

**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**

54th Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 19th December, 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., S.C,
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

(Absent)

*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 National Resources (Absent)

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

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

*The Hon. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

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

Ministers (5)

The Hon. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

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

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

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

*The Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

Minister 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. Nascimemto, Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister	
The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P., Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast/ West Demerara)	(Absent)
The Hon. K.B. Bancroft, Minister of State - Regional (Mazaruni / Potaro)	(Absent)
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 . Carmichael, Minister of State - Regional (North West)	(Absent)
Parliamentary Secretaries (7)	
Mr. J.R. Thomas, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Housing	(Absent)
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	(Absent – on leave)

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co – operative and National Mobilisation

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

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (17)

Mr. J. N. Aaron
Mrs. L. M. Branoo
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Miss J. Gill
Mr. W. Hussain
Miss S. Jaiserrisingh
Mr. K.M.E. Jonas
Mr. M. Nissar
Dr. L. E. Ramsahoye
Mr. J.G. Ramson
Mrs. P. A. Rayman
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J. P.
Mr. S. H. Sukhu, M.S., J. P.
Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.
Mr. H.A. Taylor
Mrs. L. E. Willems

Members of the Opposition - Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition
Mrs. E. DaSilva

Officers

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

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

19.12.74
2 p.m.

National Assembly

2 - 2.10 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Teaching Service Commission Bill 1974 – Bill
No. 43/1974. [**The Minister of Education and Social Development**]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1975

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1975 totalling \$458,678,527.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Pages 88 to 93.

HEAD 30 - MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,592,329 for head 30, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: May I, Sir, express regret that the Hon. Minister is not here. However, I am certain that the Hon. Minister who is acting for him will follow the example of the substantive Minister and give the usual full answers.

Dealing with subhead 1, item (4), Economist, we note that the sum approved for 1974 was \$14,208. The revised estimate is \$9,936. In almost every Ministry we find provision for economists and invariably the posts seem to be vacant. There is provision for two economists here. We realize the problems, as we have mentioned before. These specialized officers obviously prefer to work overseas, where taxation is less. In Guyana they pay to the Government 75 cents on every dollar they earn. That may be the reason, why these posts remain vacant. However, since they are listed in the estimates, perhaps the Hon. Minister would care to tell us how soon he expect these posts to be filled.

Item (6) is one post of Chief Accountant and again we note that even though the sum of \$6,672 was approved in the 1974 Estimates only \$3,336 – Just about 50 per cent – is shown in the Revised Estimate column. Similarly, on item (11) where there are two posts of Stock Verifier, the sum of \$8,304 was voted for 1974 but the revised amount is only \$4,728, again about 50 per cent. We always seem to be under spending in areas of financial control, reflecting, of course, vacancies in these position. When will these posts be filled so that we can have proper accounting control in the Ministries.

Moving down to item (14), Conservator of Forests, we do seem to have a discrepancy here. We do appreciate that an Appeals Tribunal was appointed after the Job Evaluation exercise. I am not sure whether it has sat and reconsidered the position of the Conservator of Forests but the legend states that the post has been reclassified. What we have note is that the post is on salary scale A 37 and the question is: Why is it not on salary scale A 40 like, for example, the Commissioner of Geological Surveys and Mines and so many others technical departmental heads.

This is a very important department and the head is expected to be very skilled, technical person in a field in which it is the declared intention of the Government to spend very vast sums of money for forestry and timber development. Therefore, one would expect that the labourer is worthy of his hire and that this highly – skilled, technical office would not be relegated to any lesser position than so many other technical heads of so many other Departments.

On page 89, we note that the Commissioner of Geological Surveys and Mines is on salary scale A 40. Surely the Conservator of forests should also be on A 40. If the appeal Tribunal has turned down this request then I appeal to the Government to do the job because, in the final analysis, the power is in the Government's hand to give this post the recognition that is due to it. Dealing with item (23), Timber Grading Inspectors, we note that the 1974 approved estimate was \$12,000 and the 1974 revised estimate is the nicely rounded figure of \$6,000. Are these the officers who grade timber for the export market? That is what we want to know. Presumably they grade timber not only for the local market but particularly for the foreign market. If they do, we note that only 50 per cent of the vote has been spent which lead us to believe that only about half these posts are filled. If this is the position, then does it not have an adverse effect on our shipments to the overseas market? I can recollect that the Chinese complained bitterly about the quality of timber sent to them recently. One wonders whether that is not perhaps as a result of the shortage of staff.

