the cost were in excess of the amounts that we had anticipated and the profound answer he raised in relation to loss of skills and the impact of this recruitment on those areas, I think really is not, with all due respect to him a matter for us to tackle at this point in time. What we are observing is a short term phenomena, in other words, many of our entities are short of skills, particularly accounting skills, anywhere you go, in the public sector accounting, in the traditional public service, in the commercial enterprises. In the short term those skills are not available in Guyana and therefore the option of putting local Guyanese in those posts is not available to us and we are seeking as a short term measure to bring those skills in for periods that range from one to three years in order to block a gap that is before us right at this point in time so the questions that he raised in terms of policy are in fact issues of long term policies rather than one that can be tackled merely by an adjustment in the salaries as I think he was implying in his questions, that is not before us if you check the number of Accountants, qualified and available to the system at the moment you will find that they are inadequate relative to the demands of the service. This is also the case in the private sector

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as well. In relation - the same thing applies to teachers, we have lost a lot of teachers over the years and of course -there are several reasons for that - - -

The Speaker: Cde. Greenidge, dont be drawn into that. His statement is This thing recruitment is specific to Accountants, if it is also including teachers then you may go on but if it is specific to Accountants, let it rest there.

Cde. Greenidge: Okay Cde. Speaker, I would like to move to the other items raised by the Cde. page two, item six, Office of the Prime Minister - the additional provision sought here to cover the expenses of the Geology Commission represents advances paid for enforcement work. You will recall that during the latter part of 1984 there was an intensive effort conducted on several fronts in order to stop the smuggling of gold and other precious metals out of the country. This item will be repaid out of the proceeds of the forfeiture that arise out of the enforcement, so really it is a transaction that involves two sides but for the moment we can only show that one side, the revenue that will cover this will appear when the forfeitures are actually carried out, when the prosecution of the case is completed.

In relation to the capital items Cde. Chairman, the additional provision sought will not represent the final request for expenditure on this vote, but basically we need to understand that this expenditure pertains to 1984 and in relation to 1985 the voted allocation is in the 1985 budget and any further explanations I think were adequately pointed out to you that/<sup>it</sup>is difficult to anticipate before hand how much that type of exercise will cost because of the age and the nature of the building involved.

The Speaker: Page four, item 16, current, and page three items 9 - 11 capital.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to ask a few questions on the capital. Item number 10, it deals with the Coldingen Mechanical Workshop and we note that the sum of \$250,000 was voted at the beginning of 1984, now we are seeking a supplementary provision of \$620,000 and here we are being told



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in the notes that this sum is to provide for final payment to Contractors and Consultants for work done at Coldingen Mechanical Workshop. Going through the estimates from 1984 when the sum of \$250,000 was sought and approved, the legend read then for the completion of Coldingen Mechanical Workshop. Here it is that the sum of \$250,000 was being asked for, was being provided for at the beginning of 1984 and the legend then read that it was for the completion. One year after we are being told that we still need the sum, not as much as \$250,000, but far more than two hundred percent of that amount and still now we are being told by the notes that this sum is to provide for final completion for the work done there. My question would be Cde. Chairman, whether in fact this is the sum that is going to complete work at Coldingen Work Shop.

As pointed out before that \$250,000 did not suffice perhaps this \$650,000 would in fact be enough to carry out this work. May I ask Cde. Chairman, why is it if again at the beginning of last year we were told that this sum is to complete. Did the relevant Minister knew then that money was outstanding for Consultants, money was outstanding for Contractors. If this was so why supplementary provision was not sought during the year 1984. Surely if this is for labour cost, for consultation fees, for Consultants and labour cost for the Contractor one would have been able to know this since Coldingen Workshop as far as I know is in operation for a number of years. Why take money from the Contingencies Fund for such an expenditure. It is not correct. Contingencies must be for contingencies work. This money ought not to have been taken. Surely the relevant Minister, the relevant Accounting Officer should have seen and known that such an expenditure was coming, the signal should have been there and apply in the normal way for supplementary provision and not to go into the Contingencies Fund to take money for such a thing. It is not correct as far as the Financial Administration Audit Act is concerned. Therefore, I would like to know from the Minister Cde. Chairman, points that I have raised, whether

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first of all this is the final sum, really the final sum or we are going to be told again later this year that we have to vote more money for the completion of that workshop and secondly, why this money, whether it could not have been foreseen then that this sum was owing to the Consultants and the Contractors and in the normal way application made for supplementary provision, rather using money from the Contingency Fund to do this type of work.

14:25 hrs

The Chairman: Any more questions? Cde. Greenidge, I take it that you are answering. There is only one question to be answered, the one on item 10, Capital Estimates.

