

**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**

46th Sitting

2 p.m.

Friday, 1st November, 1974

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ministers (5)

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

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

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

Members of State (10)

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

The Hon. O.E. Clarke, Minister of State – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne)	(Absent)
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 – on leave)
The Hon. K.B. Bancroft Minister of State – Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)	(Absent – on leave)
*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)	(Absent)
*The Hon. F.U.A. Carmicheal, Minister of State – Regional (North West)	(Absent)

Parliamentary Secretaries (7)

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

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

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

(Absent)

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

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

(Absent)

(Absent)

(Absent)

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

1.11.74
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. Zaheeruddeen for today's sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/1974

“Be it resolved that the Committee of supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper NO. 3/1974 Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$38,619,890 for the period ending 15th October, 1974.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution of Guyana, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Finance, I certify that the Cabinet has recommended the Motion for consideration by the National Assembly.

The Motion, as we are aware, sir, is that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 1974 Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Estimates for the period ending 15th October, 1974.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: I understand, that, by agreement with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we will do the Prime Minister's items first. On page 1 we will deal with items 1, 2 and 3. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. M.F. Singh): Mr. Chairman, before I deal with the Paper proper, may I crave your indulgence to say that this Financial Paper was tabled on Wednesday last and today Friday was named for the debate.

This is perfectly within the Standing Orders since only one clear day's notice is required. We, in the Opposition, small as we are, would certainly have required more time to study in detail this very bulky Financial Paper but we did not request, and we did not press for more time, which we certainly would have done under normal circumstances because we were told that the International Bauxite Association meeting will be held here in Guyana next week and all our reporting staff would be deployed for this meeting. That is why we did not very strenuously seek an extension of time to go into this very detailed "mini budget" as one set of people call it. We certainly view with alarm the magnitude of the amount being asked for here.

For this year we have had three requests for supplementary provisions. The first totalled \$1,525,605; the second \$41,754,520 and now this third one is for \$38,619,890 making the colossal total of \$81,900,015. The first Financial Paper tabled this year did say: "Schedule of Supplementary Provision, Uncovered Advances from the Contingencies Fund in 1973." So even if we took that out, which is roughly \$1.5 million, we still are left with \$80.4 million approximately. The total budget for 1974 was approved at \$395,191,038 up to the 15th October this year which is what this Financial Paper refers to. Up to the 15th October, 1974, we have a total of – and that is excluding the first Financial Paper - \$80.4 million more.

Again I ask the question: What is the point of exhaustively debating Estimates in December when so much of it bears no relation to what is actually spent by the end of the year. What we normally debate in December of one year in respect of the following year seems to me

to be not Estimates but merely very bad guesstimates. They are not even guesstimates they are very bad guesstimates.

The hon. Minister, or some hon. Minister, would probably say it is the oil crisis. This is the excuse, but we on this side of the House reject this. Certainly it is a contributory factor, nobody can say otherwise, but it certainly is not the main reason.

A careful look through this Financial Paper, without the detailed research which we have had no time to do, makes one realise that the Government seems to have gone on a spending spree, indulging in what we consider unnecessary and extravagant spending, most of it seemingly aimed at propping itself up in office by unnecessary propaganda – we will deal with this when we come to the appropriate Head in the Ministry of Information – creating jobs and sharing out favours in an attempt to keep their otherwise dissatisfied supporters happy. They are unhappy at the present moment and it seems to be an attempt to keep them happy. There are so many things here for which we have very vague notes and very vague reasons given but we have our suspicions as to how the money is being spent - - [**The Prime Minister:** “We will come to your items on the Supplementary. The fancy office you have now and your extra travelling.”] It is required under the Constitution to be provided. [**The Prime Minister:** “Well, we have got to provide it that is why we have to come here.”] But it certainly does not amount to \$80.4 million. [**The Prime Minister:** “You are not worth that.”] I am glad, Mr. Chairman, that at least the hon. Prime Minister recognizes the need to upkeep the trappings and the semblance of democracy in Guyana at the present moment - - [**The Prime Minister:** “In India you wouldn’t get the work. You remember Indira told you that you have to get ten per cent of the votes?”]

2.15 p.m.

What is listed in this financial paper as fuel costs and consequential increases are negligible as compared to the rest. But, we will deal with the specifics, the principles, and under the present circumstances we will leave the general details, the general principles, for the

Estimates or “guesstimates” that are coming up in December. We will look at the kind of Budget that we will get in December as compared to the expenditure this year and then we will deal exhaustively with the whole thing – providing of course, that we have the necessary time.

Now, dealing with the Office of the President –

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think it is only fair that the Minister of Finance who did not make any speech in moving the Motion should be permitted to reply to that because that did not deal with items 1, 2 and 3. Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope): Sir, it seems to me that the Leader of the Opposition conveniently forgets what transpires in this House from time to time. In July this year, the Government brought to this House substantial variations in the original budget not because of “guesstimates” but rather, because of the fact that certain developments have taken place within the international framework and certainly within Guyana necessitating, as a means of controlling the economy, to make sure that the economy was kept on the right keel. We brought certain changes to the Budget. Those changes necessitated a suspension of expenditure as I indicated in my opening remarks when presenting those figures; necessitated certain suspensions in expenditure on certain items as well as certain additional projects which, as we have explained, were designed to create income fast.

Since then, as a result of very successful handling of our economic situation – very successful management of the economy – we have seen that the financial fortunes of the country did increase sufficiently significantly for the Prime Minister to indicate certain subsidies and grants to the nation a few weeks ago.

In addition to that, the financial fortunes have sufficiently improved to permit of the continued spending on certain projects where spending had been suspended and in fact to accelerate certain projects which were designed to promote the further long-term economic

development of this country. It is in that context that this particular Schedule was brought. For instance, the hon. Member would see that we have substantial expenditure in this Schedule for the hydro-power road, something which we had suspended last year because we wanted to ensure that the finances were there. Now the finances are there, we do not have to wait for next year to proceed on that very essential part of our economic development.

Similarly, in the Estimates, one will find a number of the provisions which have to be met because of the various forms of assistance given to the Nation. Take, for instance, the subsidy which we have given in terms of the free exercise books that we have given to all school children. It is now that the expenditure is being requested. Take, for instance, the subsidy which we have given on stock feed to enable the reduction on the price of chicken and eggs – particularly on the price of chicken. That has already taken place. Now, the expenditure is being sought having been met from the Contingencies Fund and this is really the foundation of the Estimates before the House.

Obviously, the hon. Member has been talking as a means of propaganda but certainly not serious assessment of the situation. I hope sir, that the hon. Member proceeds in the discussions on these items within the context of the fact that the Government does not work on the basis of “guesstimates” but that it works on the basis of reasonable estimates. And, particularly, that we move along because we always feel that development is a dynamic thing; it is not static. It is not static for twelve months. It is dynamic, and, we bring Estimates to the House bearing in mind the needs of the country in terms of development and development spending.

The Chairman: Items 1, 2 and 3.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I do not wish to raise my point on those items, sir.

PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

The Chairman: Page 2, item 15.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The posts are always changing sir, but I suppose that is what we expect of the hon. Prime Minister.

The Chairman: Page 3, items 16 – 18 inclusive and item 21.

Mr. Singh: May I deal with item 17 first. I intend to deal with this subhead once and for all – this business of telephones and outstanding accounts for 1973. We have talked so much about telephones in this House. We have talked *ad nauseum* about telephones. On the last occasion, we were told that all the arrears were paid. Mr. Chairman, we all know that these corporations are intended to operate as businesses. They are intended to operate on a strict business-like basis like any other business in the private sector and it is unfair – grossly unfair – to these corporations to have accounts owing to them for so long.

Now here it is, we are in November, 1974 and the legend states:

“Voted provision inadequate as outstanding accounts for 1973 were paid this year.”

Some of the legends state “to be paid” This one states: “. . . were paid.” Supplementary provisions of Financial Paper No. 2 were approved in this House, in August, I think it was. These accounts were not included then, so presumably, these accounts were paid subsequent to August. Is it fair that these corporations should be kept waiting so long for 1973 accounts? If it were a private individual, the corporation would have cut off the telephones and the private individual would have had to pay a reconnection fee. But Government, because it is the Government – **[Interruption]** But it is unfair to these corporations which are supposed to run on a business like

basis. They have to go to the banks. They have to borrow money and pay bank charges. Is it right? John Public has to find the money to make the corporation pay its way. As a result, one would hope that in future the Government would pay its bills.

I have talked on this subject so many times before. Why give me the assurance on the last occasion that all these bills were paid when we see, for example, that since 1972 the telephone bills for the United Nations Office, further down in the Estimates, were not paid. Why is that? Let us be fair to these corporations. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister, president of GUYSTAC - - [Interruption] this is not a laughing matter. Apparently some people think this is something to laugh about. It is a serious matter. One must realise that these corporations suffer like any other private business when they do not have ready money to meet their expenditure and I am appealing to the Government on behalf of these corporations to pay their bills on time, not only to this corporation but also the Electricity Corporation. In fact, every corporation must have its bills paid. Look at this: 1973 accounts.

2.25 p.m.

I did not intend to speak on some of them, but some of the others are really terrible, the sums they are asking for. I make the point here that I do hope in future that the departments concerned would pay their telephones bills.

I compared this with the last Financial Paper and I note that, in the last Financial Paper, those corporations that put in an amount for supplementary provision did not put in an amount on this occasion. What it obviously means is that in the last Financial Paper, those same corporations that are putting in now could have put in then in the Financial Paper No. 2. It must be slackness on their part. If some corporations could have put in Financial Paper No. 2, why could not these others put it in at the same time also?

Moving on to item 18, Expenses of Officers on Transfer, First Appointments and Termination of Services, the original provision was \$250,000. The sum now being sought is \$150,000. This is an increase of over 50 per cent. The legend states, "Voted provision inadequate due to an increase in the number of officers to be recruited and repatriated."

One obviously must ask the question: How many people are involved here? One would have thought that the number of offices to be repatriated would have been reduced considerably, in fact, would have been very minimal since Independence and since we were turned into a Republic, and I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister could tell us what numbers of officers are involved here, recruited and repatriated. I would expect hopefully, that the number to be repatriated for 1974 would be very small. We have already voted \$¼ million. We are now asking for \$150,000.

Item 21, Personal Emoluments, is in the usual pattern of the Prime Minister with the posts changing ever so often.

The Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, my hon. Friend has neglected the Rules of this House in that he sought to speak on matters of principle in the Committee of Supply. In any case, so far as item 17 is concerned, it is shown that the 1973 accounts were paid out of this year's vote and because of that the original vote becomes inadequate for the Office of the Prime Minister to keep currently abreast of its indebtedness re telephone. As President of Guystac, I want to thank my hon. and learned Friend for the solicitude which he shows for the public corporations and their prompt collection of debts.

With respect to item 18, the repatriation referred to is repatriation of Guyanese to Guyana from foreign countries, repatriation of Guyanese to Guyana to be involved in the Public Service, the public sector, and other relevant sectors. I can understand why the Leader of the Opposition

would think that we would be repatriating people out of Guyana, because it has been part of his propaganda that so many people are leaving. He could not really believe that repatriation here could be referable to people being repatriated to Guyana. I hope the next time he makes a public utterance he would refer to this fact, that several hundred Guyanese have been returning and have been joining the public and other sectors.

The Chairman: Page 4

Mr. M.F. Singh: Just two items, Mr. Chairman. Item 23, Miscellaneous, the vote provision was \$17,000. The supplementary provision sought and granted was \$9,000, and now we are being asked for \$4,500 more, and a very bald legend states: “To provide for an increase in the cost of miscellaneous items.”

I would have thought that this office ought to show an example in budgetary control. The supplementary of \$9,000 was asked for shortly after the middle of this year, and asked for presumably on the basis that that would be enough for the rest of the year. It is not that this amount was granted at the beginning of the year at the time the Estimates were presented and that Government is only now coming for something else. Supplementary provision in the sum of \$9,000 was granted and one would have thought that that was estimated to be what was required for the rest of the year. Now \$4,500 is being requested almost as much as was estimated for the year. I am wondering whether this is not really an example of bad planning and whether the hon. Prime Minister should not institute some system whereby there is much stricter control of this Miscellaneous Head, so as to set the example to other Ministries in these days when we are being told so very often about tightening our belts in order to meet the stringent financial requirements of the present situation.

If we look at item 24, and this is bringing out my point, Telephones, the voted provision was \$50,000, Supplementary Provision now being sought is \$40,000, and the legend states:

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National Assembly

2.25 – 2.35 p.m.

“Voted provision inadequate due to payment of 1973 accounts amounting to \$32,000 from 1974 provision.”

I want to refer to the Estimates which we debated in December last year. I will not repeat this again but this occurs all the time more or less. If we look at page 33 of the 1974 Estimates, we will notice against the item, Telephones, subhead 5, in the column, 1974 Estimates, \$50,000, and in the column, 1973 Revised Estimates \$78,563. I said at the time that this amount of \$50,000 was unrealistic in view of the fact that the 1973 Revised Estimates showed \$78,563. If they had taken the 1973 figures as indicative of what the 1974 estimates should be, then we would not have had this problem. Then we would have had a more realistic set of estimates. Obviously, if the Government spent \$78,000 in 1973, \$50,000 would not be enough for 1974. That is why we are now coming to this honourable House to ask for \$40,000 more. WE spent \$32,000 during 1973; \$50,000 and \$32,000 make \$82,000; \$78,000 was voted for 1973.

2.35 p.m.

I was quite correct, \$50,000 for 1974 was unrealistic. It is unrealistic and I want to know what will be the figure. I will be looking carefully to see what will be the figure for 1975 because this is a recurring thing in respect of almost all the Ministries. Will the hon. Minister please give the necessary instructions for us to have more realistic figures in respect of telephone rentals so that we can pay these people their bill on time.

The Prime Minister: I must say, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was obviously right when he spoke at the time of the consideration of the Estimates but with unrevolutionary immodesty he quotes himself. What can I say?

The Chairman: Page 5, items 26 – 28 inclusive

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, for item 26, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries, the voted provision was \$75,468. Supplementary provision now sought is \$11,194 which is not insignificant. It is not enormous but every little bit counts as we say in Guyana.

The expenditure under this Head seem to be rising every year. In 1973 it was \$52,280. In 1974 we see that it is approximately \$86,500 odd. How many of these Ministerial Private Secretaries are there? We are not given any details at all. We are merely told “voted provision inadequate due to increase in staff and payment of overtime allowances.” Very bald indeed. What are we supposed to go on, particularly when we look further down at item 30 and see “Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries” again and it says “Voted provision inadequate due to staff increases.”

We have got Ministerial Private Secretaries in the office of the Prime Minister, Ministerial Private Secretaries not only in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs but in the other Ministries also and one wonders, since significant amounts are involved initially, what the strength of these Ministerial Private Secretaries is like for which we pay \$86,000 per year for the Office of the Prime Minister alone?

Now, Mr. Chairman, item 27. That really takes the cake, if I may use a Guyanese expression. It is a new Subhead – Expenses of National Development. What is this all about really? It says “To provide for expenses in connection with National Development.” \$100,000 has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. It could cover a multitude of sins. What is it really? Give us the details of this. Every Ministry has provision for schemes for National Development. Every Ministry gives details for what they will use for National Development. This is one block vote under National Development.