If we go over the page to page 89, we would see that on item (38), Timber Graders, the same position obtains. The 1974 approved estimate is \$18, 864 and the revised estimate is only \$9,432. We note that the vote is under spent in this category. Is the Ministry having difficulty in filling these posts? Is that the problem?

The next observation is that if we look at the 1975 Estimates, the sum of only \$12, 312 is being requested for this item, where as the 1974 Approved Estimates had called for \$18.864, so that for the same six timber graders, the Ministry is asking for less money. If we look in the column on the right hand side, it is usual, it is courteous, to give an explanation. Why does the Ministry want less money than in the previous year? There is no explanation as to why a lesser

amount is being requested for the same number of posts. There is no note to say “changes in holders of posts”, which seems to be indicated as the Minister is asking for \$6,552 less than in 1974.

As I said before, the usual thing is to give an explanation why less money is wanted for the same number of posts. The usual thing is to ask for more because that would take in the normal increments of the people. The people are in the posts and their increments would carry their salaries to more than what was asked for in the previous year. Why has the Ministry not given any explanation as to the reason for this lesser amount? Are we going to employ fewer timber graders? The answer must be No, because the Establishment remains at six. Are we putting them on different salary scale? The answer is No, because they are still on scale A7. So there must be some other reason.

On the next page, page 90, I shall deal collectively with subhead 1, items (75),(76),(77), (78), (79), (80), (81), and (82). They are all posts in respect of which I want to ask the same patterns of question. It will be noticed that all these posts show significant under spending in relation with the Estimates of 1974. These posts are in the Hydropower Division. Obviously there is an indication of vacancies.

To give an example, item (75), Assistant Chief Engineer, estimated at only \$6,192. The revised amount is then, in respect of item (76), for a set of six Specialist Engineers, the sum of \$69,840 was approved for 1974. The 1974 revised estimate is only \$40,740. Item (77) follow the same pattern. For one post of Senior Mechanical Engineer the sum of \$9,228 was estimated. Only \$4,614 is revised estimate. Item (78), Senior Electrical Engineer: the sum of \$9,228 was estimates and, again, the revised figure is \$4,614, the same as that for the last item.

In respect of item (79), Senior Engineers, the approved amount was \$46,140 and the revised amount is only \$23,070. We go on. For example, on item (82), in respect of five Engineer Civil the sum of \$31,920 was estimated and the revised is only \$15,960.

In view of the Government's announcement of the establishment of a hydropower station, what will be these engineers or we would not have established the posts. When will these posts be filled? The pattern is seen not only in the 1974 Revised Estimates. It existed in 1973.

If we look at the 1973 Estimates we will see the same sort of situation. If we look at page 85 in the same 1974 Estimates, which were presented in December 1973, we would see such a similarity that we wonder whether it is mere coincidence. If we look at the 1973 revised figures we would see that some of them are identical with the 1974 revised figures. In the case of the Senior Mechanical Engineer, the revised estimate for 1973 was \$4,614, the same as the 1974 revised estimated figure was \$23,070, the same as the 1974 revised figure.

Do these officers not receive not receive any increment? Where do these figures come from? Are they pulled out of a hat? Similar, the revised figure for 1973 for one Mechanical Engineer is \$3,192. The 1973 revised estimate is the same. The 1973 revised figure for one Electrical Engineer is \$3,192, and the 1974 figure is the same. What kind of situation is this?

2.20 p.m.

These officers are on salary scales and they would normally be entitled to increments. Why that the revised figure is the same in 1973 and in 1974. Something must be wrong somewhere. These figures from 1973 and 1974 cannot possibly be identical. But, they are listed as such. What is the position as in respect of staffing in this so very important, as the Government would have us believe, hydropower division?