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Greenidge): Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. In response to Cde. Narbada Persaud's query, first of all, the answer to the question as to whether this is indeed the final payment is Yes. We shall not be requesting any additional amounts for this item. The answer to the second query - perhaps to him the more substantial point - is that it is often difficult to tell during the course of the year the exact quantum of final payments on such items because it depends on the consultants submitting their claims in time. We do not have any control over that although we might ask them, we might remind them. Secondly, it also depends on a process of reconciliation where amounts that might have been outstanding are offset against advance payments as we have seen in the past and it also has to do with that process of reconciliation between the agencies. That is the reason why you often find --

The Chairman: Cde. Greenidge, don't you think that if that is the experience of the Government it might have been advisable not to put "final" so as to avoid this type of question?

Cde. Greenidge: Thank you very much. It might have been prudent to be more cautious. We will bear this in mind in the future.

The Chairman: Page 2, item 7, Current Estimates.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Chairman, one notes that many things are garbled under this subhead, Expenses Specific to the Agency.

The Chairman: What do you mean by "garbled"?

Cde. N. Persaud: A lot of things come under it. We cannot decipher them. This is the main reason why we are not taking part in the discussion on the Estimates because a lot of things come under this. We cannot follow them.

The Chairman: We have only one thing here.

Cde. N. Persaud: In the Estimates, Cde. Chairman, we see more than one thing.

The Chairman: In this Supplementary there is only one thing.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am going to ask the question, Cde. Chairman, if you will permit me.

The Chairman: Certainly.

Cde. N. Persaud: We note that at the beginning of last year the sum of \$3,453,000 was provided. I am not in a position at this stage to say what that

amount of money was spent for, since it comes under Expenses Specific to the Agency. During the course of the year the sum of \$1,234,786 was sought and passed in supplementary provision. Now we are being told that we need an additional \$334,986 and this <sup>is</sup> spelt out although it comes under the subhead Expenses Specific to the Agency. This is spelt out to say,

"To meet final payments for the asphalt overlay (resurfacing) of Brickdam, and other expenditure relating to 150th Anniversary of Abolition of Slavery."

Surely this is not the only thing that comes under "Expenses Specific to the Agency".

The Chairman: With great respect, we are dealing with the sum of \$334,986 and that expenditure is explained as being spent for the Brickdam overlay and other expenditure relating to the 150th Anniversary.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am referring to the subhead under which it comes.

The Chairman: Cde. Narbada, I am telling you what this is.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am fully in agreement with it but the subhead I am saying is a garbled one.

The Chairman: We are not dealing with the subhead. We are dealing with the expenditure.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to ask a question but you will not permit me.

The Chairman: I will permit you the question if you do not go into irrelevant matters.

Cde. N. Persaud: The first question I want to ask: What part of the total of the supplementary provision now sought relates to the expenditure incurred relating to the 150th anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery.

The second question I would like to ask: What sum out of this \$334,986 went towards the resurfacing of Brickdam since the legend is saying "for resurfacing and for other expenditure"?

My third question will be: What is now the total expenditure incurred for the resurfacing of Brickdam?

My last question: What are the other expenditures relating to the 150th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery amounting to this sum that we have in front of us?

The Chairman: Cde. Chandisingh.

Cde. Chandisingh: Cde. Chairman, the explanations are very simple. If Cde. Persaud had participated in the debate on the original Estimates for 1985 the

explanations would have been provided. In relation to the questions that he has asked, the provision to be voted now, amounting to \$334,986, is broken down as follows:

The additional request for the asphalt overlay of Brickdam would consume the sum of \$177,895.23. The additional request for the operations of the Commemoration Commission would amount to \$157,000. If you note carefully, you will see that there is a difference of 77 cents, I think, for the figures are rounded off. In answer to another question: the total amount for the overlay of Brickdam would comprise the two figures. You have to add them - \$834,785.87 plus \$157,000 from the current request for supplementary. That would give you a total of \$1,012,771.10. That is for the asphalt overlay of Brickdam. For the expenditure on the Commemoration Commission, we have to add the following figures - \$400,000, which would have been provided in the previous supplementary estimates, plus the sum of \$157,000 in the current supplementary provision. This would add up to \$557,000. That is the break-down, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: Page 3, items 9 to 13, Current Estimates; page 4, items 14 and 15. All are on the Current Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, item 9 has a vote of \$100,000:

"To provide for the maintenance of Traffic lights, supplies for police horses and dogs, etc."

I don't know what is meant by "horses".