What does National Development really mean in the subjective terms of the hon. Prime Minister’s Office? Are we, in this House, not entitled to know? If it is that you are going to bring a block item and say ‘National Development’ well okay. There need not be any debate on

it at all. The Prime Minister's *ipse dixit* stands and there is no debate on it. Therefore, in fairness to this honourable House, if we are going to go through the motion of debating this, then let us know what this 'National Development' is all about. It can cover almost anything and is very subjective in the minds of the officers of the Prime Minister's Office and, as I asked before, what new schemes do they intend to go in for in view of the fact that we have so many Ministries all over the place that can specifically deal with the particular aspect of National Development that may be involved? Who is hiding what? What is being hidden here in this \$½ million vote for National Development that is new.

The Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, with your permission I should like to ask that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development reply to the observations on item 27. So far as item 26 is concerned this is what it says first of all "increase in staff."

Now, the Ministerial Private Secretaries have messengerial staff. Private Secretaries themselves are not paid overtime because they are monthly officers but the messengers are paid overtime whenever they do work overtime and it shows how hard they are working and the long hours which they are required to work. Speaking for myself, I know that my messengers have sometimes worked to three o'clock in the morning when we have been at meetings.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development (Dr. Reid): Mr. Chairman, it is good that the hon. Member on the opposite side has raised this question which is indeed a new Head.

Over the years, in analyzing development, it has been found out that there is something missing that is not catered for in a budget in the normal way and thus this Ministry of National

Development is trying to meet these long standing demands of development, for too often development is associated with officers and experts and men of that type, leaving the great mass of population almost unattended in certain areas, areas that are vital to development and sometimes, I believe, even more vital than the ordinary know-how of the several disciplines that we know, that is, it aims at getting people aware so that they can attend to development, so that they can accept the changes, so that they can act and thus bring development to reality.

This is what the Ministry of National Development is endeavouring to do. It goes beyond any formal plan for if we were to start to itemize expenditure under this \$½ million somebody will ask what should go under Capital, what should go under Current, what should go under Personnel. We will have to give all sorts of details and once those details are set out, the rules and regulations demand that they be followed.

In doing an exercise like that you lose, probably, the exact timing that is needed for certain acts. Development has to run a special course and if you miss the timing you sometimes miss a whole year of work, a whole year of development. For that reason we put this block vote.

2.45 p.m.

We find that many matters about development cannot be included in specific courses. Some people might say: “Well, mount special courses. You have the University, Critchlow Labour College, the Technical Institute and so on. Mount the courses there and let us move on.” But these specific areas of discipline do not really touch what development has to do with people – ordinary people – some of them who have never ever been to primary school.

First, these people would find it difficult to get admission into any of the formal institutions. People are going to ask all sorts of questions. “How many C.P. subjects have you passed? How many G.C.E. subjects have you passed? You have to take a test and if you fail the test you cannot get in.” People say these things forgetting that probably these are the real people

in the development stream who are doing the real productive work in the community and they are left without any training of any kind, without any guidance.

National Development is determined to give this sort of guidance and, in getting this on the move, one has to inspire the people, one has to inform them so that the work can go on. All this is in keeping with the change that must take place in this community to change our economy from a capitalist economy to a socialist economy.

All these people must be involved to a much greater extent than any formal Ministry of Education can do in our community so that the people can see the value of self-help, the theory behind it, the quality behind it, the ideology behind it. All these necessary things must be known and then one will get a chance to awaken the social consciousness of people. In these days one hears people talking of social justice but there cannot be social justice unless there is social consciousness.

The hon. Member spoke of the Ministry of Education. It is sometimes difficult to bring these people into any area where Ministries like the Ministry of Education can deal with them. This is a particular, a specific, kind of work. Sometimes to get a man to move, one has to go and sit with him on his back steps. Sometimes one has to cross a pool of mud to get to him and officers do not usually go. We need a special kind of people who would go out. The Ministry of National Development I going to recruit that kind of person who would not mind walking that extra mile; who would not mind walking ten miles to reach the poor farmer who has never seen an officer all his life.

That is the kind of work this Ministry is going to do and we cannot tie it down with specific heads or items in the Budget because the success of it all would rest on the flexibility – how flexible we can be in doing this thing – so that we can get prompt action.

For instance, if one puts down a subhead “Telephones”, as the hon. Member said just now, one would surely go wrong. Of course, that is an example where the final amount is always wrong because one can never tell how many telephone calls one may have to make to one particular individual. It might be to a poor farmer far away. He might have to call you. He might not have money to pay for the telephone call or return charges and things like that. One will have to take care of that bill if one wants to have a conversation with him, if one wants to communicate with him properly. The Ministry of National Development is hoping to do these sorts of things – find out the materials he would need, the practical things that must be done, all the necessary equipment for the practical work.

One must become involved in the life of the community to find out exactly what the people need, the kind of teachers that must get into this exercise, the instructors, the demonstrators, the communication system one must set up, the officers one must involve to make this communication meaningful. One might have to retain some of the sociologists for a few weeks or a few months, or probably even a whole year, because in times past so many people have gone out into communities without knowing anything about people. We are hoping that National Development will take its rightful place by making people understand the nature of people, how people react. All this is work that we must do. We need a whole set of salesmen to sell our programme so that people can move forward.

We could not have initiated this at a more appropriate moment than now when we have got on our backs as much imperialist pressure as one can think about. In the formal educational system, it is sometimes difficult for the ordinary teacher to expose the student to what we term “imperialist pressures.” But, these men who would go out to meet the community would be able to do that without any apology and to expose the devious means adopted to restrain development. In that way economic development can really take place.

We need men too, in our team, who would be able to do research. They would be near enough to people to find out the proper data so that we could make proper analyses of how

development must reach the most needy with the greatest speed. That is why this small amount of half a million dollars has been included in this budget to complete this year's programme.

The Chairman: Pages 34 and 35. All items on page 34 excluding item 219; and items 224 to 227 inclusive on page 35. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 35 items 225 and 227, I have just two questions.

On item 225, a new subhead, we are being asked to provide the sum of \$960, a small amount considering that we have just been speaking about half a million dollars, to provide for the purchase of seamen's identification documents. The legend states:

“To provide for the purchase of seamen's identification documents.”

Could we have this explained? Is this transferred from somewhere else? Did seamen not have documents before? Why are they being purchased now as it were for the first time?

Under item 227, Old Age Pensions, I am very pleased to see this allocation for \$219,600 “to provide for increases in old age pensions.” Have all the old people who were entitled to get these increases received them? If not all, how many have received increases?

The hon. Prime Minister, when he spoke to the nation a few short weeks ago and gave the little boost to us with the announcement of the free exercise books, an increase in old age pensions and so on, said that this would come into effect. My leader tells me that this was to be paid from the end of last year. I would like to have that clarified. Could the hon. Prime Minister say whether payment was retroactive to the end of last year or whether it only started from the date of his announcement.

I would like task, sir, that some time in the future, after the matter of old age pensioners and their receipt of allowances has been investigated, the Government would consider giving pensioners in the rural areas an amount equivalent to the pension given to those in Georgetown.

I know that the answer to that is going to be: “oh, the country people should be able to manage better. They have a little bit of land and they can plant a few things.” But in point of fact, what they gain on the roundabout, they lose on the swings. They may be able to plant a little bit of calaloo or a few bits of bora but they have to pay extra costs when they buy things like evaporated milk and onions, for example, and other items which are imported and controlled and which reach them through Georgetown. These items cost about a penny more per item in the country areas. Therefore, the old age pensioners in the country areas deserve to receive pensions on a par with pensioners in town.

We appreciate that the increase to be little at the moment but we look forward to the not too distant future when we hope it would be possible to give old age pensioners a further increase.

2.55 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, so far as item 225, Purchase of Seamen’s Identification Document, is concerned, the fact is that this is being done for the first time.

So far as item 227 is concerned, I should like to recall that the undertaking was to increase the old age pensions from 1st September, 1974. So far as I am aware, that is happening. Secondly, it has been alleged that in point of fact there is no good reason for paying old age pensions in the rural areas at a lower rate than that which obtains in the urban areas. This has

been brought to Government's attention and we are looking at it. In proper cases, old age pensions are and can be supplemented from the social assistance vote.

The Chairman: Schedule B, page 8.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The hon. Prime Minister well knows my views on this item 37, National Service. I merely want to ask: this \$150,000, what new frolic is being embarked upon in respect of this new vote?

Mrs. DaSilva: I just want to ask one question about the vote. Could the hon. Prime Minister tell us – because we are boat building in Guyana – if this \$150,000 is being spent to build a boat in Guyana or if it is coming from overseas?

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, the boat has already been acquired. It is not being built. It is a boat that was in Guyana before, a trawler, a part of the fleet of the Guyana Marine Foods, a boat which was originally a shrimper but could be more economically worked as a fisher for trawling fish instead of shrimp. The National Service has bought this boat from the Guyana Marine Foods to bring in fish from the sea. [Interruption] Has bought. As a lawyer, you know as long as there is a contract, there is a sale. The payment does not make the contract. It does not make the sale. [Interruption]

Mr. Chairman, this trawler also leaves fish at New Amsterdam for the New Amsterdam residents to have. It also sells fish at a very low price of between thirty and thirty-five cents per pound to the residents in the Berbice River including places like Kwakwani, De Velde, Wiruni, and then in addition, it supplies fish to the National Service recruits and staff at Kimbia. It is also used for transporting other items which have to be taken to the National Service Centre at Kimbia. It is my conviction that not only it is a good buy in terms of what it does in supplying fish to areas that never had access before to sea fish, but also as a training vessel for some of the National Service recruits.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I am alarmed that the vessel has actually been bought and what we are doing is merely coming to Parliament for rubber-stamp approval. I thought Parliament was the place whereby you come to ask for approval to do such things.

The Prime Minister: I did not want to be too rough on one who is a member of the profession which once I practiced, but if he were to look at the Constitution he would see that contracts can be made, things can be purchased before the Executive come to Parliament. What then is the *raison d'être* of the Contingencies Fund? It is part of the Constitution that he purported to help to settle. He must not come here and masquerade on bad law.

The Chairman: We will deal with the remainder of pages 1 and 2. Page 1, items 3 to 7. Page 2, item 8.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 4, Transport and Travelling, Supreme Court of Judicature, \$10,000, voted provision inadequate due to increased rates of travelling allowances. Obviously, the travelling allowance was inadequate due to the increase in the price of gas, etc., and there had to be an increase, but I should like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of this honourable House to a plight which exists in respect of certain people attached to the Supreme Court and to ask what can be done to alleviate the suffering there.

I refer to the judges' chauffeurs. A judge's chauffeur was paid \$165 per month, which was the same as the salary given to a Minister's chauffeur. The salary of a Minister's chauffeur was raised to \$235 per month and recently it was raised to \$287 per month on scale \$287 to \$385 per month, with a gratuity of 22½ per cent of the basic salary at six-monthly intervals, or on the termination of service. It seems very unfair, to my mind, that a Minister's chauffeur should enjoy salary between \$287 to \$385 per month while the salary of the judge's chauffeur remains at \$165 per month. Let us bear in mind that the Minister's chauffeur also receives 22½ per cent of his basic salary every six months. But what is very significant is that whereas the 22½ per cent of the basic salary at six-monthly intervals is in some part of a recognition of his service,

where the judge's chauffeur is concerned, if he gives six years' service and the judge feels that his services should be dispensed with, he can go just like that without a single cent in compensation, and without consideration for his service. The contract between the judge and chauffeur is a personal one, as it should be under the circumstances. So that if the judge is dissatisfied with his chauffeur's service after ten years' service, he can tell him: "Here is one month's notice. Go." And for that ten years' service, he gets nothing.

3.05 p.m.

With the Minister's chauffeur, on the other hand, every six months he is entitled to get 22½ per cent of his basic salary so that he does get something. He gets it every six months or he gets it at the end of his term of office when he is told "You can go."

It seems to me to be very unfair in the circumstances. I am not saying that they should be brought exactly up to the status or up to the financial remuneration of the Minister's chauffeurs. It may well be that the Ministers' chauffeurs work much harder than the Judges' chauffeurs, but what I do say is that a salary of \$165 in these days of crisis, in these days of rising prices, seems to me to need review. I do not want to make a big song and dance about it; all I want is a statement from the hon. Minister concerned that he will look into the matter and see what can be done for these people.

Moving on to item 7, Court of Appeal, under the Head Supreme Court of Judicature, the legend says "to provide for the purchase of books to be used by the Court of Appeal." The sum of \$4,500 was originally voted. Supplementary provision now sought is \$2,800. In and out of this House I have always advocated that our Courts should be adequately and properly stocked with all the relevant books, all the reading material that they need. I have absolutely no quarrel with this amount. What I do say is that it is a pity this amount was not originally included in the allocation when we discussed the Estimates. Certainly, I think that the original provision of

\$4,500 was too small. I am glad to see that a supplementary provision of \$2,800 is now being sought here.

In future when we consider Estimates, I do hope that we make a more realistic allocation to supply our Courts adequately with books by providing them with more money than we have done in the past.

Item 9, Miscellaneous, under the Head Magistrates: The voted provision was \$10,800. Supplementary provision now sought is \$6,850 which is an increase of over 60 per cent. The legend states: "To provide for the increased wages of Charwomen." I am wondering whether this legend is really correct because the increase is over 60 per cent. If it is that the charwomen have got generous increases I have no quarrel with that at all. I think they work hard and are entitled to good remuneration, but is it true that over 60 per cent of the original allocation is now being given as increased wages or is there something else that is being covered? I would sincerely like to know.

I wish to refer to item 13, Telephones, under Head 6, Ombudsman. I merely mention this *en passant*. The voted provision was \$1,200; supplementary provision now sought is the small amount of \$450. But what amuses me is the legend "Previous provision inadequate due to increase in the number of calls made." This does not refer to arrears in the accounts but to an increase in the number of calls made. Now, this goodly gentleman, the Ombudsman, was ill for some time so that, presumably, some members of his staff seemed to have made an additional amount of calls over and above what the office had anticipated should be made in 1974. I am not sure whether there is any Minister here who can answer for this office because the Ombudsman is supposed to be a very independent person and I merely wonder what extra work this increase in the number of calls stems from.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, first of all I do not believe that the Leader of the Opposition expects to get any comment or answer as regards item 13. His innuendo, if one was intended, I think is unworthy of him.

I will deal with the question of the chauffeurs. It may be true that Judges' chauffeurs and Ministers' chauffeurs both experience a certain degree of insecurity but I think that it is true to say that Ministers' chauffeurs experience even greater insecurity than Judges' chauffeurs for the simple reason that while Judges' chauffeurs can lose their jobs by being dismissed by the Judge in question, the length of service of a Minister is something of speculation for all of us and therefore a Minister's chauffeur has a double jeopardy, either his own misconduct or the real or imagined misconduct of his employer.