There is just a small matter in relation to item (87), Telephonist. The 1974 Approved Estimate was \$1,920. The 1974 Revised Estimate column has nothing at all. Presumably the post was vacant, but the Ministry seems to have done without the service of a Telephonist for the whole of 1974, as reflected in these Estimates because no amount was provided in the Revised

Estimate column. Since the Ministry was able to do without this expenditure in 1974, why does it want provision in 1975?

I turn now to item (98) to (120) and item (127) on page 92. We note that these items are appearing for the very first time and we note in the explanations by previous Ministers, who have had this sort of reflection in their Ministry, that they would like to give Parliament more information. This is very much unlike the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister whose office has a signboard which reads: "Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress and Minister of National Development." Presumably, that Government Office is now a Party Office. The party activities will take place from that office. Maybe I should put a signboard on the Office of the Leader of the Opposition to read: "Office of the Leader of the United Force and Office of the Leader of the Opposition." Maybe that would be permissible. But you see, sir, I do not belong to the ruling party. Perhaps, if I attempted to do that I would find the police moving in on me.

This is a very state of affairs where, in the presences of the Director of Audit, I am saying that the Minister is declaring that that office is a Party office in addition to being a Government Office. What will happen in respect of the funds? Will the fund in respect of that office be channelled toward party activities too? This is obviously the inference from the signboard outside of the office. All the members of the People 's National Congress who wish to see their General Secretary can go into that office, which is carried by the Government funds, to transact their party business. Is it not a scandalous shame? I think the particular Minister should hang his head in shame at such blatant disregard for the taxpayers' money.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister refused to give us any explanation for that big block vote but we note that this Ministry is, in fact, giving us a break – down **[Interruption]** All that the back – benchers can do , sir is introduce Church Bills. They cannot even speak. We would like the back – benchers to be able to speak knowledgeably. **[Interruption]**

The Chairman: Hon Minister, please let us hear the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Thank you. Sir. Dealing with the Estimates, we have details here of what previously was hidden in block votes. The provision are itemized now. I should like to know under which subhead the payments were made previously. There is no legend. Perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us where the money came from previously.

In fact, that was the note I made at first. But when further down in the Estimates I noted that on page 92 it is stated that some of these were previously under heading "Labour at Headquarters." On page 92, under Labour at Headquarters, just below subhead 20, the legend states "Provision transferred to Personal Emoluments." So that that is part of the answer. But what is the significant is that the reduction there is \$62,060 and the total amount when I made quick addition these posts which have been now itemized is well over \$200,000. It looks as though as a result of itemizing them we are paying much more than we seem to have paid in the past. I wonder if the Minister would care to explain that.

Turning over the page to page 92, subhead 1, item (126), Development Officer. This is one of the items that never appeared before and the sum requested for 1975 is \$12,036. There are two posts which are reflected here and no salary scale stated. All the others have salary scales attached to them. How are these gentlemen recruited? What do they do? At what rate are they paid? What salary scale are they on? Is it that a salary scale should have been stated and has not been put? We certainly like to know, sir.

There was one typographical error on page 89 that I should have mentioned. If I may be permitted to go back, sir. The establishment for 1973 against the post, Timber Technician, item (31), should be 2 and not 1. You will note that the legend to item (31), states "One of Timber Technician redesignated and reclassified by Supplementary Estimates in 1974." So far 1973 there were two posts and not one. That is a typographical error which must be corrected.

2.30 p.m.

I shall now turn to item (130), Station Allowances, and I shall deal at the same time with item (132), Responsibility Allowance. In respect of Station Allowances the sum of \$24,520 is the revised amount for 1974, but a much smaller sum, \$20,520, is being requested for 1975. Similarly in respect of Responsibility Allowance, item (132), the revised figure for 1974 is \$55,801 and the estimate for 1974 is not \$55,000 but \$45,081. If these are realistic levels for 1974 then why are we requesting less for 1975, considering the nature of these heads, Station Allowance and responsibility Allowance. Why should the provision be less in 1975 than in 1974? Will we be downgrading activities? One wonders whether there will be a lesser amount of work done in view of the fact that we have so much more provided in the Estimates for 1974.