The Chairman: It is providing something for horses and dogs.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The question I want to pose really does not relate to the dogs or horses. The question is a straightforward one. It is one that concerns the safety of people on the roads. As you know, right now in 1985 the number of fatalities on the roads are greater than those of 1984. There is need for a better police input and I use that word in a very general term to ensure that whatever necessary precautions and care can be afforded to the users of the road will be provided and there will be no short-comings there.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

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So that we will not simply have complaints and concern about the increasing in the deaths because the Parliament must be concerned if people are being killed on the roads for whatever reasons and we should do everything possible to prevent the increase in road fatalities and accidents of any kind. One of the areas for great complaint is qualified under this Head 4, highlighted in Parliament and that is Traffic lights. Most of them are never in working condition. People approach those traffic lights confused. What should they do? Do they go, do they stop and there is a lot of confusion on both sides resulting on many occasions in accidents. I think we can have serious accidents where these traffic lights have been reduced to nothing more or less than an hazard instead of something to prevent accidents on the roads. We are not opposed to the sum but I think we would like to know in very clear terms what is being done to ensure that Traffic lights, particularly in the City of Georgetown and those streets that carry heavy traffic throughout the day and particularly during peak hours, are always in working condition. It is not a case that it is not working for a day, sometimes lights are not working for several weeks and it would appear that no attempt is being made to look at them and so we can have more and more accidents and fatalities occurring.

In dealing with Item 10, I do not like this vote. We do not like this vote. We do not support this vote. Why would we want to give awards to anybody and particularly in this case to the Police because they are involved in seizing exercises in collaboration with the Customs Department. The Customs Department has got it's function. The Police is a disciplined force. Must we simply reduce the police force to a body that will go and harass people like in this case to seize, and if the harassment is to the extent that it satisfies those who are directing or dictating it, to give awards/who can be involved in terrorising and harassing exercise. This Head has accounted for \$172,000 and like Cde. Narbada Persaud with the greatest respect no one can ascertain if from that sum any sum was put to this particular expenditure. We are opposed to this vote and whatever action is to be carried out in confirmity with the law, those who are part and parcel of the law enforcement contingent must do it. Policing is something I see differently from people, it is not how many people you charge but it is how these forces can act as a deterrent to prevent people from committing offences. I think if we have periods where there are no crimes then it augurs well for the good of a country,

because any country that is pursuing a socialist path cannot successfully do that by having votes like this to harass and terrorise people. People are complaining. I want to cite an example. There are many but I only want to give you one.

The Chairman: I do not know what you have to say but if it involves a police prosecutor ....

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I would not do that. I am ever conscious of the whole question of sub-judicial matters and I would not raise it, and even if I did raise it I would raise it in a manner that would not go near to that. The example I wish to cite refers to the Port Mourant /Rosehall market area. I was there a couple of weeks ago in January or February when the police went contrary to what is being said, I am not saying the Customs were not there, one might have been there in civilian clothes and could not have been identified. They went and took up the people's goods without saying what they were taking and what they were taking and what they will do, and those people are small people, simple people they did not know what to do next. They spoke to me for almost half an hour after the exercise. Because of that kind of experience how could we sit in this Parliament, how could we allow an item like this to come without raising our voices strongly as we can so that we would not in any way be in any kind of collusion with any parliamentary sanction that in our opinion will not properly effect the law, but in fact is more of a harassing or terrorising nature. The Minister will probably be disposed to tell us what merits these awards? That question is specific, What merits these awards? What the particular person must do to ensure that they will qualify for awards? I hope it will never occur again under these estimates and the Government will see the wisdom in our criticisms this afternoon which is very objective. Cde. Chairman, I will go to the next page and I wish to speak on item 15 where originally the sum of \$9,000 was provided for, when subsequently \$217,000 was provided, when <sup>the</sup> National Registration Act was read, one finds that the intention of the legislation when it was framed was to have national registration as an on going process. Those laws never envisaged that registration will become paramount when elections is due. But registration has got two limbs as the Government itself has been attempting time and again to allude us to, but we have no registration in the context of our experience it has been circumscribed to the electoral process and it is only then registration becomes paramount and is given focus.

But the law is so framed sir, that each year what you would have had is simply a process to ensure that those who were not registered previously are registered then, so that when the election year reaches the process would not be hazardous, cumbersome, long drawn-out process, so that the necessary scrutiny that is envisaged in any legislation process can be effectively carried out. It is because of that fact that in 1984 the small sum of \$9,000 was provided and then shortly after when probably the decision was taken, well election is next year and in any case you have got to have registration, then the sum was increased to \$2 million. I am sure there will be further sums. I would like to hear the Minister's response on this whole question of registration.

The Chairman: Cde. Thomas.

Cde. Thomas: The previous speaker's question is some what in relation to \$669,075.