In addition, the pay given to Ministers' chauffeurs is in recognition of the unusual hours that they are intended to put in. A Minister's chauffeur is intended to work almost as long hours as the Minister on days of Cabinet and during the sitting of Parliament, on holidays and at times when a Minister has to be all over the country his chauffeur has to be with him; he shares in many cases the day's concerns with the Minister. It is in recognition of this that Minister's chauffeurs are paid something over and above what is given to other chauffeurs.

I do not quarrel with the contention that we would be happy to see an increase in the emoluments of Judges' chauffeurs but then we would be happier to see increases in emoluments in many other categories of employment if the country could afford it.

With regard to item 7 dealing with books, the provision is largely to pay for the purchase of Indian law books. Here again we have felt at all times that more money should be provided for our law library. Again there is the question of allocating scarce resources and I wonder if the hon. Member who is himself a practicing lawyer is not making a special plea for a well-stocked library which might assist him in reducing the purchases that he must necessarily make if he has to keep up his practice.

With regard to charwomen it is a fact that the charwomen's salaries have been increased and there is really nothing other than what appears in the legend here. It does appear that there is some peculiar suspicion which seeks to find some hidden meaning in the plainness of sentences but I can assure this House that the sentence as it reads means exactly what it says.

3.15 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 3, items 19 and 20.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 19 deals with Personal Emoluments under head 8, Public Prosecutions. The legend states:

“To provide for increase in salary due to the reclassification of Deputy Director and Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions.”

We have no quarrel with an increase in salaries. We agree with the increases shown. We are increasing salaries. We know that this office is supposed to be independent, but something seems radically wrong somewhere.

I am not sure whether any Minister can answer this, but I am asking this question. There is a gentleman by the name of Dr. Balwant Singh whose case came up for trial and was thrown over to the next session. Several sessions have passed and nothing has happened. This gentleman, who was a former renowned civil servant, was interdicted from duty. One would have thought that a civil servant in as high a position as he held would have been speedily brought to trial and that his trial would have been speedily concluded. But since so many sessions have passed and his case has not come up, it leaves John Public to wonder whether there is any reason for this delay.

Certainly we would like to know that civil servants who are interdicted from duty, who are not enjoying the salaries that they would normally be enjoying, would have their names cleared or otherwise as speedily as possible. I wonder whether anyone can throw some light on this.

Mr. Jack: From time to time in this House, we are witness to a peculiar form of presentation of remarks from the opposite side of the House. Before I attempt to answer the question, which really I do not understand, I wish to have clarification as to whether the hon. Leader of the Opposition is making a plea or a demand that this case in question be brought speedily to trial.

Mr. M. F. Singh: In the name of justice, Mr. Chairman, I am making a plea that a sword of Damocles should no longer hang over the head of this civil servant and that he should have his fate decided once and for all.

Mr. Jack: I asked a simple question which could have resulted in a simple answer either “Yes” or “No”. It seems as if there is some reluctance to say “Yes” or “No”. Assuming that the answer is “No” – because I still do not know what the answer was – I am also prepared to have these remarks translated to the proper quarter.

The Chairman: We shall now deal with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We begin at page 5 from item 31; the whole of page 6; the whole of page 7; the whole of page 8; the whole of page 9 which deals with Foreign Affairs as well as Attorney General; the whole of page 10, up to item 64. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I shall deal with item 31, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Transport and Travelling and item 32, Miscellaneous. The sum of \$332,000 was provided under item 31 and we are now seeking approval for the sum of \$122,625. The legend states:

“To provide for unanticipated additional expenditure.”

I do not think the person who drafted the legend is being very fair to this House. It refers to “unanticipated additional expenditure.” What does it really tell us? This tells us nothing. Is it the cost of fuel alone? If not, what else was included? This is not a small amount, it is \$122,625. Could we have some more explanation of this “unanticipated additional expenditure?”

The amount originally voted against item 32, Miscellaneous was \$85500. The supplementary provision now sought is \$94,945, a large sum, and this again is to provide for “unanticipated additional expenditure.” Again the legend tells us nothing.

What is the point in coming to the House for a debate on this financial paper if no information is forthcoming? I hope that hon. Minister will give us the benefit of some details in respect of these two heads, because we can come to this House and say almost everything is “unanticipated additional expenditure” if it does not relate to something specific.

Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, resulting from the change on this page 5 of item 27 from \$100,000 to \$500,000 all these sub-totals are now to be changed to add on \$400,000. The total at the end is correct, but all these sub-totals should be increased by \$400,000 from here to the end to make them correct.

I turn to item 35, Books and Publications, under Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The amount originally voted was \$21,700; supplementary provision now sought is \$7,527. The legend states:

“To provide for increase in subscriptions to, as well as in the number of publications purchased by the Ministry.”

I am alarmed by the way in which this head is increasing. In 1971, the provision was only \$11,000. With the supplementary provision now being asked for, it amounts to \$29,227. Are we really making economies as it is intended that we should make? If we are making economies, then we must economize in the number of publications and purchased books

3.25 p.m.

Item 38, Entertainment Expenses, the sum originally voted was \$25,100. The supplementary provision now sought is \$55,887, an increase of over 100 per cent. Again the legend merely states, "To provide for unanticipated additional expenditure." Again it tells us nothing. Perhaps the hon. Minister would do us the favour of telling us what this unanticipated expenditure is all about, in view of the fact that it is an increase of over 100 per cent. At the beginning of the year when we present our Estimates to this House, let us put a realistic figure. It could not have been unanticipated to the extent of 100 per cent.

Turning to page 7, item 42, Expenses for printing and distributing information material, the voted provision was \$26,000, supplementary provision now sought is \$16,805. The legend states: "To provide for an increase in the cost of printing newsletters by overseas Missions for circulation to Guyanese resident in the respective countries." What is this? Is it more propaganda? In 1971, the actual expenditure was \$10,827.

I am sure we will all agree that charity begins at home here in Guyana, with Guyanese who are here facing the suffering, facing the trials, facing the turmoil. Charity should begin here not with those who choose to live in luxury in the developed countries. There are not many Guyanese in India and in Africa. They are very few so that a large portion of this money being spent is being spent in respect of Guyanese in the developed countries, where they can walk into the shops and buy anything they want, unlike what is happening here in Guyana. We are forgetting the Guyanese at home and we are spending this kind of money on Guyanese in the developed countries.

Let us look at that in relation to item 52, Publicity and Information. We go to page 8 to look at that. The vote provision was \$2,000; supplementary provision now sought is \$14,198, that is, approximately \$14,200. It has increased from \$2,000 to \$14,198. Again this is “to provide for unanticipated additional expenditure.” This was spent in respect of what, in respect of whom? Publicity and Information for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Surely we must put an end to this and start concentrating on bettering the life, the standard of living of Guyanese here in Guyana before we start looking after publicity and information for Guyanese living in these developed countries.

Item 54 on page 8 is a new subhead, Hospitalisation Expenses – Heads of Missions, and the legend states: “To provide for hospitalization expenses of Heads of Missions.” There is an advance from the Contingencies Fund. The legend states, “Heads of Missions.” What about our other diplomats in these Missions? It is a new subhead and there must be a particular reason for creating it. I wonder whether it is only Heads of Missions who will benefit from this vote.

Perhaps I may ask the hon. Minister to tell us of the health of my learned friend and colleague Mr. Fred Wills, whose health I am concerned about.

Item 55, Refunds of Revenue: This is a new subhead. The sum required is \$35,000 and the legend states: “To provide for the refund of consumption taxes on gasoline paid by Resident Diplomatic Missions”. The whole amount has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. I ask this in order to obtain some information. I seem to recollect that there has been a consumption tax on gasoline for some time in foreign countries. Years ago, there was consumption in almost all the developed countries on a lot of items. Is this recent decision to refund consumption tax? Merely from the point of view of information, I should like to know what is involved in this refund of consumption tax.

The Chairman: Page 9. We are also dealing with the Head, Attorney General.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 58, Head 15, Attorney General, Personal Emoluments. There is one item I should like some clarification on and that is the legend “(B) remuneration to graduate law students at the rate of \$300 per month;” Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister will take this opportunity to tell us what this is all about. Is it a recent innovation? The hon. Minister will take this opportunity to tell this House what this remuneration to graduate law students at the rate of \$300 per month is all about.

I turn to item 64 on page 10, Transport and Travelling. The original provision voted was \$5,500. Supplementary Provision now sought is \$4,000 and it is on the legend that I want some explanation. The legend states: “To provide for expansion of services and increased rates of travelling allowances.” No one has any quarrel with increased travelling allowances but what we would like some explanation on is this business of expansion of service. What is the expansion of service being referred to in respect of item 64?

Mrs. DaSilva: My leader has dealt extensively, exhaustively, and in great detail with the gross expenditure incurred in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have one question I should like to ask the hon. Minister. We must have our Missions in foreign countries. We are not disputing the fact that our Missions must have a certain standard to uphold. We do not want Guyana’s Missions or representatives abroad being asked to live on a lower standard than those of other countries. We want the diplomats in our Missions to be proud and to be able to take their places side by side with others. In view of the fact that we have been hearing – we heard it from the hon. Minister of Finance and the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, over and over this afternoon; I think the hon. Minister of Finance referred to it as “current developments” – that the fuel crisis is the reason for the increased cost this year, I should like to ask the hon. Minister who is dealing with Foreign Affairs whether it is not time for the Government of Guyana to set an example to the nation in the making of the sacrifices which it asks the ordinary Guyanese citizen to make in the interest of the development of our country? This can be started in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; it can be started high up as it were.

1.11.74

National Assembly

3.35 – 3.45 p.m.

[Mrs. DaSilva continued]

3.35 p.m.

The time has come for us to start considering whether we cannot double up the work of the Missions that we have. For example, we know that the German Embassy in Guyana will be closed and be transferred to Trinidad. We have Missions in the North American Continent, in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Then we have one in Washington and two in New York, a total of six in that area. Why could not two or three be made to do the work of six? That would be one way of cutting down. I would like to suggest that in London the Mission should do the work of the one in Brussels but perhaps we will hear that it is not possible, that Brussels has to be on its own because of the European Common Market.

This is away in which we can save thousands and thousands of dollars. Missions, because of their very nature are expensive operations to run. We are playing proud and we are poor. We beg on the one hand and yet we live it up on the other. It is time we started thinking about doubling up. I am not saying that we should reduce the standard because it is accepted that Missions have to maintain a certain standard, but it is time we started thinking about having the Missions double up on their work. We could close a few of them and thus save the country's money. Could the hon. Minister let us have any thoughts on this?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Jack: First of all, Mr. Chairman, the question was raised with regard to the increases for subscriptions for books as well as an increase in the number of publications.

I think that it is general knowledge that in keeping with the general escalation of prices the price of books has risen astronomically. Those of us who buy magazines regularly will recognize that prices have gone up, in some cases fifty per cent and in others nearly one hundred per cent. Furthermore, with the increased work of the Ministry it has been necessary to keep

abreast of the times and, therefore, to have more publications at one's disposal. This accounts for the increased expenditure for which we are asking a provision.

With regard to the Entertainment Expenses at 38, I think I should make some general remarks with regard to how the foreign service works and how expenditure is incurred.

We could, of course, make an extremely large provision which would cover all possible expenditure during the year but we do not think it would be wise to do that since it might encourage a slackness of the reins which are always held on expenditure in each Ministry.

It is not possible to anticipate with precision what expenditure will be incurred for things like travelling and entertainment. For this reason we have a number of invitations out to a number of Heads of State. A Head of State may indicate that he cannot come at a particular time but then, again, he may indicate that he would like to visit at a particular time. If he does so then it is our duty to try and accommodate his wishes by changing up a programme or by fixing matters in such a way that we could have him at a time most convenient to him and, of course, to ourselves. For this reason we have had, recently, distinguished Heads of State visiting us. Some of this expenditure – as a matter of fact, a large part of this expenditure – has been occasioned by the visits.

May I take this opportunity to anticipate questions of a similar nature that will be asked next year and to tell the hon. Member that we will have another Head of State visiting shortly and that that visit could not have been anticipated at this particular time although we knew that such a visit would take place and we welcome it.

Item 42, Expenses for printing and distributing information material: Again it is tedious to keep repeating that there is increased cost but it happens to be true. I would think that those of us who have families overseas would appreciate that the Government may want to keep them in

touch with the advances that are taking place in this country and keep the life-line, as it were, strong and vibrant.

Item 52, Publicity and Information: Again we have had, due to the increased activity of the Ministry, increases in travelling, in entertainment and in publicity. This is part and parcel of the general increase in expenditure which has been occasioned by the visit and by our increased activities. One will recall also that we have had the Namibia Mission here which was something that we could not have anticipated at the time when the last budget was being passed.

Item 54, Hospitalisation Expenses – Heads of Missions: it seemed that the hon. Member knew the answer to the question before he posed it. Generally, officers are covered by insurance but this particular expenditure was occasioned by the illness of someone for whom he seems to have an interest and who, we are happy to say, has recovered from that illness now and is back on the job.

Item 55, Refunds of Revenue: The Diplomatic Corps in Guyana, as in other countries, enjoy certain duty-free privileges. It used to be the case that they bought gasoline duty-free at the filling stations. Some months ago the stations changed that operation and started to sell them the gasoline with the duty. In Guyana there were three filling stations which were generally supplying them. Representations were made to Government and we have worked out a scheme where they tender their receipts and they get the duty paid back. This, I understand, is similar to what obtains in the United Kingdom.

3.45 p.m.

The provision at item 58, Personal Emoluments, is for two law students. Actually it is for graduates who are now doing work in Chambers. Under the Agreement which we have with our CARICOM colleagues, students who are taking the examination of the West Indian Law Faculty, upon concluding their graduate studies, must do a certain period either in private Chambers or in

Government Chambers. This provision is to pay for two students who are in Chambers undergoing this course of training.

Item 64, Transport and Travelling: The legend states: “To provide for expansion of services and increased rates of travelling allowances.” We have established a land registry division in New Amsterdam and, as a result, there is the necessity for further travelling of officers from Georgetown to New Amsterdam and back and this is reflected in this provision made here.

The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva raised the question as to whether we could not save by doubling up our Missions overseas. I have just asked the officer to give us complete details on the number of missions covered by each one of our representatives, but let me say that to anyone who is familiar with the workings of our Missions it would be clear that our Ambassadors are generally more taxed than the average Ambassador in the countries in which they operate. Most of our Ambassadors are accredited not to one country but to a number of countries.

Together the Ambassador in Caracas and the Ambassador in Brazil, are accredited to all the South American countries with which we have diplomatic relations. The Ambassador in England, for instance, is accredited to Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Yugoslavia, Russia and the Netherlands and will be accredited to some other countries when we establish diplomatic relations. I do not have the full list of the accreditation of the Ambassador in Washington but it is of a similar order.

One needs to remember that the purpose, first of all of accreditation, is to allow some familiarity with the country, some contact with the people, especially the people in Government, so that one can make proper representation on behalf of one's country. An Ambassador is supposed to visit at least once a year and one can see that when an Ambassador is accredited to 15 or 20 countries, his utility may be completely impaired by the necessity which he would experience of spending most of his time travelling to or from a country.