The same applies to in fact to item (135), Overtime, and item (136), Risk Allowance. The revised figure for overtime in 1974 is \$30,180; the estimate for 1975 is only \$1,000. It is most unrealistic. The revised figure for Risk Allowance for 1974 is \$13,476; the estimate for 1975 is only \$1,000. hon. Minister may tell us that these are token figures. I gave a concrete example yesterday where token figures are not being used. For example, I mentioned that provision for substitute staff for officers on leave in the Magistrates Department is a realistic figure, that the provision for acting allowance on page 47 of the Estimate is realistic figure: we are not using token figures there. Let us be realistic. When we know we will spend a higher amount let us put the higher amount. One wonders why those lesser amounts are provided in 1975.

The same pattern continues in respect of subhead 7, Uniforms. The 1974 revised amount is \$19,388; the estimate for 1975 is \$15,000 that is \$4,388 less. Why are we estimating less for Uniforms in 1975 when we bear in mind the rising cost of things in general and when other Ministries are requesting more money in respect of uniforms? In additional, the legend states "Increase in cost of uniform." The poor employees who wear uniform look forward every year to receiving uniforms. I do hope that the result of this reduction will not be that some employees will not be able to get uniform in 1975.

I move on to subhead 15, Silviculture. The 1974 approved estimate listed the sum \$70,000. I asked about this level of expenditure last year; the hon. Minister said that the money was needed and the legend bears that out in the 1974 Estimates. It states "the money is needed to bring more acres under cultivation." What has happen in respect of this? Only \$25,629 has been spent out of that provision of \$70,929, that is \$45,000 less. Now we are requesting the old amount of \$70,000. What will we do in 1975? What is the position as regards these acres that were supposed to have been brought under pine cultivation in 1975? Will the hon. Minister tell us?

Just a comment on subhead 26 Maintenance and operation of Stations. In the 1974 Estimates, this subhead was shown as "Maintenance and operation of mining stations." I wonder whether there is any significance in this. Are they no longer mining stations? What is the position in respect of this item?

Page 93, subhead 32, Maintenance of Tiboku Base Camp. the sum of \$4,500 is being requested for 1975, and the legend states: "New Subhead ", as in fact , it is. This was a Camp for hydro – power study which began in 1966 and ended in early 1968. This camp was used for hydro – power study in that area which was done by Shawiningan Engineering Company of Canada in conjunction with United Nations. They did produce, a very impressive – looking book and the essence of it was that hydro – power establishment at the Tiboku site was feasible provided there was established also a smelter to utilise the excess available power. I am happy to see this subhead but I wonder what is the significance of it. Does this mean that the Government is thinking of going ahead with the Tiboku sit which necessitated the provision of this subhead for maintenance of this camp site?

The Minister of Co – operatives and National Mobilisation (Mr. Green): Mr. Chairman, I Want to congratulate the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his hard work. He must have spent some time perusing the Estimate with great care and detail. I think that is the purpose of a responsible Opposition.

19.12.75

National Assembly

2.40- 2.50 p.m.

2.40 p.m.

Many of the points made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition must have been answered by myself yesterday and certainly by my other colleagues.

In so far as page 88 is concerned, there was a question regarding the Economist and whether we will recruit, or be able to recruit, such a person in 1975. It is difficult to give a precise answer. As I pointed out yesterday, Guyana, like every other developing country, faces the difficulty of recruiting trained personnel and Guyana, in this respect, is not unique, nor is it different. I think it is unfair for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest, as he did, that the difficulty we find is because of our tax structure and our salary structure.

In fact, the cost of living in Guyana is lower than many parts of the region and in many parts of the world. One cannot merely look at the tax structure and arrive at that conclusion. In any event, in terms of the effort we are attempting to make over the next period, we are more interested in people who can come to work in this country being dedicated and determined to help the Government and people of this country to establish a truly socialist society. We would prefer, in some cases, to do without people who were merely interested in the exchange of money; we look for people who are interested in helping to build the Co – operative Republic of Guyana.