The Chairman: He asked question 9, item 9 for the Traffic Lights.

Cde. Thomas: Now this sum was really requested to assist in the maintenance of traffic lights and of course the repainting of traffic signs. Most of it went to the purchase of electrical bulbs. If one understand how the lights work then one will appreciate the fact that the lights are being used when for about 100 hours, and that is why so much difficulty is experienced when one sees traffic lights not working. An officer checks those lights on a daily basis. The cost of supplies have increased and as a result the sum is now dissolved.



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(Cde. Thomas continues)

We had to utilise this sum during 1984. We have had to organise the traffic department in such a way so that we would be able to do some traffic education work with the result that there will be a decrease of accidents on the roads. The Member did refer to the fact that deaths on the roads for this year are in excess of deaths on the roads for the corresponding period last year. In fact, to date there are 42 deaths on the road and that resulted primarily because of two or three unfortunate accidents which claimed the lives of about 10 people between them. Nevertheless, we are sure that given the new initiatives and plans which will be implemented, we will be able to reduce the number of accidents on our roads.

The Member went on to question the sum being given to policemen and he sought to criticise the expenditure. In fact, the whole sum was not used for the payment of incentives. The bulk of the money went to <sup>the</sup> <sup>of</sup> purchase/passports and the increase of the cost of rations for prisoners who were held by the police. He questioned the sum of \$669,427 and he felt that the whole sum was used for the payment of awards.

The Chairman: With all due respect to Cde. Persaud, he is reading from what you have here: "To provide for the payment of awards to Police Personnel who were involved in the joint Police/Customs seizure operation." Certainly, if the answer is that a great portion of this money went for passports or other police activities, some indication should have been given. It is not fair to that that type of explanation in the legend.

Cde. Thomas: Because of the inaccuracy of the legend he sought to assume --

The Chairman: He was quite right to assume.

Cde. Thomas: I am just trying to point out that even though the whole sum was not spent, there is need really to provide incentives for officers who work beyond the call of duty, those who display scholarship of a high level and in the exercise of their functions really demonstrate a great degree of dedication to duty. Obviously, in any system, there must be some who deserve, because of their work, to be given some commendation, in some cases in the form of cash and in other cases just awards. I do not agree with the Member who sought to criticise the scheme of incentives and or awards which was provided for under this subhead.

The Chairman: I am not holding a brief for Cde. Persaud. He is not criticising

that. If the officer who prepared this legend had taken the care you are taking now to explain that would not have happened. This is a different answer all because the officer who prepared the legend did not give the necessary time.

Cde. Thomas: If I may continue, Cde. Chairman, I wish to respond to the question asked in relation to the additional sum sought for National Registration. I wish to respond by saying that this money was used for meeting expenses in relation to the registration of non-resident Guyanese. Because of rising prices in the procurement of stationery and equipment necessary for the exercise the sum keeps rising every day. I take his point and we did say the last time a question of the nature was asked that we take the point that registration should be done at regular intervals and we plan to keep updating our national registration register on an annual basis. But we could not see the possibility of having a continuous registration on a day-to-day basis at this point in time. I want to repeat that response once more.

The Chairman: Page 6, items 22 and 23 on the Current Estimates and on page 5 of the Capital Estimates, items 21 and 22.

Cde. N. Persaud: Page 6 of the Current Estimates, item 22, subhead 312, Subsidies and Contributions to Local and International Organisation. The sum of \$385,000 is being sought to enable the New Amsterdam Town Council to offset liabilities to the Royal Bank of Canada. I have two very short questions here. What kind of liabilities are these? Why the Town Council took money from the bank, to do what? Is it a loan or a gift.

Item 23, Electricity Charges. Here the legend reads "To meet expenditure for the Regionalisation of Guyana for which no provision was made". I fail to understand what is the relationship between electricity charges and regionalisation of Guyana for which no provision was made. Then what has really been done in the year 1984 as far as Guyana is concerned for \$2,500,000, when we know for a fact that the whole country is in a national water crisis. Therefore, I would like to know the relationship between the electricity charges and this explanation given and secondly I would like to know specifically what work has been done as far as the ten regions are concerned for \$2,500,000 when the whole country is suffering from a national water crisis.

The Minister of National Mobilisation (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Chairman, in relation to the first question I would like to explain that the money which is

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reflected here for the New Amsterdam Town Council was made available to them  
with  
in order for them to offset liabilities that/the Royal Bank of Canada at the  
time when they were closing their operations in Guyana. The Royal Bank of  
Canada were the official banking agency for the New Amsterdam Town Council for  
several years and they had run up an overdraft to that amount. When the Royal  
Bank was being closed they called upon the Town Council to liquidate this  
indebtedness and the Guyana National Co-operative Bank which was to be the  
new bankers for the Town Council was not able at that time to begin the account  
with the overdraft. At any case, we at the Ministry felt it would be better for  
the New Amsterdam Town Council to start with a clean sheet at the G.N.C.B. and  
because of a request made by them, it was agreed to make this amount available  
to them to offset that liability at the Royal Bank of Canada.