We have been doing this kind of multiple accreditation long before the more advanced and wealthy countries thought of it and I can assure the hon. Member that if she spoke to Ambassadors from Guyana and from other Third World countries, similarly placed as we are, she would find that the job of an Ambassador is by no means an easy one and that it results in extreme strain, both mental and physical, upon the officers who hold these particular posts. So, in fact, we have already done and are already doing what she was suggested.

The Chairman: Page 17, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources items 117 to 120.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 119, Uniforms. The sum of \$13,000 was originally voted and \$3,388 is the supplementary provision now sought:

“To provide for payment in lieu of uniforms not issued in 1973.”

We recollect that there were a lot of problems in respect of some people, not necessarily employees in the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. These people staged all sorts of demonstrations in respect of the Government’s failure to issue uniforms.

I wonder if the hon. Minister would tell us why these uniforms were not issued in 1973 so that it became necessary to make monetary payments in 1974 in respect of uniforms which should have been issue in 1973. One would presume that there was a saving in 1973 in respect of these uniforms which were not issued.

Item 120, Labour at Headquarters: The voted provision was \$62,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$3,310 and the legend states: “To provide for wages of watchmen.” Is this because the original provision was inadequate or is it that more watchmen have been taken on and therefore money is required for additional wages? Or, is it that the compliment of watchmen is the same but that more money is required? If there is an increase in the number of watchmen, presumably there are more premises that these men have to watch. Perhaps the hon.

Minster would tell us exactly what is meant by this legend and why this sum of \$3,310 is, in fact, required.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, the position is that in 1973 uniforms were not issued because there was a shortage of material. I believe that this legend may appear subsequently somewhere else.

I take this opportunity to mention that I am informed that there was a general shortage of material so that this answer is likely to suffice for similar provisions under other Heads. It was agreed that payment would be made in lieu of the material which was not available.

With regard to the payment of wages to watchmen, we have not increased the number of watchmen. We found ourselves in the position where the Ministry of Works should have paid the watchmen but that Ministry did not have adequate provision and so we were called upon to make the provision for paying them. Formerly the Ministry of Works paid all the watchmen but latterly we have been paying our own watchmen.

3.55 p.m.

The Chairman: Schedule “B” item 1. This deals with Capital Expenditure. Page 3, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, item 14 and 15.

Mr. Singh: Item 15 is a new subhead, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, dealing with Public Relations Programme. The provision now sought is \$100,000 and the legend is very enlightening. “To meet expenditure in connection with the Public Relations Campaign, both local and overseas relating to the imposition of a levy on Bauxite exported from Guyana. This amount has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund.”

With the massive amount of money that is in the Ministry of Information and the amount of money that is also under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one wonders why it is necessary to provide even more money for a matter like this. Of course, one sees in the newspapers various organisations, institutions, individuals, coming out with statements in favour of the Government's stand against Reynolds, a matter which we have debated in the House and on which the House was unanimous. One would have thought that the ordinary machinery of the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Affairs Ministry would have been well able to deal with this matter, and that is why in these days of tightening one's belt and trying to conserve in respect of the expenditure of every dollar, one wonders why it is necessary to provide this sum of \$100,000 on a campaign of this nature.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Jack: Comrade Chairman - - **[Interruption]**

The Chairman: Hon. Members, will you please permit the hon. Member to carry on with his reply.

Mr. Jack: We are engaged in a serious struggle on the issue of ownership and control of our natural resources. The company which is engaged in this struggle with us is a very rich company and has at its disposal organs for disseminating its point of view. We feel that it is right and proper that the truth should be known both here and abroad. Those of us who have been familiar with the way, in which countries have been maligned by certain sections of the international Press, deliberately and maliciously, would recognize the necessity of getting our point of view across.

This sum of money is extremely small if compared with the magnitude of the task which we have undertaken, and if compared with the size of the operation which we are about to take

over. I think that it is wrong to assume that one will get anything for nothing in this world, or that one can carry out serious undertakings of this nature without some expenditure. I would urge the hon. Leader of the Opposition to recognize not only the necessity that has occurred of spending this sum of money but also the necessity which may arise to expend further sums of money before the issue between the Government and Reynolds is finally settled.

The Chairman: We are dealing with the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation. Page 32, item 215, the whole of page 33, which also takes in the Ministry of Local Government, and page 34, item 219.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 216 on page 33 deals with “miscellaneous” which is used, we have said before, to cover a multitude of sins. The voted provision is \$43,460 and we are being asked for a supplementary vote of \$15,000. We continue to say that we feel that this item, Miscellaneous, is one that opens itself to no end of suspicion. All sorts of peculiar things can be included and counted as “miscellaneous.”

Could we not have a more detailed explanation in the legend as to what “miscellaneous” really covers? All it says is: “Voted provision inadequate” while asking for over half of the amount of money which was first requested. This does not tell us anything and we feel that some explanation to this House, and to the citizens of Guyana, is necessary, because it is their money that is being spent.

On page 34, item 219, Community Development Workers, we voted a provision of \$53,500 to start with. We came back and we had a first supplementary provision of \$79,750 and now we are being asked again to provide a further vote of \$167,440 under this subhead of Community Development Workers. This is a total of \$300,690 under this subhead alone.

1.11.74

National Assembly

4.05 – 4.10 p.m.

[Mrs. DaSilva continued]

4.05 p.m.

At the beginning of the debate this afternoon, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister went into a lengthy explanation of the need for the spending of half a million dollars on development. This is a further sum of \$300,690 for development. We would wish to see the development of our country. We are not against providing genuine employment for people. We want this but this is an enormous amount of money that is brushed off very casually by a note that says “Voted provision inadequate to meet the payment of salaries and travelling to 31st December, 1974.”

The Deputy Prime Minister spoke about the need for development. Nobody says there should not be this but we certainly feel that we ought to be told how and where it being developed, what new places are being opened up.

We had to talk about needing sociologists and psychiatrists. I wonder how many there are in the country – perhaps one or two. Where are the people working? Where are they opening up? What have we got to show for this development? We would like to have some explanation.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation.

The Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Mr. Green): Mr. Chairman, in so far as the miscellaneous aspect of the title is concerned, I take it that the hon. Member has asked us to change the whole structure of accounting in the Government system, because I suspect even when we run a small business there is need to have a head called ‘Miscellaneous’ where small items that must not be missed are put. I find it, therefore, absurd to suggest that for the purposes of national accounting we should dispense with this subhead called “Miscellaneous.”

With respect to the specific amount here, this was used to assist a number of Local Authorities, particularly around the areas contiguous to Georgetown, just after the heavy rainy season. There were a number of cleaning-up exercises to ensure that the city remains in a fair state of cleanliness.

In so far as item 219, Community Development Workers, is concerned, every year we have to explain this in this House. I will not attempt to repeat what my colleague the Deputy Prime Minister said earlier, except to note that as far as the Community Development Workers are concerned we operate at different levels in the system and what we are attempting this country is indeed a serious revolution. We are attempting to provide a new Guyana man, a man with new standards, a man who is less selfish. We are attempting to do within a short period what would normally take centuries in some countries. We need people with the right orientation, the right psychological background and the right training to go into areas wherever there are new people.

The hon. Member is asking for the names of places and I repeat an invitation I made in this House some time ago to take him with us any day, any time, at his convenience, to show him the various areas in the Demerara River, in all the creeks, in all the new areas where we are trying to settle people. He should take a life belt with him so that he is safe.

We do not settle people by herding them in one place. We need to take them to let them see that they are part of the system. We need community development workers in all these places to help to guide people to show them along the correct path. And since we have had increased activity last year and this year, we need additional funds to provide for additional staff and also to provide for salary increases and additional cost of travelling which resulted from the crisis we faced earlier this year.

Sitting suspended at 4.10 p.m.

1.11.74
4.35 p.m.

National Assembly

4.35 – 4.40 p.m.

On resumption - -

The Chairman: Page 5, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, items 29 and 30 and Ministry of Information and Culture, page 11. Hon . member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak on items 70, 72 and 74 on page 11. This is just for reasons of identifying item 70, subhead 20, Publishing and Publicising under the Ministry of Information and Culture. The voted provision was \$214,000.

We spoke on this aspect of publishing and publicizing when we were talking about foreign affairs. A great deal of money is being spent by a country that says it has to make sacrifices; it has to tighten its belt; it cannot afford this; it cannot afford that. What we do not seem to be able to do is to establish priorities as to how and where our money ought to be spent.

We are not saying that publishing and publicizing is not important, is not necessary. A little while ago we had a long speech from the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources about the expenditure of \$100,000 in connection with Reynolds and the bauxite levy. Why cannot this publishing be prepared in the Ministry of Information and Culture whose duty it is to deal with publishing and publicizing?

The voted provision for this item was \$214,000. The Government came back for a supplementary provision of \$57,200 which was granted. Now we are being asked for \$66,880. The legend reads "To provide for an increase in the production of various miscellaneous publications in respect of Government's public relations campaign." If this is to take care of all the various fields we should not have to ask for an additional sum for Energy and Natural Resources and for Foreign Affairs.

For item 72, Public Relations Programme, we voted \$136,000 and now we are being

asked for \$96,600 “To meet the cost of “Guyana Today” booklet as well as the cost of miscellaneous leaflets and posters.” There are two sets of miscellaneous leaflets and posters.” There are two sets of miscellaneous leaflets and posters. In 1970 we called them miscellaneous publications; now they are described as miscellaneous leaflets and posters. Yet we are not using this Ministry for what it is intended because as far as we can see it is being used to peddle P.N.C. propaganda. This Ministry should be used to further the development of the nation that we talk about so much. In Guyana there is no television as in most of the countries of the world including some of the developing countries. I know there are pros and cons. I do not intend to deal with that now but one aspect of it is well know and that is the educational field whereby the children can be taught by seeing.

We cannot afford television but our Ministry of Information, instead of everlastingly publicizing party propaganda, should have some publications dealing with the necessities of Guyana. For example, a very worthy campaign which will start shortly for the compulsory immunization of our school children. A terrific amount of education, of information and of publicizing has to be put across to the nation to make this campaign the success that it should be if it is going to have the results desired. That is the sort of thing that the Ministry of Information and Culture should be publicizing.

We also need to promote the use of local foodstuffs. Items of food are banned. We are not going into the pros and cons of that. The fact remains that we have our local foods and it is very pitiful but true that the people who need to save money; who can least afford to spend money, are the ones who suffer the most. The more educated person is able to cope and economise, whereas poor persons are suffering. This is the kind of work the Ministry of Information and Culture should be doing in their publicizing and publication programme, not publicizing and peddling party propaganda.

4.40 p.m.

Item 74, Staff. Technical and Development: The sum of \$36,000 was originally voted for this item. Then, \$101,400 was provided, and now, we are being asked for an additional \$5,400. The legend states:

“To provide for the employment of additional public relations personnel.”

Public Relations is a very important and necessary field, but I should like the hon. Minister to tell us whether public relations personnel are going out into the areas that we have been talking about that are being developed, and whether they are teaching the people how to use the facilities that are around them. Are they being used for that purpose or are they being used to peddle party propaganda? Apart from telling us that we are having the production of a booklet called **Guyana Today**. We should like to have from the hon. Minister some explanation as to what, how, and where public relations will take place and what form it will take?

The Chairman: After this Head is finished we will proceed with Ministry of Home Affairs and then Ministry of Agriculture. Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Minister of Information and Culture I should say that there are many with a jaundiced eye, who see propaganda as being synonymous with information. With your leave, Mr. Chairman, I should like to inform this House, and particularly the hon. Member who has just spoken, that information is a vital instrument for the development of any society, particularly so in this year of austerity, when this economy is operating under very stringent circumstances.

Indeed, because of the very stringency of the situation, it becomes imperative that there be documents, periodicals, publications, leaflets, and so on to stimulate greater production and so combat the question of lower production and enhance greater productivity.

If you will permit me, Mr. Chairman, I shall deal with two items which have been taken separately and which the hon. Member relates together conceptually. First, the item Publicising and Publishing. The legend here, albeit skeletal can be amply explained.

When the principal Supplementary Estimates were approved in this House, the voted provision took into account several publications but one publication in particular. That was the publication entitled **Forward**. The provision also took into account that that publication would have been pull-outs in the dailies. Because of the popularity, however, of the publication, because of the human interest that it attracted, because of the fact that it concentrated on rural development – I think for the first time in the history of the evolution of information in this country one is placing, and rightly so, emphasis on rural development – because of such facts and circumstances, this publication now enjoys national acclaim and the Ministry has been forced to double the number of copies. In fact, the number of copies went up from 30,000 to 60,000.

In addition to the normal pull-outs, it was necessary to get Forward as a separate publication to be distributed. I am certain that the hon. Member must have seen this publication and must have seen the arrangement of it.

This vote, also contemplates the publication of another very attractively produced and attractively presented booklet entitled **Guynews**. I do not know if the hon. Member has seen this booklet and also the booklet **News for Guyana**. **Guynews** is an overseas monthly publication and **News for Guyana** is a weekly overseas publication.

From time to time this vote also has capacity to accommodate many other publications that are necessary as a result of speeches made by Ministers. There is therefore abundant justification for the enhancement of this vote. I have merely given very scant treatment to this item because time does not permit a more ample elucidation of the reasons why this vote is so necessary and desirable.

On the question of the Public Relations Programme, here, too, the legend shows that the sum of \$96,000 now sought is to meet the cost of production of **Guyana Today** and other booklets, leaflets and posters. This journal **Guyana Today** is a quarterly journal.

I have with me today a copy of the booklet **Guyana Today**. As members can see, it is very colourfully set out and it provides in a very concise way the necessary information that is needed for Guyanese overseas to ensure that those Guyanese are *au fait* with the current, economic, social, educational trends etc., prevailing in the country. This is quarterly and because of the popularity of this publication it has now become necessary for the coverage to be doubled again. It is free and my hon. Friends who now enjoy the sumptuous comfort of the Office of the Opposition will, in due course, be in receipt of all of these publications, for their enlightenment and for the enrichment of their knowledge of Guyana, Guyanese economy and Guyana's policies.

I can commend to this House and commend to my hon. Friends a number of leaflets, but this is not the time for the ample information that the general debate on the Budget, which will be tabled in this House in a short while, will afford. I have one such **booklet Patterns of Progress**. The word "Patterns" is used advisedly because although this particular booklet deals with rice, there will be many other booklets dealing with other subjects of interest, like corn, bauxite and other sectors of the economy.

There is, therefore, some reason for the enlargement of this vote and also, because of the popularity of these publications, for the coverage to be doubled for both of these publications.

On the question of the technical and professional staff, it follows that with an enlarged productive effort on the part of this nation resulting in a miscellany of projects scattered throughout the length and breadth of this country, proper information coverage must be given to these projects; *a fortiori*.

[Mr. Ramsaroop contd.]

4.50 p.m.

Staff must be deployed to cover those projects, hence today we have information divisions in many parts of this country that were hitherto absent in those parts. Therefore the last comment by the hon. Member Mrs. Eleanor DaSilva, which relates to this item, finds justification in the enlargement of personnel necessary to cover the national programme that is now in train, which, in itself, is an expression of the spontaneous reaction of the people of this country to promote growth and development.