There was another question on the Conservator of Forests. This matter is still under review and it would be improper for me to either venture on opinion or respond to the Leader of the Opposition, except to say that the matter is still not yet final.

We do have all the Timber Grading Inspectors as reflected on page 88, subhead 1 , item (38) , the difficulty that the legend could , perhaps , have attempted an explanation. An attempt is now being made to make the people who extract lumber responsible for providing graders approved by Government, and, in fact, the sum seen here is based on the fact that we will be phasing out this particular group of workers during 1975.

On page 90, the question of hydro – power was raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and a number of observations made in so far as the recruitment of staff and apparent

inconsistencies in the Estimates are concerned. If only he had completed the excellent exercise he started of examining these Estimates with great care and detail! I remember that when I was at school a long time ago, I got “licks” for not reading the entire book. It is a poor student and a poor lawyer who only reads the middle of the book. If my hon. friend will look towards the end of the book, at Appendix E, on page 237, he will find the answer to the questions he has asked.

In fact, the majority, if not all, of the scale between items (74) and (83) are fixed scales and that will explain the hon. Member's apparent concern that in 1975 the figures are unchanged from the 1974 figures. [Mr. M. F. Singh: “But they are different from the Approved Estimates.”] That difference will reflect the number of vacancies there are. The hon. Member raised the question of why the quantum in terms of a given number did not reflect the changes. I am explaining that these scales are fixed.

Page 91, item (87), Telephonist 1. There was no Telephonist last year. As hon. Members know, we have a problem in terms of office space. Whether a particular Ministry gets a particular office, grouped with other Department or not, will determine whether we need a Telephonist, a PABX or a PBX, I understand that that is the case here. The Ministry expect to a part of a general arrangement of physical Ministries next year and therefore we anticipate the recruitment of this person.

On items (98) to (120) the question was asked: Where were these people paid from previously? My hon. Friend did a peculiar mathematical, acrobatic feat which he referred, “Labour at headquarters”, one will see that is not the only area. There were other areas like other charges and, in fact, as hon. Members probably know, in the Government system, many of these posts were neither to paid out of capital votes. This was the method. We are attempting to correct this and, therefore, we have this great detail. I wish to assure my hon. Friend that there is no “jiggery pokery” going on in this Ministry.

Page 92, subhead 1, item (126) Development Officer. That will be the person we hope to identify early in 1975 to function as a liaison between the Ministry proper and the Corporations which have an interest in a relationship to the Ministry. In fact, he will be the

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National Assembly

2.40- 2.50 p.m.

person dealing particularly with the business arm of the Ministry. As hon. Members know, because of the peculiar nature of this Ministry dealing in forestry, mines and so forth – it must be involved in a certain amount of commercial activity, in spite of, and notwithstanding the establishment of the forest Industries Corporation, the salary scale has not been classified. In life, we need to do a prognosis sometimes. It is expected that we will be able to identify someone to be put on a scale and the fund reflected here is merely an attempt to explain what we hope to get.

The other question asked was with respect to subhead 1, items (130) and (132) Station allowance and Responsibility Allowance. This Ministry is undergoing a series of changes and reorganisation in the field and this figure is expected to satisfy the anticipated needs. It is a complicated arrangement which I do not feel competent to explain. I do not think my hon. Friend is interested in that detailed explanation at this stage.

Subhead 15, silviculture. ain, we have difficulty in terms of staff and a number of problems but, as I said, “ Hope spring eternal . . . “and in 1975 we hope to see optimum activity in this particular area.

2.50 p.m.

[Interruption]

Subhead 7, Uniforms. Some uniforms arrived late and we had to pay for some of the 1975 uniforms in 1974. That is why there is this distortion as far as the Estimates are concerned.