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(Cde. Corbin continues)

As to whether it is a loan or a grant, we have made to clear to them, even though it is down as a grant that we expect that the Municipality would be in a position to repay this sum to the Government at some point in time, so that as far as the Ministry is concerned we expect that at some future period when the financial situation of the City Council improves that they will be in a position to repay this sum. In relation to the second question the Minister of Health and Environment will answer. Thank you.

The Minister of Health and Public Welfare -(Cde. Van West Charles):

Cde. Speaker, in relation to Head 16, all the water facilities within Region Four now come under the Regional Administration of Region Four .

All the operation in Region Four are operated by electricity and as such the Region then has the responsibility to pay the Guyana Electricity Corporation for the electricity incurred.

Cde. N. Persaud: I have two supplementary questions , the first will go to Minister Corbin. The bank that we have now set up, having taken over the assets from the Royal Bank of Canada is known as the National Bank of Industry and Commerce. Why is it that the same liability could not have gone over to the other bank which succeeds the Royal Bank of Canada?

The Speaker: Did you hear the answer?

Cde. N. Persaud: He said it went to G.N.C.B. That is why I question it. He said G.N.C.B. has now become the bankers of the City Council.

The Speaker: He said they were not in a position to have the overdraft.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am saying if the Royal Bank of Canada is succeeded by the National Bank of Industry and Commerce why then can the liability remain at the National Bank of Industry and Commerce. I hope the Minister get the point. The second question is whether in fact \$250,000 was electricity charges for 1984, if that is so I would like to emphasise the point, I thought it was a mistake

Cde. Corbin: That is very simple - Cde. Chairman, at the time when the Royal Bank was . . . . in operation, they began closing their branches in the regions and I don't think anyone had any idea what the Royal Bank was going to do at that point in time and they were closing their operations in New Amsterdam and there was no decision about the National Bank of Industry and Commerce at that time.

The Speaker: Page 2, current estimates, item 5, page 5 current estimates item 20, page 6 item 21 and capital estimates page 5 item 20.

Cde. N. Persaud: Page 5, item 20, we have here Cde. Chairman, \$2,750,000, originally provided \$3,610,000 provided under previous supplementary provision and now we are asking for \$450,000 to meet additional expenditure up to 31st December 1984 for Overseas Conferences and Official Visits. Cde. Speaker, I am sure you would have come across some of our writings as far as solving the problems of this country are concerned. We have openly/stated on a number of occasions that there is/ no need keeping with the financial difficulties, we have to cut down on what we term extravagances. When the three sums here are totalled up we come to \$6,810,000 and according to the subhead it is for Transport, travel and postage. Again, I am not in a position to say how much went for transport, how much went for postage nor how much went for travel and therefore, I would like, in keeping with our call to cut down the number of these overseas trips, cut down the number of overseas conferences, cut down the size of the delegation going to conferences and also to the official trips and visits and cut down the daily allowances paid to members of the delegations going on the official visits and also going to the conferences that we are sometimes called upon to go. I want to enquire from our Cde. Minister whether he is in a position this afternoon to give us details as to how many overseas conferences and how many official visits we have had for the year 1984 because the figure seems to be a very large figure - \$6.8 million. The second question and I would say it is really necessary - the size of each delegation and bearing in mind the points I have just made, whether any effort is being made during the year 1985 to reduce (1) - number of the delegation and (2) - the size of the delegation. I would also like to know whether the Minister can tell us what has been the cost of each such conference and each such visit.

Cde. Greenidge Thank you very much Cde. Chairman, in answer to Cde. Persaud's queries

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queries, may I say that the number of visits that took place in 1984 - we have got the figures but I don't have them here with me, we can supply them to Cde. Persaud subsequently . . . . in relation to the visits in 1984, that too ought not to be taken in isolation.

15:05 hrs

Very many of the visits that were undertaken were unanticipated. They were unanticipated in the sense that we could not before the end of, say, September, 1984, have anticipated that the Lomé negotiations would have to drag on right through to December. That is on the one side. We were not able to anticipate certain visits, for example, bilateral arrangements with Cuba for assistance of various sorts.