The Chairman: Page 12, Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, page 13, up to item 92.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 12, items 80 and 83; on page 13, items 87 and 89. I start first with page 12, item 80, Prisoners' Rations. We voted \$28,000 for this year and now we come for a supplementary vote of \$10,000. The legend reads: "Voted provision inadequate due to general rise in prices of foodstuff, as well as an increase in the population." We are well aware of the rising cost of foodstuffs. Naturally, the food has to be bought for the prisoners, so they must have to pay an increased cost, but I should like to ask the hon. Minister if the sale of the produce from the farm, the greens or vegetables which they are producing on their farms, does not help to offset the rise in the price of food.

We then come on page 13, to item 89, Farms, and the supplementary provision of \$3,000 sought there is to provide for the increased cost of stockfeed. I want to know if the farms are not able yet to be self-sufficient, to provide enough food for the prisoners and, in addition, to provide enough food to be sold to other Government institutions. What is the position with the farms? In this way there would be no need to ask for an additional sum of \$10,000 for Prisoners' Rations.

The legend to item 80 also states: “as well as an increase in the population.” There has been talk for some time of resiting the Government Prisons taking it from 12 Camp Street to some where at Chateau Margot. Would the hon. Minister care to say what is the position there? It is quite unsatisfactory having a prison in the centre of the city as it is now. Maybe it was all right years ago but now it is not an ideal spot for a prison. With an increase in the prison population, as it states here in the legend, one wonders if it is overcrowded or if the conditions are satisfactory. Prisoners must be dealt with firmly, they must be disciplined. That is the whole point behind it but there must be humanity, there must be justice, and one wonders what the conditions at the prisons are like now regarding this aspect.

Item 83 deals with the question of passports which comes up year after year. I want to remark that we were asked for \$25,000 this year, and \$30,740 is the provision now sought. But I am rather amused by the legend. In very many of the legends, we see: “to meet unanticipated costs”, but this one is rather unusual. This is meeting an anticipated cost because it states: “To provide for the advance printing of 1975 passports in anticipation of a shortage in paper during 1975.” This is very new and unusual slant on the passport situation. Maybe I should congratulate those concerned because we cannot say: “You are buying so many extra passports, so many more people are leaving Guyana.” The Government is not saying it is securing the passports because so many people are leaving Guyana. It says it is asking for this money to be voted for the passports because it anticipates there is going to be a paper shortage.

I am pleased to see that some anticipation is done in the planning of the Estimates. This is the only item that refers to it because all the others, as we said, are guesstimates and we are always meeting unanticipated costs.

Now we come to page 13, item 87. This is a new subhead, Temporary Staff – Special Constables. We have been asked to vote \$175,226 to provide for the employment of special constables. The Minister of Home Affairs is one who always gives his very best and gives you an honest, adequate, and courteous reply, and I am sure I am going to get it from him.

I do not know where these special constables will be deployed, and the Minister himself may not know because of the various places they would have to go, but I would like to ask him, in view of the fact that we are having all these special constables, if they could not be put on the road to walk the ordinary beat, something that is vitally necessary in our country. Everybody is highly specialized, everybody has to have a high powered motor car with blue lights flashing and sirens blaring. But it is the ordinary policemen on the beat who is going to take care of the very terrible situation of choke and rob in Guyana.

I make no apology for bringing this up again. It almost seems as though we talk about choke and rob all the time but it is something like the blackmarketing campaign. Until something positive is done to curb it, it will continue. I will deal with the blackmarketing campaign later because, as the hon. Minister says, good results are being achieved.

As far as the police are concerned, it is the policeman on the beat who is the person to curb “choke and rob.” Very often one hears people saying: “Oh, the police are no good. What is the use bothering with the police? They never do anything anyhow.” I was very pleased to hear the other side of the story over the air recently where somebody related that in three separate incidents of choke and rob the police were on the spot and they were able to deal with young boys who are committing these choke and rob offences “because the policeman was on the spot”, that was the operative phrase. The policeman was there. It was no good telephoning Brickdam or Eve Leary to send a car, which would arrive five minutes later at the very earliest. The policeman was on the spot, and that is what we need. Many of them should be on beat duty. That would help at least to improve the choke and rob situation. Could the hon. Minister say if some of these special constables will be deployed on this task?

I dealt with the Farms at 89, when I was talking about the prisoners’ rations. I think the Minister will let us know what the position with the farms is and how they are producing. Are they producing enough to feed the prison population, and, I hope, to sell the other Government institutions.

1.11.74
5 p.m.

National Assembly

5.00 – 5.10 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 77, page 12, Ministry of Home Affairs. This is the last time I am going to speak on this item, and I do so in a very sincere effort to have the Ministry of Home Affairs be more realistic in future. This item deals with Telephones. The voted provision was \$350,000. The provision now being sought is \$350,000. The legend is very interesting. It states “to meet additional telephone charges due to increased activity.”

We all know that we could not possibly accept that but let us look at the Estimates that we discussed. I have with me the note that I wrote at the time. This is on page 55 of the Estimates and it is subhead 5, Telephones. The 1974 Estimate was \$350,000. The 1973 revised Estimate was \$720,000 and my note was “In view of the 1973 revised amount, this amount really is unrealistic.” That is what I said at the time. I shall bring it up again when it comes before the House because if you have a 1973 revised estimate of \$720,000 and you put in \$350,000 in the 1974 Estimates, obviously it is unrealistic. This is, in fact, what has happened here. To say it is the result of increased activity is ridiculous. No one of us can possibly accept that.

Moving on to item 79, Lighting, I must compliment this Minister for making a provision here for \$12,750 to provide for increase in the cost of electricity. I note that other Ministries have not done that and I predict that they will come to this honourable House and will ask us for supplementary provisions to meet increased cost. I am pleased that this Ministry has done it now. What the others are waiting for I do not know.

Item 82, Medical Expenses: The sum of \$6,650 is asked for “To provide for unpaid accounts for 1973.” I wonder whether the hon. Minister can tell us to whom these accounts are due and whether they have been paid. Presumably they have not been paid because no money has been advanced from the Contingencies fund. Therefore, this 1973 account is still to be paid. Whom have we kept waiting so long for their money?

In respect of passports, I share the sentiments of my colleague in respect of the word ‘anticipation. What I do not agree with is the amount of time that persons have to wait before they can get a passport. I do wish the hon. Minister would look into that and see whether we can expedite the granting of passports to people after their applications have been found in order.

I turn now to item 87, Temporary Staff – Special Constables, on page 13. What intrigues me about this the word ‘temporary’. This is a new subhead. ‘Temporary’ means that they are here only for a short time and the legend says “To provide for the employment of special constables.” Now if they are temporary, presumably the subhead will go out of existence at some time or the other. Why are they temporary? Are they assigned to special duties of a temporary nature? If that is so, then could not the Police or the Army have been assigned to those duties? The Army certainly seem to have a lot of personnel who could be given some work to do. What are these special constables doing at the moment? Why is it necessary for them to be regarded as temporary?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo): Mr. Chairman, with respect to item 80, prisoners’ Rations, and the point raised by the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, I think she is a little confused, and that if she had looked carefully she would have noted that this head comes under ‘Police’ and not ‘Prisons’. In other words, these rations are really for prisoners in police custody. This is for people connected with the Police and not necessarily people connected with prisons. It means that this is just used to provide rations for people who are in custody.

I should say we are getting fairly substantial revenue from our farms but another bit of information which would be valuable to the hon. Member is that this income goes into the general revenue. It does not necessarily come to the prisons.

Item 82, Medical Expenses: Policemen are usually given free medical treatment. If they are stationed in areas where there are no Government hospitals we have to make some arrangements with the private hospitals we have to make some arrangements with the private hospitals. Most of this money goes to GUYBAU. The reason why it was unpaid in 1973 is that the accounts were submitted very late. This really goes to GUYBAU for the medical treatment of policemen who are stationed in that area.

On question of item number 83, Passports, the Crown Agents have advised us that we would need to place an order immediately for the printing of passports because they anticipate a world shortage of paper and it is expected that prices, as a result of the shortage, will go up. We thought that we should cash in on this information and try to beat the gun and get our passports ready before the price goes up.

Item 87, Temporary Staff – Special Constables: The hon. Member Mr. Singh enquired what is meant by ‘temporary’. Our special constables are not on the permanent staff. If they are not on the permanent staff they are called temporary employees. I would wish to state on this item that the security situation in the country at the moment demands the recruitment of special constables to do some special work. We thought we should not waste fully trained policemen and soldiers to do this work.

I would ask that hon. Members do not press for details as it is a security matter and to go into details would be giving information which I think is not necessary. Suffice it to say that these men will be used to do special duties on which I think we should not waste policemen and soldiers.

I think I have dealt with the question of Farms and so I do not have any other points to make.

The Chairman: Page 13, item 93, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, pages 14, 15 and 16 up to item 116 on page 17. After this we will do Ministry of Economic Development.

5.10 p.m.

Mr. M. F. Singh: You said, sir, that we would start with item 93 on page 13. I am wondering why item 93 is there at all. The Government is not asking for any sum of money.

The Chairman: Then you simply do not make any comment on it.

Mr. M.F. Singh: It is unnecessary reading, Sir.

I go on to page 15, item 103, Maintenance of District Office, Demonstration Station, Offices and Nurseries. The voted provision was \$60,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$20,000 – that is, one-third more and the legend states:

“To provide for maintenance works to be carried out to various buildings of the Ministry.”

Certainly if maintenance works are necessary, they must be carried out, but this sum is \$20,000, one-third of the vote. One would expect if the officers of the Ministry were doing their work they would have seen that it was necessary for maintenance works to be done to the extent of the supplementary provision now sought.

I merely ask that in future the officers responsible should try and get the whole amount rather than keep coming for supplementary provisions. Instead of asking for \$60,000 at the beginning of the year, they should have asked for \$80,000, because obviously maintenance works would not suddenly appear. It is a gradual process and it would have shown up at the

beginning of the year. The officers must have realised that maintenance works would have been necessary.

Item 104, Dairy Farming Expansion, Maintenance Expenses: The hon. Minister of Agriculture is going to have his baptism. Under this item, the voted provision was \$168,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$140,000. This is an increase of almost 100 per cent. The legend states:

“To meet additional expenditure due to the expansion of the Dairy Farming Programme and increased cost of stockfeed and other materials.”

We bear in mind that the hon. Minister has recently taken over this portfolio. In view of that fact, I would be quite happy to put my question in writing but knowing his capabilities, and aware of the fact that he has been associated with agriculture for almost all his life, I have every confidence that I will get the correct answers.

I merely wanted to know what this Dairy Farming Expansion Programme was. I assume that there must be some returns from it. Presumably, the money is paid into the General Revenue. If it is not paid into the General Revenue, will the hon. Minister tell us exactly where the returns go. If the money is paid into the General Revenue I should like to look it up and see what level of returns there is from this Dairy Farming Expansion Programme.

Similarly, item 105, Subsidy to Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation: The sum of \$150,000 is being sought in respect of a subsidy to the Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. Some time ago I visited the Guyana School of Agriculture and I did note that the students were engaged in growing a number of things. Again, I wonder where the financial returns from the produce go. If into the Government Revenue, then I would be very pleased to know, but it may well be that it goes to the Public Hospital, for example, by way of actual

foodstuffs and would be treated as a credit to the Guyana School of Agriculture or something like that. One would like to know, if it is possible, what method is being used.

Page 16, item 109, Subsidy on Poultry Feed. It is a new item and I am very happy to see it. Even though we were told about it before, we are seeing it in the Estimates for the first time. But, there have been complains about the lowering of standards in respect of poultry feed. There seems to be some complaint among farmers that the standard of this poultry feed has been lowered, that the nutrient content was not as it should be. I would urge the hon. Minister to give us the benefit of any investigation which may have been made in respect of the standard of poultry feed or to mount an investigation, if this has not already been done. Farmers are still complaining that the cost is high. We have these complaints but we have to bear in mind that there is a substantial subsidy on the poultry feed. Items 110, 111, 112 under Ministry of National Development and Agriculture – Lands, all deal with an increase in the number of surveys. I am very glad to see the Government is increasing the number of surveys and I should like to take this opportunity to ask the hon. Ministry if he could say when they surveys will be extended to include surveys in respect of Amerindian areas so that Amerindians can get their lands.

We have been told, time and again, that the shortage of surveyors resulting in the lack of personnel to do the necessary surveys is one of the reasons why the findings of the Amerindian Lands Commission, which have been accepted by the Government, cannot be implemented in so far as they relate to the handing over of their lands to Amerindians. I know that we have intensified our programme in respect of training surveyors. I am not sure that it is within the scope of the hon. Minister to answer but, it is and if he knows the answer, we should like to be told when these surveyors will move on to Amerindian areas to demarcate Amerindian lands.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask the hon. Minister a question on item 104, Dairy Farming Expansion Maintenance Expenses, which falls under Ministry of National Development and Agriculture – Agriculture. I have really used this head to ask for information about the Milk Pasteurisation Plant because we have been asked to vote \$140,000:

“To meet additional expenditure due to expansion of Dairy Farming Programme and increased cost of stockfeed and other materials.”

We have no fault to find with that, but we would like to know what is the position with the Milk Pasteurisation Plant. Why can we not obtain milk? For a long time we were receiving powdered milk, and now no milk at all is sold. The Milk Pasteurisation Plant, as far as I am aware, is producing orange juice. Why can we not get milk?

People are paying 54 cents in town and 56 cents in the rural areas for a large tin of evaporated milk. When it is diluted it does not even give two good points of milk.

5.20 p.m.

For a family with many children, this is very expensive and we really ought to be able to give our children fresh pure cow's milk that is fresh and pure. Has it got anything to do with the price given to our farmers for their milk? There is a good amount of milk to be had in the country areas if one lives there, but the milk just does not seem to reach the milk plant in Georgetown to be utilised for general distribution. Can the hon. Minister give us some information as to the actual situation that exists at the milk pasteurization plant?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kennard): Mr. Chairman, I shall deal specifically with the items raised across this Table. There was the en passant mention of item 93, personal Emoluments, where nothing was requested. Perhaps it was a reflection of the efficiency with which the Ministry has managed its financial affairs resulting in no request on that subhead.

Proceeding from there, the next time which attracted attention was item 103, which provides for maintenance works on various buildings. We did find during the course of this year

that it was necessary to maintain the large number of buildings which come under the management of the Ministry and we were confronted by the increased cost of building materials and the multiplicity of buildings to be repaired contributed to this request for additional funds to the extent of \$20,000.

With respect to dairy farming there has been a very serious effort to establish a real dairy-farming industry in Guyana. In the past, dairying has more or less been an adjunct to rice production, and cattle, which were not specifically dairy cattle, were milked and the milk marketed. We are in the process now of setting up specialized dairy farms. Two of the more important farms will be located – and work on these has already begun – at Mon Repos and Moblissa where very large acreages have been brought under cultivation with grass, and where we have over 800 head of high-priced pedigree dairy cattle, Holstein cattle, imported from overseas. The cost of this major input and of rearing these animals, to establish what we hope will be a thriving dairy industry, is reflected under this subhead by this supplementary request in the sum of \$140,000.