Subhead 32, Maintenance of Tiboku Base Camp. The base camp at Tiboku is still being used by the United Nations Guyana inventory team, and surveyors are still in this area collecting valuable data which we hope to use in the future.

Head 30, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources - \$2,592,329 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 94.

DIVISION XV111 – Ministry OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

[Mr. Green contd.]

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,868,500 for Division XVIII, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1. Forest Industry Development Survey. The approved estimate for 1974 was \$45,000 and revised estimated for 1974 is \$14,200. The legend states; "To provide for a detailed inventory of Leases." This exercise was planned since December, 1973, for 1974. The legend on page 88 of the 1974 Estimate will confirm that and it states, "To provide for a detailed inventory of the Upper Demerara River and an inventory of the leases for the Timber Export Board,"

The amount expected to be spent in 1974 is only \$14,200 but it was anticipated at that time that the exercise would cost \$45,000 as shown in the Approved Estimates. The legend is essentially the same but the amount now being asked for in 1975 is not \$45,000 less \$14,200. The sum of \$100,000 is now being requested to do essentially the same thing. We would certainly like the hon. Minister to give us some explanation. What was done last year for the \$14,200 and what is going to be done next year with this of \$100,000.

Subhead 2, Forest Utilisation. We note that the 1974 approved estimate was \$72,900. This was reflected on page 88 of the 1974 Estimates and legend stated: "To establish a laboratory for quality control in wood preservation." We have not spent \$72,900 as approved. We expect to spend in 1974 only \$35,900. The question I should like to ask is whether that laboratory has been established. If it has been established, well, I commend the Ministry for having established it at a much lesser cost than was originally anticipated. If it has not been established, what was done with the \$35,900 expected to be spent in 1974?

The sum of \$356,500 is asked for under the same subhead to be spent in 1975, but now the legend is different. It has nothing to do with laboratory, it says: "To provide for investigations into the uses of new species, "Maybe this incorporates a laboratory. It could be so . Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us.

Subhead 4, Forestry Co – operatives. There we have Co-operatives again but this time under another Ministry. There is no consolidation within any particular Ministry. And there is a Ministry of Co –operatives. There the sum of \$400,000 is being requested for 1975 for forestry co-operatives. How will this money be spent? Will it be a hand out; will it be way of loans? What are the proposals in respect of these forestry co-operatives?

We go down the line to subhead 7, Canada / Guyana / Geophysical survey. The 1974 approved estimate was \$312,700. The revised amount for 1974 is nil. The legend says: “See note below” and the note says: “To extend the aeromagnetic coverage of the country and to carry out a Seismic survey of the Rupununi.” I am not sure that is the one referred to. The asterisk is at the end of the sentence and not at the beginning. But if we look at what was said in the 1974 Estimates on page 88, on this same subhead, Canada/Guyana/Geophysical survey, we would see: “To complete seismic survey. Ganadian Grant. “We should like to know the reason why nothing was spent in 1974 and what are the prospects for 1975. The amount sought is \$1,200,000 to be spent in 1975 in spite of the fact that nothing was spent in 1974, was even though provision was made. Can we really do the Job in 1975?

Subhead 13, Closing of Tumatumari Dam. In the Approved Estimates for 1974, the sum of \$68,000 was voted but in the Revised Estimates, there is nothing at all listed. In 1975, the asking for \$60,000 to do the same thing. Will we really do the job in 1975 when nothing was done in 1974? Will we close this Tumatumari Dam? That is what we should like know.

3 p.m.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, first of all, may apologise for not responding in so far as item (26) on page 92, Maintenance and Operation of Sections is concerned. There is an error in legend. It should read “Setting up of a new mining station in the Rupununi.”

The first question raised by the hon. Member was about the amount of money that will be spent on the Forest Industry Development Survey. Perhaps I could group this with the reply to subhead 2. First of all it is an ongoing programme. In so far as the survey is concerned, it is a new programme and/ or policy that the Government is concretising for next year.

Previously the people given leases were given leases to extract specified species of Greenheart, crabwood and what have you. We will now give a lease but, with the knowledge which we will have as a result of this survey. The leases will be required to take out all the timber and in any event to pay, based on the several species which we know to be in the area for which he or she will have the lease.