That brings us to the second point. When I say you have to look at these things from two sides, it is, of course,, for the purposes of the debate, very convenient merely to point to expenditure, but there is a counterpart and we are, at least on this side we have the responsibility to ensure that the budgeting exercise is not treated purely as an exercise in expenditure. I/<sup>do not</sup>have my Estimates before me but Cde. Narbada Persaud might find it useful to have a look at the copy of his Estimates which he has before him. If he looks at the Tables at the beginning which deal with inflows he will find that, in relation to 1985 inflows show an enormous increase over 1984 and those inflows are not unrelated to the visits. For example, some are associated with Lomé, some with the E.E.C. inflows into Guyana, some are associated with assistance from the D.P.R.K. and some are associated with inflows from Cuba. So it is necessary for us to have some balance. If you look at the complete picture you can have that balance.

In relation to the allowances, I might draw my colleague's attention to the fact that one of the problems that we have in relation to the cost of the visits is that the allowances to individuals visiting these places, the per diem in other words, are very often inadequate relative to the cost of the hotel meals, accommodation and so forth, the reason being that while we adjust the rate as the U.S. dollar strengthens one has to provide more Guyana dollars to cater for the same quantum of American dollars when the hotel bills have to be paid. So, all these factors have to be taken into account. When one considers the total size of this vote relative to the results that they have subscribed to, I think that Cde. Narbada Persaud will find that it is not something really to make a noise about.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates, page 2, items 6 and 7; page 3, item 8. Current Estimates, page 4, item 17; page 5, item 18. Capital Estimates, page 4, items 13 to 16; page 5, items 17 to 19.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, item No. 13, Capital Expenditure. It is pointed out in the legend that money is sought for the purpose of the construction of the President's College. I would like to ask the Cde. Minister of Education whether it

is true that during last year school children were taken out of their classes to work voluntarily in the construction of the President's College. Secondly, may I ask whether the Cde. Minister of Education can say what amounts of money have been raised so far by the fund-raising committee that has been set up to raise funds for the President's College and whether he can give us the necessary assurances that proper mechanisms for the control and accountability for those funds are in place. Thirdly, on that score, if the Cde. Minister can also say whether such funds as are collected by the fund-raising committee will be reflected in the expenditures of the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Education.

It appears to me that this is not the first time that we are hearing about the President's College. Very likely it is not going to be the last time. I wish to invite the Minister of Education, particularly in view of the on-going concerns about the College, to prepare a Paper so that we will be able to understand fully what the President's College will be involved in, the idea behind it, what it is all about. Such a Paper can be brought to Parliament for debate and perhaps for public discussion. I think it would be very helpful in terms of an experiment and an experience which is rather new in the education system and, may I emphasise, particularly because of the concern that the President's College may perpetuate élitism within our society, aspects of which still exist within our educational system.

I wish to ask the Cde. Minister a general question on items 15, 16, 17, 18 because all of them deal with the Second Education Project. As I understand it, the Second Education Project is scheduled to come to an end in 1985. I would like to know whether this project is going according to schedule. On item 16 he is asking for \$62,000 for Furniture. I would like to know whether this is to furnish all the different aspects of the project and, if not, what aspects will be furnished by means of this sum.

On page 5, item 17, it will be useful, informationwise, if the Minister could tell us what pieces of equipment are going to be bought as stated here in the legend. On item 18, Consultants, perhaps the Cde. Minister can spend some time telling us whether the consultants who are to be paid from the sum of \$395.727, which is shown here, are foreign or local and also what is meant by the word "etc." which is shown here in the legend.

The Minister of Education: (Cde. Parris): Cde. Chairman, first let me say that in terms of voluntary contributions, we have received approximately \$3.5 million as contributions to the President's College. It is particularly because



of the control that we have to come for a supplementary provision. The release of the funds is not being done willy-nilly.

The point here is that a certain amount was voted up to the end of 1984. The sums voted covered work up to the first week in December. It was agreed with the contractors that they would work up to Christmas Eve Day and this additional provision was actually to pay wages of workers up to Christmas Eve Day. This cost is actually the carrying forward of expenses from 1984 to 1985 and does not involve additional expenditure. I want to assure Members that the amounts received are being meticulously accounted for.

In terms of the voluntary work by school children, I would invite the members of the Minority Party to visit the President's College at their convenience. They will see that already we have begun to have an extensive farm on the project and school children/not only school children, but members of the Ministries/go to the farm and they are involved in very simple tasks which will contribute towards their education. We are building pens and different forms of activities are being prepared at the President's College.

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And I think that any work at the college can be quite easily considered educational work because it is not any different from what the children will do at their own schools. It is only an opportunity for them to visit the President's College and to participate in the construction of this historic venture. In terms of the second education project we have had some snags in terms of building and this is easily because of the inavailability of materials in some instances and also because of the unpredictability of the weather which has affected work. But generally I would say that the second project is proceeding as satisfactorily as one can expect in terms of building.