Added to this, it is well known that the price of stock feed has gone up and, as is apparent here, stockfeed for dairy cattle is not subsidized. Attention was drawn to the subsidy which it was necessary to impose on poultry feed, for which we have been congratulated, but we have not extended that subsidy to dairy feed. Hence, the price has been passed on and this is reflected in the additional provision which is now being sought.

Not only will we gain from this industry in terms of the output of milk – and these cattle that have been brought in are of breeding age; they are yet to produce milk – but we will benefit when they do produce milk in terms of revenue from the milk, from the value of the increases in population, the young animals that will be produced from the dams brought in from overseas. Therefore, this expenditure is very largely recoverable in the enhanced value of the increased population resulting from this initial importation as well as from the value of milk to be produced.

The pasteurization plant has been dependent for a number of years on what I described earlier as the cattle industry, which is an adjunct to the rice industry. In times when farmers are pre-occupied with rice production, there is very little milk on the market. When they are harvesting their crops, there is a negligible quantity of milk on the market. It is only when attention is not being focused on the cultivation of rice that many farmers find the time to care their cattle, to extract the milk, and to market that milk through the pasteurization plant.

The situation has become serious during this year because of the very considerable expansion of the rice industry. So much attention was paid to rice rather than to cattle, which is a complementary enterprise, that very little milk reached the pasteurization plant, rendering production uneconomic. It was not viable to operate the plant on the negligible volume of milk that was coming in. In order to keep the plant going, we have had to supplement production by using milk powder. The plant has been producing orange juice, as was mentioned by the hon. Member. This is one of the basic reasons for starting a proper dairy industry as shown in the previous subhead. The industry is to be expanded.

We are going encouragement to small farmers and have had a number of meetings with small farmers along the coast. There has been dialogue with respect to price, cost of production, the marketing system, the distribution system, and it is hoped, very soon indeed, to reactivate the plant on the basis of revised prices to producers and on the basis of better distribution to consumers. Once again, we should see the milk plant rolling but its sustained production will depend very largely on the fundamental work we are doing with setting up specialized dairies with high-yielding cattle in these various areas starting at Moblissa and Mon Repos.

The next item which attracted attention occurs on page 16.

The Chairman: I think, hon. Minister, item 105 on page 15.

Mr. Kennard: Subsidy to Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. The school is maintained largely from the subsidy provided by this Parliament. During this year the school, like other institutions, was faced, and continues to be faced, with the escalation of costs arising mainly from the importation of inflation, importation of materials and consumables, fuel, feeding stuff, fertilizers, and so on. These increases are included in the additional provision which we have requested.

At the same time, because of the great interest in the agricultural programme throughout the nation we have had tremendous demand from young people for training. We have been able to accommodate an increased number of students in the school. Indeed, next year, we shall be asking for a substantial provision to accommodate an even larger number of students. These costs are reflected in the additional provision which is being requested: the increased cost of maintaining students, the increased cost of the activities of the school. In terms of the recovery of this expenditure: part of the production from the poultry unit, the pig unit, and the farms generally, part of that production is utilised in feeding the students; the remainder is sold largely through the Guyana Marketing Corporation to consumers. So that there is money to be recovered under this provision.

5.30 p.m.

If we may turn to page 16, the question with respect to the subsidy on poultry feed needs no comment from me except to say that this subsidy reflects the Government's earnest in stabilising prices of the end product, the poultry meat, to the consumer and preventing the passing on to the consumer of the high feed costs created largely by the continued importation of protein concentrates which constitute essential ingredients in the compounding of these balanced rations.

We are engaged in a vigorous programme in the Ministry promoting the development of our own soya bean industry and our own corn industry in addition to the processing of residue from the fish industry and from the slaughtering of cattle to produce high protein feed in order to

replace imports and to provide balanced, nutritious feed at reasonable cost and perhaps eventually, because of such reasonable cost, to reduce or eliminate the need for a subsidy.

With respect to the observations on the quality of locally compounded feeding stuff, it seems to me that, having regard to investigations that we have made – and this is one reason which propel us to be totally independent of foreign feed – we have found that the quality of imported concentrates, which are mixed with local ingredients such as rice or corn or rice bran, has tended to be quite poor in recent times. Perhaps that poor quality of the imported element in the feed has caused a lowering of the standards.

The Ministry was very quick to begin monitoring the quality of feed and we have established within the Ministry, through a recently created division of nutrition and food technology, the standards, the quality of feed produced not only by the private feed compounders but also by the para-statal compounder, the Guyana Rice Board. I wish, therefore, to assure my hon. Friend that that early difficulty has now been solved and that the industry can be assured of feed of the highest quality which is constantly checked by the specialists.

On items 110, 111 and 112 I may say that we are expediting surveys for, as we all know, it is very urgent and very important to have comprehensive surveys of land to enable title to land to be given to all the inhabitants of Guyana and also to enable them, by the possession of such title, to have access to loans from various commercial or governmental lending agencies.

There is a most comprehensive programme at the moment with respect to the Amerindian areas which are very extensive and very isolated. That programme includes aerial photography, aerial topographic surveys. To be accurate is a *sine qua non* for efficient and effective surveys. The speed at which we are proceeding with this matter, particularly in the interior areas, depends sometimes on the availability of the necessary aircraft and the sophisticated instruments for the expediting of the surveys. As I have indicated generally, the whole question of surveys is being

seriously and assiduously tackled so as to provide sound legal titles for their own purposes and for the development of agriculture and of the natural resources generally.

I believe that these were the significant items to which attention was directed by my friends on the other side and it is my hope that the answers provided will serve to enlighten and will prove to be adequate.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Agriculture, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your, if I may use the term of the Leader of the Opposition, “baptism.” You have indeed come out excellently. Congratulations. [Applause]

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, may I also endorse what you have said.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates pages 1 and 2, items 3 to 12 inclusive, Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I should like to deal with item 7, Food Development and Nutrition Unit. The hon. Minister made mention of this just now. I think he said it is a Unit for checking on the stockfeed and poultry feed. An additional provision of \$204,439 is being sought. The legend states: “to provide for the investigation of food processing methods.”

I heartily endorse this but what I should like to see is a proper Bureau of Standards established. Year after year we keep harping on this. I recollect that shortly after the last elections in 1965, the hon. Prime Minister promised that a Bureau of Standards would in fact be set up. Year after year we talk about it and we seem to be taking a long time to get to this.

This is a start in the right direction and I would urge that the hon. Minister use his good offices to try and push for the establishment of a proper Bureau of Standards rather than handling this matter piecemeal.

Item 10, Cassava Production Programme. This is again a new item. The provision being sought for this new item is \$1,522,500. The legend is “to provide for the implementation of a programme for the production of cassava.”

5.40 p.m.

For some time now we have been hearing about the use of cassava as a flocculent in the bauxite industry. This is very good indeed.

What we would like to hear from the hon. Minister is how this huge amount of money is to be spent. I note here that it is not stated that any of this money has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund or anything like that. So that, presumably, the money will be spent between now and the end of the year.

I assume that there is a programme, a set method and plan whereby the money would be spent. How are small farmers going to be encouraged in this? Is some of this money going to be channeled to small farmers? Surely, some of it must be channeled to small farmers. Will loans be given to them? What help will be given to them in respect of the land to be cultivated? I think the nation would like to know how, in fact, this \$1½ million is going to be spent,. Earmarked as it is for casaba production. Item 13 - -

The Chairman: item 13 has already been finished.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I did not realise that item 13 had been completed or else I would have pointed out that it is a pity that hydro power should be used an election project. The subhead states: Upper Mazaruni Hydro Power “Election” Project instead of “Erection” project. We have heard of many things being used in respect of elections but I did not know that the Government had extended it to hydro power.

The Chairman: We are dealing with items 8 to 12. Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Kennard: Mr. Chairman, first of all, may I thank you and the hon. Leader of the Opposition for your very kind remarks and the charity with which you, and in particular the Leader of the Opposition, received my first appearance here this afternoon. Thank you very much, sir.

Referring to the specific item, item 7, the Food Development and Nutrition Unit and the need for a Bureau of Standards, the need for a Bureau of Standards has long been discussed and I share the anxiety of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and think that it is about time that the discussions should cease and that the ideas should be brought to fruition.

Indeed, with that object in mind, we, very recently, sent the head of this Food and Nutrition Unit and the government analyst, the representative of the Ministry of Health – that Ministry is very vital to the whole question of standards as it protects the health of the community – to a meeting held in Jamaica to consider the question of standards generally and to determine how the member countries of CARICOM might proceed in setting up and developing their own standards organisations.

As a result of that conference and having regard to a report just received from the two delegates, proposals have been made for the setting up of a Bureau of Standards not on an elaborate basis but to get it off the ground by using the facilities and the manpower resources, the technical resources which now exist and I expect that perhaps very soon and perhaps more specifically in the 1975 draft Estimates, an item of expenditure will be recorded for the setting up at last of this much-desired Bureau of Standards.

On the question of cassava production, item 10, the Ministry is making a very serious attempt to replace some of the very high imports of wheaten flour. The main nutritional

ingredient of wheaten flour is carbohydrate, starch, and we feel that we could at least replace some of these imports by producing starch from another plant material. In this case we selected the cassava plant. The idea is to blend or to mix the cassava flour with wheaten flour, cognizant of maintaining the nutritional level but cognizant also of the need to reduce the outflow of foreign exchange for the purchase of a carbohydrate material that can be produced here in Guyana. Our target is to replace at least 30 per cent of the importation of wheaten flour through the production of cassava flour in Guyana for admixture with wheaten flour.

It might be necessary to add to that mixture some supplements, for example, soya bean flour to augment the protein content and this is one reason too for our soya bean programme so that we can give the consumer a Guyanese flour comprising cassava flour, wheaten flour and perhaps a certain percentage of soya flour as well.

In this regard, we are working very closely with the local flour mill and experiments are also being conducted in the United Kingdom at nutritional laboratories to test, not only the nutritional value of this new product, but also to determine its cooking, its keeping and other qualities which are so relevant to getting the product accepted by consumers, that is, by housewives in the main.

The importation of wheaten flour is very large indeed and hence to replace even 30 per cent of it one requires a very substantial production of cassava in Guyana. We are targeting a production of about 6,000 acres of cassava which is truly large-scale production and not small-scale production. The dimensions of this production are reflected in the supplementary provision which we are seeking.

Now, how will we use this sum of \$1.5 million? In the first place, more than half of this amount – some \$800,000 of the supplementary provision – will be used for the purpose of loans to farmers to get into cassava production. At the moment we are dispensing loans from the Ministry direct to farmers in the producing areas, notably the North West District, the Pomeroon

area and other areas of well-known cassava potential. We give \$150 per acre. In addition to this, we are giving free planting materials to the farmers. The cost of that free acquisition and distribution of planting materials is included in the provision. The other half of this fund, namely \$750,000, will be used to purchase three large cassava-flour factories to be located in these main areas of production, the North West District, the Pomeroon and the East Bank of the Essequibo River near Parika.

Those are large, modern, efficient flour mills, similar types being already in use in places like Nigeria and Gambia. We are inspecting those installations in Africa as well as consulting with the manufacturers to ensure that the factories are adaptable and suitable and of the very high efficiency which are demanding in Guyana.

5.50 p.m.

Factories involve mechanical peeling of the roots, washing their disintegration, mechanical drying, mechanical pulverization, automatic bagging equipment. It is a very sophisticated type of factory which we shall be installing to truly develop the potential of our cassava industry.

The Chairman: We will now deal with the Ministry of Economic Development and thereafter the Ministry of Trade. Page 17, item 117. Page 18, items 121 to 128 inclusive. Capital Estimates, page 3, item 16. Page 4. Page 5, items 17 and 18.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Page 3, item 16, Industrial Development. The provision voted was \$18,900,000 and as if this was not enough, we are now being asked for \$2,550,000. To provide for what? One of the things listed here is the acquisition of the Guyana Graphic Ltd. for \$553,000.

I can but I will not at this stage indulge in any dissertation on press freedom in Guyana. We all know to what a low ebb it has sunk in Guyana within recent times but what I should like to know is this: is it not a fact that the Government consistently and purposely set out to acquire the Guyana Graphic Ltd? Is it not a fact that with a view to suppressing criticism and owning the media, Government made life such hell, as we say in Guyanese parlance, for this company that it was forced to sell out? Is it not a fact that the government engineered the dispensing of the services by the **Graphic** of both Ulric Mentus, the Editor of the **Sunday Graphic**, and Rickey Singh, the forceful reporter of the **Graphic** newspaper?

Why should the Guyana Government have gone to such lengths to take over a company, a company that one would have expected would have been allowed to survive in order to champion the cause of democracy, to champion the freedom of expression, to champion what the United Nations in its Charter has set out so very clearly and vividly, what the United Force also in its constitution, has set out: Freedom of the individual, freedom of expression? What is the Government doing here?

The Government owns the **Chronicle**. Not satisfied with that, it owns also one of the radio stations. It has muzzled the other radio station. Not satisfied with all of this, it has now moved and it has acquired the Guyana Graphic Ltd. by a process of having forced it to sell out. Should this not be a matter of shame for all Guyanese that we have sunk to such a low level?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Economic Development.

The Minister of Economic Development (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman the hon. Leader of the Opposition is certainly indebted to him imagination for his “facts”; certainly, too, to a lack of confidence in himself and his party, for the fears which he has expressed about press freedom.

The fact of the matter is that at a time when the Thomson group were bent on closing down their newspaper business in this country and when that group could not obtain any other

purchaser, Government intervened to save the jobs of those people who are employed at Guyana Graphic Ltd. For that act by the Government, instead of congratulations coming from the hon. Member, he seeks to indulge in fantasy and baseless criticism.

Government has no apologies to make for saving the jobs of hundreds of Guyanese employees and making sure that we get on with the business of developing this country. I do not think that at this time one needs to refute any further the baseless allegations which have been made from time to time and which the hon. Member deems it necessary to repeat in this honourable House today, about two journalists who are happily enjoying themselves, I suppose, outside of the boundaries of Guyana.

The Chairman: After the Ministry of Trade we will do the Ministry of Works. Ministry of Trade page 35, items 228, 229, page 36, items 230 to 235 inclusive.

6 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 36 item 230, Ministry of Trade, subhead 3, Miscellaneous. The voted provision was \$4,000 and the supplementary provision now being sought is almost as much as was originally voted, that is, \$3,939. The legend states: “to provide for the increase in charwomen’s wages and additional expenses due to the expansion of the Licensing Division.” I merely would like to ask if the hon. Minister could tell us how much of this money being sought is in respect of an increase in charwomen’s wages and how much is in respect of the expansion of the Licensing Division so that we can get an idea of how this Division has been expanding.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman item 235 on page 36, subhead 15, Licensing Division Salaries. The supplementary provision now sought is \$9,530 “to provide for payment of salaries to additional staff.” I wonder if this additional staff for the Licensing Division has anything to do with the stepping up of the activities in the blackmarketing campaign and if the hon. Minister

would care to use this opportunity to tell the House what progress has been made in the efforts to curb blackmarketing.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Trade.

The Minister of Trade (Mr. King): Mr. Chairman, may I refer first of all to item 230 and point out to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the governing word there is “due”. The legend states “To provide for the increase in charwomen’s wages and additional expenses due to the expansion of the Licensing Division.”