In terms of the equipment part of the second education project is for the provision of what we call low cost science equipment and what we are attempting to do is to bring science nearer to children and nearer to the environment so that children can appreciate the thought that science is everyday living and most of what we see here will go towards the building of low cost science teachings in Berbice. To the best of my knowledge, the consultants in the second education project are local and I want to assure the Assembly that we have already begun the attempt to educate comrades as to the functioning and the role of the President's College. I will bring some documents for the Minority so that they can read more about the President's College. This will depend on your ruling Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates, page 4 item 12, Current Estimates, Page 2 item 8.

Cde. F. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, just looking at item 8, I am of the belief that something is wrong with what is stated on the subhead and what the legend says. Here the subhead is talking about subsidies and contributions to local international organizations where the legend is speaking about payment of salaries and wages. I do believe something is wrong and I invite the appropriate Minister to offer some explanation.

The Chairman: Cde. Harewood-Benn.

Cde. Harewood-Benn: Cde. Chairman, nothing is wrong. The local organisation referred to is the Library and we have the G.N.A.

The Chairman: Page 5, Current Estimates, item 19.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to persuade this Parliament this afternoon to interpret my contribution under this particular item as one that is very serious. I do not know what information the Minister concerned have at his disposal, he may have information. I recall in this very house Cde. Chairman, one of the Ministers under whose jurisdiction

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this particular department fell, made a very frank and true speech and more or less conceded some of the complaints that emerged from this side of the Assembly, resulting from their debate in a kind of Commission which report has not been tabled in Parliament up to the present time by the Harris Committee. The first think I want to do is to ask the Cde. Minister to set up a Committee to investigate the payment of old age pension and social assistance. The procedure of this particular area of social services which affect the lives of our senior citizens is one which can permit very widespread fraud and corruption. My information is that this is existing currently in the distribution and payment of old age pensions and social assistance. Many persons all over this country, we have got a lot of information at our disposal and we are willing to give them to the Minister if he is so inclined, send names, letters, and representations where people have applied and have never heard from the Board. Upon enquiry in the many areas, the Local Board of Guardians are not meeting, that is the information we get upon enquiry. If the Minister can investigate and find so many areas, we have what is called the Polar Commission but that functions in Georgetown. I think probably each region should have one Local Board of Guardian. If you have one and it is not meeting with regularity then one can very well see the result. The function which is dependent on the investigation carried out by officers who are expected to enquire into each application into each claim for old age pension and social assistance and in many instances, these applications and claims have never been investigated or people are suffering and I want every member of this Parliament this afternoon to express deep concern in this area when people advanced in age, people incapacitated, people without resources to meet and speak with you, one cannot help throwing out ones heart and kindness and concern to them. And consistently, Cde. Chairman, I have told these people that I will have this matter raised in this parliament and this afternoon I want to deal with those great degree of conviction commitment and concern with a view that this afternoon we will response and as I said the Minister will see the wisdom mounting investigations into the distribution and payment of social assistance. Another area of complaint is that many books have been siezed for different reasons, and this officer continues to run into the particular officer in the district affected and that is almost in all the districts, only to be told come back next month. Some persons have spoken to me and they have been going for two years now. I cannot understand this. Something is wrong and cannot be left to lie among officers incapable of representing their own cause. Only tears are coming from the eyes of these people. We have never been opposed to this vote.

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The vote is not being questioned. What we are questioning is whether the service is being given, whether these people concerned are being benefited, whether other people involved in the process are withholding and/<sup>are</sup>probably using the funds for the old age pensioners and social assistance for their own purpose and personal use, and all those things. All these are things that are possible and they have been proven in the past and I am sure that the Cde. Minister is not without information.

15:25 hrs

( Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

I want to ask him particularly with respect to this vote to let us get some speedy action. I want to ask him<sup>and</sup>/to persuade Members on both sides of Parliament to persuade the Minister to take immediate action and help these people. It cannot continue, they cannot bear it. I would hate to go back into any area if I did not successfully persuade this Assembly this afternoon to see that something is done. The Minister must let the public know that he is concerned about this matter and if there is information around from persons who have been affected, whose books have been seized, who have been told to come month after month and are not getting any positive response, that they should report to him or to some Committee, I am sure we would not be really showing concern for senior citizens and people who need help in this country.