It is the full knowledge of this House that earlier this year it was found necessary to expand our Licensing Division not only in terms of staff but with the resultant accommodation necessary to house those members of staff. In doing so it was necessary to employ further help for the basic needs of cleaning and so on.

Item 235, Licensing Division Salaries: This is a direct result of an increase in numbers. I recall that the hon. Leader of the Opposition expressed much concern, when this system was introduced earlier this year, over the fact that there could be delays in the processing of applications and in order to avoid the delays which he so very much feared, we increased our staff to what we considered the appropriate level of efficiency. I am happy to tell this House that those applications are being processed quite normally and expeditiously and the only ones which appear to be delayed are those which cover commodities, the importation of which is not in the interest of the country.

Referring to the question raised by the hon. Member Mrs. Elinor DaSilva with regard to blackmarketing, we have, as this honourable House is aware, taken certain steps in keeping with the Government’s policy to stabilize and to keep the cost of living down to the lowest possible level, having regard to the inflation which is external in scope. As a result of this, we have had occasional periods of scarcity and while there are some distributors, while there are some

retailers, who are co-operating with Government in its efforts, there are, regrettably, some who are insistent to defeat Government's objectives and continue to hoard and blackmarket.

I believe that the expansion of the Licensing Division and the additional employment of control officers have contributed considerably to the curbing, and one hopes eventual obliteration, of blackmarketing in our society to the benefit of the consumers. The results which we are getting from our campaign are encouraging. I should like to assure this House that this campaign is not one of short duration. It shall be sustained, it shall be continued until we reach the level where we are satisfied that there is only a minimum or no blackmarketing at all.

The Government is quite prepared to co-operate, to listen to the complaints or grievance submitted by retailers, wholesalers or any other persons involved in the distributive trade. We are now carrying out an exercise on certain bulk items the cost of distribution having risen because of the high transportation cost and high fuel bill when compared with the bulk and also the value of those commodities. We hope shortly to revise the prices of one or two items, not to pass on to the consumer but probably to be absorbed within the subsidy. However, we deplore any retailer or any wholesaler who seeks to blackmarket or to take advantage of our citizens.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, may I also draw to the attention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, that item 235 which seeks an increase in the number of staff, is also, as the hon. Leader is aware, a revenue earner in some ways.

The Chairman: After the Ministry of Works we will do the Ministry of Education. Page 18, item 129; pages 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 up to item 163.

Mr. M.F. Singh: page 19, item 133, Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications) – Post Office – Personal Emoluments. The sum of \$30,000 is being asked for as Supplementary Provision. (B) in the legend states “for the payment of Local Allowances to Postal Apprentices, Rural Postal Assistants and Town Postmen for 1972.” Presumably, there is a

story behind this since it dates back to 1972. I should like the hon. Minister to enlighten us about this because it seems a long time for these people to have waited for what seems to be allowances which were due to them.

6.10 p.m.

Page 20, item 136, Uniforms: The voted provision was \$48,000; supplementary provision now sought is \$42,000. The legend states:

“Voted provision inadequate due to increased prices.”

I may be wrong, but I would have thought that the system was that at the beginning of the year tenders were invited for the supply of these uniforms. It seems rather strange that the estimate in respect of the uniforms could have been so unrealistic that it now requires almost a hundred per cent increase over and above what was originally asked for. The reason is not “increase in the amount of uniforms”. The legend specifically states: “increased prices.” Perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us what the system is.

Page 21, item 143, Maintenance of Timehri Airport: I am using this head to register my disapproval and indeed the annoyance and disapproval of many of our citizens and many visitors to this country in respect of the services being given by the Airport Restaurant. It is what some people have termed “a disgrace”.

The Airport Restaurant is never properly stocked with the items that it should have. The service is lousy, the place is never particularly clean and, indeed, the whole running of that Airport Restaurant leaves very much to be desired. I really would invite the hon. Minister to try and do something about it. Of course, it must be borne in mind that one has to pay 50 cents before one has the dubious pleasure of entering that place.

Page 22, item 146, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works) – Establishment, subhead 13, Maintenance and Operation of Electrical Plants and Radio Equipment. The voted provision was \$214,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$162,000 and the legend states:

“To provide for increases in the cost of fuel and spares as well as additional wages.”

Wages are involved here in addition to fuel and spares, but what struck me forcibly was that there was no note that any amount had been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. One would expect, therefore, that the whole amount of \$162,000 would in fact be required between now and the end of this year. Since nothing has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund, is this amount of \$162,000 really going to be spent between now and the end of the year? We just wondered about that and we wonder whether the hon. Minister will tell us whether in fact he has received something from the Contingencies Fund to meet at least additional wages which are required.

Item 153, Head 39, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works) – Annually Recurrent, subhead 1 – Maintenance of Public buildings: The sum of \$2 million was originally voted; supplementary provision now sought is \$500,000 and the legend states:

“To provide for increases in the cost of fuel and building materials.”

No one can gainsay the fact that the cost of fuel and building materials has gone up substantially.

I am craving your indulgence, sir, to use this head to say how glad I am to see that tools for building and some building materials have in fact been placed under price control and I congratulate the hon. Minister of Trade for his very laudable action in this respect. I would like also to invite his attention to the control of building materials such as lumber. I think at least one of the daily newspapers advocated this within recent times and I think the time has come to

control not only building materials coming into the country, but also building materials being produced and put on the market in the country.

The price of building materials has gone up. The sum of \$500,000 is additionally required here, partly in respect of building materials. As I said, sir, I am craving your indulgence. These remarks are not particularly for the hon. Minister of Works and Housing but I invite the consideration of the hon. Minister of Trade.

Moving on to page 23, item 158, subhead 23, Freight and handling charges. I notice the voted provision was \$30,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$30,000 so that the increase is 100 per cent. The legend states:

“To provide for increased freight charges due to establishment of a branch of the Central Stores at Lethem.”

This is a lot of money to be attributed only to the establishment of the Central Stores at Lethem. Indeed, it does appear to be a very significant sum and perhaps not in keeping with the reason given in the legend. Is the hon. Minister really satisfied that this \$30,000 is needed only for freight charges in respect of this Central Store at Lethem?

Perhaps the hon. Minister would take this opportunity to tell us something about the establishment of its Central Store at Lethem and the ways whereby there would be savings as a result of the establishment of this Store. There is an additional expenditure of \$30,000. There must be savings somewhere along the line.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Housing.

The Minister of Works and Housing (Mr. Naraine): Mr. Chairman, the question on item 133 was in relation to the allowances to postal apprentices, rural postal assistants and town

postmen for 1972. These allowances were discontinued and representations were made for them to be kept up to the end of 1972. Very long discussions took place and finally it was decided that, instead of earlier, the cut-off time would be the end of 1972. Therefore, some additional provision had to be made to pay these postal apprentices, postal assistants and town postmen for the period of time they were not paid their allowances.

Item 136, Uniforms: I should like to assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that in fact tenders were received for these items, and were responsible for the cost shown here, that is, \$90,000. I regret that I am not in a position to say whether in fact there were also increased numbers of uniforms but I would suspect that that was part of the reason.

6.20 p.m.

Item 143, Maintenance of Timehri Airport: The remarks made by the hon. Member are noted. I myself am not too happy with everything that is going on there. The position is that we had to vote additional money to try and improve standard and if there are still shortcomings, we will have of course, to try and remedy them. I have heard complaints from time to time and I will have to look into these. I am not in a position to give any definitive answers on what will be done to improve conditions. We will look into the matter.

Item 146, Maintenance and Operation of Electrical Plants and Radio Equipment. The additional amount requested is required for the reason stated in the legend but maybe I should elaborate on this. More money is needed because of increased cost, and additional activity, which resulted in higher consumption of fuel, spares, and additional wages. These activities were in relation to Lethem, Mabaruma, Leguan and Mazaruni where, in fact, we were carrying a 12-hour service. This was extended to a 24-hour service and, therefore, the additional money was required.

I should like to point out that this sum is not for the remaining two months of the year. These things started a few months ago and we have probably been charging expenditure

temporarily to some other vote; it will now be transferred. I am not sure whether the Contingencies Fund was used.

In relation to item 153, Maintenance of Public Buildings, the question of price control will be extended to other types of material, and lumber has been mentioned because there has been a significant increase in the price of lumber over the past year or so. Before we can make any sensible price control on lumber, it will be essential, first of all, to introduce a system of grading lumber so that lumber can be priced in accordance with the various grades. The lumber will have to be stamped and inspected so that the customer will be protected. We control the grades of export lumber and we will have to extend this facility to local consumption. It is the only way in which the consumer can be protected, because dealers may sell them inferior quality lumber at a controlled price when that price was really intended for a better quality of lumber.

Item 158, Freight and Handling Charges. It has become necessary to establish a central store at Lethem because of increased activity in terms of the expansion of the cattle industry, in terms of public works activity on the roads and on the bridge that will be constructed across the Ireng River very shortly, and general building and other activities taking place.

Sir, as you know, these materials have to be air-freighted from Georgetown and air freight is not cheap. This amount of \$30,000 was, therefore, not considered too much for this purpose. It is anticipated that, in due course, this store will be run as a branch of the central store in Georgetown and it will hold material so that all Ministries and departments operating in this area will be able to draw stores from this sub-store. It will have adequate stocks so that the delays, that are presently experienced in having to purchase from Georgetown and having to wait for the material to get up there, will be reduced by a considerable extent. We feel that economies will be established by doing this and delays will be reduced. This will result in greater economy.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9 (2)

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, I crave the leave of this House to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 9 (2) to enable us to finish the Financial Paper, which is currently being considered and also for us to conclude the Motion which stands in my name.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Standing Order No. 9 (2) suspended.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/1974

The Chairman: Page 5, Ministry of Works and Housing, items 19 to 22. Page 6, items 23 to 27. Page 7, item 34.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to speak on item 21 on pages 5 and on item 24, page 6. Item 21, Corentyne Roads. In addition to the \$100,000 voted at the end of last year in the Estimates for this year, we are being asked to vote \$70,390 to provide for the construction of three toll stations at Lewis Manor, Adventure and Benab. We once again want to state quite emphatically that we are against the establishment of toll gates on the Corentyne Road and now we are being asked to take another \$70,390 of the taxpayers' money to establish these toll gates.

We appreciate the fact that roads are being built, that they are very expensive items, and that they have to be paid for, but when an existing road like the Corentyne road is re-surfaced, it is quite wrong to impose a toll on that road. People live there, they go up and down this road. We are totally against it. It was not done on the East Coast road. Why should it be done on the Corentyne Road?

One notes that the toll gates were completely played down throughout the election period. One did not hear what would happen with the toll gates; everything was at a standstill. Now elections are over and up comes the matter of the toll gates again.

We want to register our disapproval quite forcibly. It is quite wrong and unjust to have toll gates on a road that has been in existence and which is used by people all the time. The residents have no alternative means of communication between one end, Skeldon, Crabwood Creel, down to New Amsterdam.

“How are we going to pay for it?” The hon. Minister asks. In the same way that we paid for the East Coast road. The State has an obligation to provide a road for its citizens to use. When the Government provided a new road, as it did in the case of the Linden Highway, it made it a toll road. That is fair, nobody objected to that, but in the case of the Corentyne Road, it is absolutely wrong.

6.30 p.m.

Now to go on to item 24 on page 6. This is the memorial to the late Sir David Rose. Voted provision is \$50,000 and additional provision now sought is \$28,000. I am not bringing this matter up to speak against a memorial to the late Sir David Rose. We all know the position held by Sir David Rose as the first Governor-General of our country and we have no fault to find with this.

I want to use this opportunity to draw to the attention of the House, the Ministers and those concerned that from time to time this matter of a memorial to a worth son, or maybe a daughter, of Guyana, will come up when a memorial will indeed be erected again or be thought of. As I said, before I find no fault in the fact that this memorial is being erected to the late Sir David Rose. We will be pleased to see it completed. I am talking, however, for the future.

Times get harder, the cost of living rises all the time. The Minister's favourite whipping dog is the fuel crisis, which will forever go on; we know how hard conditions are in our country. So nowadays it is necessary for us to be practical, factual and realistic and face the facts of life as they exist in Guyana. May I urge those concerned, in future when it comes to memorials, not to let us build memorials in stone, monuments and buildings but let us build memorials in something that will be perpetuated and carried on in the name of the person.

I think the best way to do it for the nation would be in the form of scholarships to aid those children who cannot afford schooling. There are children who are intelligent, who have the necessary qualifications, who are intelligent, who have the necessary qualifications, who are capable but because of the financial position of their parents they cannot afford the necessary education to enable them to complete their studies. I would urge that memorials in the future take the form of scholarship awards to such children. I feel sure recipients of these memorials would be very pleased to have their names perpetuated in that manner.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that it is appropriate for us to go into a debate for or against tolls. I believe that the pros and cons of this were adequately aired in this House when the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, the first toll road, was constructed. I think on that occasion it was made very clear to this House that, whenever a road is brought to a level of a highway standard, the Government will introduce a toll in order that part of the expenses, part of the loans which have been taken for construction of these roads, can be repaid out of the tolls.

The East Coast road has not been reconstructed to highway standard. As this honourable House knows, a loan was obtained for the improvement of certain roads in Greater Georgetown, and up to Buxton to a four-lane highway and beyond that general improvement of the road to highway standard, but this work has only just started.

With regard to the argument that no alternative route is available, it may be that the Government should introduce other measures in order to maintain the throughways of a highway. If we were to do this, we would find that in every village where the road is used for direct access to house lots, changes will have to be made so that parallel to the highway there will be access roads to serve the village communities. This may have to be done in time.

If this were done, we would find that the East Coast road, the Corentyne road, the West Demerara road and all such roads would be brought up, not only in physical or technical standards to the quality of a highway, but would also have the physical appearance of a throughway and we would not have so many accidents on the main roads.

In substance large sums of money have been spent on these roads to bring them close to the level of a highway. In accordance with the general policies of this Government tolls will be charged.

The additional sum required, although it was not mentioned here, is for additional security, lighting and fencing because of the unhappy experience which we had at one of the toll ages on the Corentyne. Additional security will have to put there, additional generators, lighting and fencing.

Item 24, Memorial to the late sir David Rose: the position is that the Opposition has to oppose. If we had come here with scholarships they would have said that the Government is spending a considerable amount of money giving scholarships. We grant scholarships at all levels; millions of dollars are spent in giving scholarships overseas and locally. Therefore, if we had said that we were going to give five scholarships they would have said “You are giving sufficient scholarships and you are going to give them to your own people.” They would have then argued in favour of a memorial – something that would have lasting value for generations. Now that we have decided on a memorial they are arguing for scholarships. They will come

another time and talk of something else because the hon. Member was not against what we are doing, but feels committed to oppose.

We feel that this is a small token to show the appreciation of the people of this country, and also the people of the Caribbean, to a person in the late Sir David rose, a man who has given tremendous service not only to Guyana but to the Caribbean. We wish to have something tangible so that our people and our Caribbean brothers, the people with whom he had made friends and whom he served, will be able to come and see this memorial. It will be there also as a reminder to other people that, if they do as well as this hero of Guyana, if they are as dedicated as he was to the cause of people and humanity, they also can find a permanent place in our land. Therefore, we feel that this is justified and we have no apology to make for it.