The matter is that the situation has gone out of proportion and it has almost reached scandal stage and I think action must be taken. I want/<sup>this</sup>Parliament to treat this particular subhead as a social service that affects people who really need help and we should all bring pressure on wherever pressure should be brought so that action is taken immediately to alleviate the sufferings that have been existing for some time. A special committee can indeed serve an ideal purpose. May I offer the services of those of us who sit on this side of the Assembly to help to curb what is happening in this particular area.

The Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives (Cde. Denny): I think in the first instance with relation to what is written here, one needs to commend and congratulate the Government for having taken the step of increasing the quantum in the payment of old age pension and public assistance retroactive to January 1, 1984. That is the first thing that has to be recognised because the supplementary provisions were designed to take care of that increase, out of the concern of the People's National Congress for the concern of the old people who have made a contribution to this society.

Just to respond to the three aspects, I want to say with regard to a special committee, that cannot be addressed at this juncture. Not that the point cannot be responded to, but I do not believe in a matter flowing out of this that we can give a commitment on the question of the establishment of a special committee. But is not the Member, who has had a wealth of experience over the years, aware that on many Boards of Guardians the People's Progressive Party is represented? Is he

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not aware that GAWJ and the P.P.P. from time to time write to the Ministry of Manpower and Co-operatives on these matters and expeditious action is taken? Is he not aware that the books that have been seized in most cases have been from people who do not justifiably warrant the payment of old-age pension and public assistance? I am not saying that there may not be instances where people's books have been taken away and who should get. I am not saying that to this Assembly. I am saying that by and large in the majority of cases many of the people who get old-age pension and whose books were seized were those who should not have got. In addition to that, I would like to indicate, and I think this Assembly should know this, that public assistance is paid by the Ministry of Manpower through the Social Assistance Department and that old-age pension, since the time of my immediate predecessor, Cde. Vice President Hamilton Green, was handed over to the Post Office. So old age pension is not paid by the officers of the Ministry. I think that is an important aspect which should be known to this Assembly.

Cde. Chairman, having made this response I finally want to say that I have been in discussion with some Members of the P.P.P. and GAWU who have been asking for even more representation on the Local Boards of Guardians and they are to give me a response in writing. That response I am still awaiting. That is the factual position to date.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Just to set the record very straight, I want to say that it is not true that some of the organisations referred to by the Cde. Minister are serving in most of the Boards. I am not talking in terms of members, Cde. Chairman, but in many of the regions - Cde. Basir was just telling me take for instance Region 2, nobody is there from any of the organisations he attempted to name. But what the Minister does not understand, I want to crave your indulgence this afternoon and I really want to be the spokesman for these people for one time. I have attempted in the past with previous Ministers successfully. This is not a matter for politicking, it is a matter for the Minister to look at realistically. If he knows how these Boards operate, they cannot function until they have got information before them which information is supplied to them by humanbeings, by individuals, by persons who have to investigate and they act in a very formal way on a document before them. I want him to look at it. This is a social problem. I want to succeed this afternoon, that is why I am craving your indulgence

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in a matter that concerns people who are suffering. I would not have raised it today with this definite conviction if I had not been persuaded as an individual by people who I have seen all over this country and who are in a great dilemma. The Post Office pays but the Post Office does not investigate. The Post Office does not take away the book. The book is taken away by the officers and not by the paying institution. The paying institution simply gives a service, like to collect money for telephones. Please let us understand the varying distinction. The people are complaining against the officers who are investigating and there are ways and means where all types of corruption might take place.

I would still like to urge this Minister, in conclusion, and thanks for your indulgence. He does not necessarily have to give a commitment but he can say he is prepared to look at the proposal and in due course make a statement from the Government whether such a committee can be appointed. I am hoping the Minister will see the wisdom and recognise the sufferings that are taking place in this particular area. I feel that we from the People's Progressive Party have this afternoon discharged our consciences on this matter.

15:35 hrs

Cde. Denny: Cde. Speaker, I have spoken clearly and ambiguously. What I have said is that - - - -

The Speaker: What Cde. Persaud is saying is the way which this thing is operating. It is far from being satisfactory and if you may look into the fears that he expressed on behalf of these unfortunate people.

Cde. Denny: Cde. Speaker, so far as I am concerned once we do investigatory work we are prepared to examine information that come before us.

The Speaker: This completes consideration of all the items.

Question -

"That the Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1985 - Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Provision on the Current Estimates for the period ending 31st December, 1984. "

put. and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Cde. Greenidge: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1985 and I move that the Committee agree with the committee for the said resolution.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wonder if you can advise or direct that the Estimates be prepared in the order in which you are dealing with it in the House. It gives us some difficulty.

The Speaker: It gives difficulty but it is not possible. I raised this matter about two or three years ago.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved. "That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed".  
/ Cde. J. Thomas/.

Adjourned accordingly at 15:40 hrs.