6.40 p.m.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, before you move on, I should just like to make a point of clarification. My colleague was not against this memorial at all. What she was saying was that in future we should think of scholarships.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, the remarks the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva made have been noted. I, myself, heard that she said she was not against a memorial.

After Ministry of Education we will proceed to the Ministry of Health. On page 24, item 164, pages 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 up to item 190 and then item 262 on page 40, and page 41. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Under Ministry of Education, at item 171, on page 24 there is a new subhead “University course for Teachers of the Deaf.” The sum to be voted is \$4,988 and the legend states:

“To provide for contribution to the University Course for Teachers of the Deaf.”

We are very pleased to see that the Ministry of Education is providing teachers for the deaf because they are very sadly needed.

I was speaking, not so very long ago, to Mrs. Matthews of the Red Cross Society and learnt that the Ministry of Education assists in meeting the salaries of the teachers of the deaf at the Handicapped Home, but there is a great shortage of these people so that the government needs to have teachers trained.

I am wondering, as this is a new subhead, whether the hon. Minister would take a little time to explain exactly what she has in mind. Where will this University course be done? Will it be done here, at U.W.I. or where?

One page 26, Ministry of Education – Primary, Multilateral and Secondary Schools, item 175 is another new subhead, “Purchase of exercise books for free distribution to school children.” This purchase of exercise books for free distribution to school children, was one of the new items announced by the hon. Prime Minister along with the increase in the old age pensions and the subsidy on poultry feed. The legend states:

“To provide for the purchase and free distribution of exercise books to school children for the Christmas term 1974 and Easter term 1975 ...”

[Hon. Member: “What’s wrong with that?”] There is nothing wrong with it. We are very pleased that school children will have free exercise books but I should like to ask the hon. Minister if she could tell us how the distribution is going, if all the schools are receiving these free exercise books. I know of one particular school with 700 children which received 1,400 books – two books per child. Can the Ministry supply the schools adequately with the books?

[Interruption] I can give the name of the school. It is not a secondary-sided school either.

Why do the members of this House get annoyed when we try to seek information about something that the government claims it has implemented? If the Government has done it, there is nothing to worry about. All that the Government has to tell us is what it has done.

Let us go on now to page 28, item 182, Carnegie School of Home Economics and item 186, Berbice High School. These items deal with power and lighting in the one case and electricity in the other. In item 182, it is for the Carnegie School and in item 186 it is for the Berbice High School.

I am very pleased to see that his Ministry is making provision to pay its electricity bills. It is providing for an increase in the cost of electricity which we all know went up from August of this year. Very few other Ministries have done this. The hon. Minister of Education is one who sees ahead. This makes me proud of the women in this Parliament. I should like to ask whether the provision of \$862 under item 182 and \$912 under item 186 is just for the four months from August to December of this year. I am wondering if these amounts are enough considering that the increase in fuel costs is 96 per cent. I should imagine that these institutions would fall under the Second Schedule with an increase of 96 per cent. I should imagine that these institutions would fall under the Second Schedule with an increase of 96 per cent. I am wondering if the sums required, \$862 and \$912 respectively, will be enough to pay that increased cost. The Minister has certainly made a start in that these institutions will not be owing the Electricity Corporation. At least, if they do owe, the sum owed would not be quite as much as in some of the other Ministries.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education.

The Minister of Education and Social Development (Miss Baird): Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to have the opportunity of making a few statements on item 171, University Course for the Teachers of the Deaf. I think it will be useful to point out that the David Rose School for the Handicapped caters for children handicapped by blindness, by deafness and by

mental retardation. As such, we are committed to train special teachers to carry out their task. This is not anything new really. The particular course is now, but our teachers of the deaf have always been specially trained after their initial course of training.

These are mature teachers who have worked for a number of years after initial professional training and they have been going out to the University of Manchester which has a record for the education of the deaf. Some have been to Canada.

Recently, the University of the West Indies established a course for the teachers of the deaf and we began sending our teachers there. That course was suspended for one year. At the Ministers' Conference in January of this year, the Guyana delegation raised the question of reorganizing the course at U.W.I.

6.50 p.m.

This year, we have sent one teacher on that course as a result of those negotiations.

I think I should make a correction here. I heard the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva say that the Red Cross Society has intimated that the Ministry of Education helped them with the training of teachers. I should like to make it very clear that the David Rose School for the Handicapped is an aided school, in the same way as denominational schools are aided schools. As such, we are committed to provide the staff, the direction, the supervision of the school. We are permitted to do that. There is a manager, who is a Red Cross official, but the school is really run by the Ministry of Education. We provide what we think is a substantial grant, a grant that exceeds the grant to most ordinary schools. Indeed, it is a special school and very expensive to run. In addition to teachers' salaries, you will notice that we are responsible for the very extensive training provided the teachers of that school.

I now move on to - -

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on a point of clarification. Perhaps I phrased the sentence badly, but I want no misunderstanding about the position regarding the teachers at the school. I am aware that they are provided by the Ministry of Education. It is a question of phrasing. All I wish to do is to clarify.

Miss Baird: item 175 deals with the purchase of exercise books for free distribution to school children. I should like to point out that in the first instance, the supplies were not adequate and so what we did was distribute what was available to all schools in the country. Naturally, those inadequate supplies would not be adequate really, but we made sure that every school child got some exercise books at the beginning. We are receiving supplies continuously and, as far as I know, all schools have received exercise books. We are now planning for the distribution of the second lot of exercised books for the January term. These books have to be distributed before January, that means some time before the end of the current term.

I think the hon. Member was enquiring whether the allocation stated her would be enough for power and lighting. I am advised that this question was examined and we think the allocation will be adequate. I think that answers the questions.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates, Ministry of Education Page 6, item 28. Page 7, items 29 to 31. We will do the Ministry of Health and thereafter the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Health. Page 29, items 188 to 192, page 30, page 31, page 32, up to item 214.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I wish to give the hon. Minister of Health an opportunity to clarify a few points for us. Page 30, Ministry of Health – Bacteriological, item 201, the Training of Technologists: we voted a provision of \$46,240 at the end of last year, for this year an additional \$22,592, has been voted and now a supplementary provision of \$2,280 is being sought to provide for expansion of the training facilities. I wonder if the hon. Minister would use this opportunity to give some indication and idea of the work in this department, especially with regard to the training of technicians to work in co-operation with the cancer detection centre

particularly. How many technicians are able to deal with the reading of the paps test? This is of great concern and importance to the women of Guyana.

On page 31, Hospitals and Dispensaries, item 207, Conveyance of Sick Persons from Interior. We voted \$40,000; we are now being asked for a supplementary vote of \$34,400 due to the increased number of persons conveyed to Georgetown from the interior. We find no fault with this because we in the United Force feel that this Government does not establish its priorities in the right way and does not spend as much as it ought to on the health of the nation. We think that more is wasted on information and culture, for example, on propaganda and publications. Some of this money could well be channeled to the much more necessary field of health. But \$34,400 is now being sought, which is almost the same as that which was asked for in the beginning. Is it that more people are becoming sick and need conveyance to Georgetown, or is it that they are able, because of having extra help, to get into more places with the assistance of the Army, and that more people are being brought to town? We would like some information, please.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health (Dr. Harper): Mr. Chairman, I should like first to address my attention to item 201, Training of Technologists. In additional sum of money is requested; I thought it would speak for itself. Last year, we received a very highly sophisticated colorimeter from Germany and other equipment which require special installation and also special facilities. Because some of these highly sophisticated instruments can only function at a constant temperature, we had to get the room air conditioned; we had to construct particular types of benches and other subsidiary technical equipment so that we can get these instruments to function more efficiently. Also, the additional cost of materials and of basic equipment accounted for this figure.

[Dr. Harper continued]

7.00 p.m.

Questions are always asked about the training of cytologists. Cytologists are technologists that specialize in the detection of cells. We have sent two of our technologists to Trinidad to take special training in cytology and we plan to send more later.

I think our laboratory is one of the best equipped laboratories in the Caribbean and I feel that we will be able to meet the demands that will be placed on us if the panicolaou test was required nationally for all women over 30.

This is one our projected aims in our national health plan as a preventative measure but as the hon. Member on my right will know we feel that at this time it would not be wise for us to engage in the strenuous programme of screening women for cancer in Guyana until we have engaged the services of a radio therapist because we do not feel it is fair for us to diagnose ailments which we are not prepared to treat locally. However, we have arrangements with our neighbouring countries of Surinam and Venezuela where we arranged for Guyanese citizens to be sent for radio therapy at no cost for hospitalization and treatment. The only thing they pay is travelling.

Now for item 207, Conveyance of Sick Persons from Interior: There was a question on the increased number of persons. This number seems very high but I think we should remember that during last year many activities escalated in terms of the production of timber, work in wood grants and on stone quarries. Even agriculture in the interior escalated and, at the same time, the cost of travelling escalated. This is responsible for what appears to be a very high cost.

One of the problems we have here – and we are trying to correct this – is that sometimes communications are not effective between different points. We dare not, as a Ministry, reject a call for a person to come out with a plane and very many times we have to make two trips

because there is no way, for instance, to get a patient from a place like Konashen to Lethem except through Georgetown. There is no flight from Konashen to Lethem. On the map they are pretty near but logistically you have to come to Georgetown from Konashen in order to go to Lethem.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates, page 7, items 32 and 33, Ministry of Health. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, it is always a good opportunity for us to know what is going on when we can get the Ministers to tell us what is happening in their various departments. The hon. Minister of Health has always been very helpful. I wonder if he would tell us about subhead 8, Geriatric unit, at item 33 on page 7. There is a provision for \$15,000 for the Sanitary Block I am not questioning the amount. I would like to get some information about the proposed plan for looking after our senior citizens in these Geriatric Units. Money has been voted for a Geriatric Unit to be established on the East Coast, I think at Goedverwagting. It has been said that the Palms is going to be Geriatric Unit too. I think people would like to know what are the plans for looking after our old people.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health.

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, in reply to the question of my friend on the right, last year The Palms was transferred from the Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Health and we were told that it was going to be considered as the Geriatric Unit of the Georgetown Hospital but the plans that were envisaged for accelerating this process had to be postponed on account of the financial crisis which occurred earlier this year and with which we are all familiar.

In The Palms at present there are two types of patients. There are some patients who are ill and some patients are not ill but are receiving custodial care. The plan was to remove the patients who are not ill and who are enjoying custodial care into houses and home which were to

be located in different parts of the countryside. This is quite in keeping with modern practice and it is hoped, therefore, only to make The Palms what they call “an extended care facility” where people need health care but not acute health care.

We plan, when this is done, to hire occupational therapists under whom we will have activity directors whose main purpose will be to keep the people who are in the extended care facility active by organising activities which would keep them from sitting or lying all day doing nothing.

I feel, and we plan, that the patients of the Geriatric Unit who are not bed-ridden could make much more meaningful contributions to their own welfare by doing gardening. They can grow flowers; they can grow vegetables. They can help with the maintenance of the building, in the care of other patients and in the preparation of their own meals under proper guidance and supervision. They may also engage in meaningful activities, in sports or some recreation or, hopefully, in productive activities.

I see no reason, for instance, why inmates of The Palms could not help to prepare some of the bandages and the surgical packs; why they could not make boxes for the cigarette factory and so on. This could be arranged. I see no reason why many of the citizens there could not be engaged in productive activity if this Government felt that it was important for them to do so and the necessary budgetary allocations were made.

7.10 p.m.

One of the constraints in this, I feel, is the matter of training personnel. This is one of the priorities that we are going to bring before this House for 1975. But, according to our national health plan, the Geriatric Unit of the Ministry of Health is going to be more effectively organized and managed in the future.

The Chairman: Capital Estimates on page 1, Ministry of Information and Culture, item 2, Dubbing Theatre; page 36, items 236 and 237; age 37, page 38, page 39, page 40, items 259 and 260. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Sir, we will just ask for one bit of clarification in respect of item 268 on page 39 under Head 75, Ministry of Finance – Pensions and Gratuities. This deals with Special Allowances to non-pensionable officers with 20 years service and over. The voted provision was \$85,000; supplementary provision already granted was \$25,000 and now we are asking for \$120,000. The legend states:

“Provision inadequate due to increase in number of pensioners and also increase in benefits payable.”

We have always advocated that these people who have given very long and devoted service to Government should be entitled to as much consideration as their counterparts who are pensionable. Indeed, they are entitled to as much consideration in respect of meeting the cost of living as those civil servants who are presently employed.

What we want clarification on is the legend: “Provision inadequate due to increase in number of pensioner ...” If they are non-pensionable officers, strictly speaking they cannot be pensioners. That is the only question we have so we can afford to indulge a little on this.

The other question is about the “... increase in benefits payable.” Are we only talking about increase in the amount of money that we would give them or is there some other benefit that we know not of? Could the hon. Minister please clarify?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Some months ago, this House approved a Motion to change the superannuation condition of non-pensionable officers with service of twenty years or more. These officers were, at that stage, eligible only for an annual allowance. What was done, was to make them eligible for a pension and a gratuity. Some of them were eligible only for a lump sum payment and the amendment was to again make them eligible for a gratuity and a pension. The calculation of those pensions was based on the same formula as pensionable officers. As a result of that, certain additional payments had to be made and the provision was therefore necessary.

The Chairman: Page 8 of the Capital Estimates, items 35 and 36. Hon. members, this completes consideration of all the items.

Question –

“That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/1974 Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$38,619,890 for the period ending 15th October, 1974.”

Put, and agreed to.

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. 3/1974 and I now move that the National Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

**STATE VISIT OF PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

“Be it resolved that Standing Orders Nos. 9 and 12 be suspended to enable a Special Sitting of the National Assembly to be held at 10.00 a.m. on Monday, the 11th of November, 1974, on the occasion of the State Visit to Guyana of His Excellency Dr. William Tolbert, Jr., President of the Republic of Liberia.”

[The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House]

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, no one will cavil at the intent of this Motion that stands in my name. As we all know, next Friday the 8th of this month, His Excellency Dr. William Tolbert Jr., the President of the Republic of Liberia will be paying an official State Visit to this country. As part of his programme of events, it is intended that he be given an opportunity to address this House at a formal Sitting.

It is very unfortunate that the rigours of our procedure preclude him from doing so without the formal suspension of the Standing Orders of this House governing arrangement of business and hours of Sitting. This Motion therefore, in my name, is merely an enabling Motion to allow His Excellency the President to deliver that address.

I think, in a sense, a piece of history will be carved into the Hansard of this Chamber in that he will be the first, I understand from the record, President or Head of State or Government to be afforded the opportunity to address this Chamber at a formal Sitting.

1.11.74

National Assembly

7.10 – 7.20 p.m.

With those few introductory words, therefore, Your Honour, I wish to move this Motion that stands in my name to enable this House to meet on Monday, 11th November, at 10.00 a.m. to make possible the address by His Excellency the President of Liberia.

Question proposed, put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, that this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday, 11th November, 1974 at 10.00 a.m. [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 7.20 p.m.