To do this, one needs to have an inventory to know precisely what is in a particular area. If we know the geography of this country we will appreciate that this a mammoth task which we shall be under taking next year. The utilisation is related to this very exercise because if you identify the species, you will then need to go to the next stage and to ascertain the use to which various species can be put.

We proceed on the conviction that there is no species found in our forests that cannot be put to beneficial use and, acting upon this, we proceed to have a complete survey and an examination in so far as the various species are concerned. It is true that this year we were unable to spend the total allocated and laboratory has not yet been established. This year we had all sorts of difficulties. The Ministry, like many others, was not sure what funds would be available in the middle of year when we were faced with the international crisis.

Subhead 4, Forestry Co – operatives. I wish to offer a correction in the legend. It should be “To provide for the establishment of Forestry Co – operatives “and not “to provide for the establishment of Logging Co- operatives.” Forestry is more all – embracing.

I wish to assure my hon. Friend that there is nothing sinister here. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources will be working very closely at the ground level with the Ministry of Co – operative and National Mobilisation in so far as the establishment of these Co-operatives is concerned. It was found necessary to put this sum with a particular Ministry since there will be an immediate need in many of the areas to provide the particular equipment that these prospective co – operatives will need in order to start operations, My hon. Friend must not see something sinister in every item he sees in the Estimates.

Subhead 7, Canada/Guyana Geophysical Survey. The programme has not yet started and this is partly because there was a lack of adequate preparation. But you will note that a substantial portion of this money is foreign aid from the Canadians. The arrangements have all been made and this programme should get on the way in 1975 with the Canadian aid.

Subhead 13, Closing of Tumatumari Dam. A great deal of work is going on there and the People's Army, the people who are in the vanguard of the effort to convert this country into a better place, the G.D.F. in collaboration with Members of the Youth Corps, did excellent work here during this year. As hon. Members will appreciate, there is nothing precise that one can say about this dam. We still do not have all the scientific information to say exactly when the water will rise above a certain level. There is very little that can be done because it becomes extremely treacherous and dangerous to put men to work during those periods.

Division XVII, Ministry Of Energy and Natural Resources - \$7,868,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand past of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 103 to 116.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING

WORKS

Question proposed that the sum of \$24,471,500 for Head 34, Ministry of Works and Housing – Work, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Subhead 1, items (13), (14) and (15) could be lumped together. These are posts that are part of what I understand to be the planning Unit. These posts relate to the Senior Economist, Economist and Cost Accountant and it is the same old story. We have provided very high figures to pay these fellow according to their salary scales. All the amounts have obviously, either not been filled or there are people merely acting in them. As I said, these posts relate to the Planning Unit and since the amount are significantly under spent, one wonders whether this Unit is in fact operating and if it is doing the job it was intended to do because of the vacancies, one would suspect not. We know there are problems but is it at all helping the Ministry or do we

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have to wait until the posts are filled before there can be any significant help from this Planning Unit?

I am perhaps deal with items (32) and (43) on page 104 together. They both are hinged on the same problem, that of realistic amount being provided in the Approved Estimates but in the Revised Estimates significantly lesser amounts being shown. Just to quote one example: In respect of item (32), Senior Supply Officers. there were three posts and it was estimated that the sum of \$23,400 would be needed for 1974. The revised amount is only \$10,210 which gives the impression that there are vacancies. The same applies to item (43), Draughtsmen. There are vacancies. In respect of Draughtsmen, the legend actually states that some posts are vacant. In fact, they give that as an explanation of why they are asking for a lesser amount in 1975 because where as in 1974 \$36,780 was provided, in 1975 they are asking for lesser amount in 1975 because where as in 1974 \$36,780 was provided, in 1975 they are asking for only \$34,320. Since the legend stated "Some posts vacant" it appears as though they do not expect to fill these vacant posts in 1975 that is why they are asking for \$2,460 less than in 1974.

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These are very important posts, they are technical posts and we do appreciate the difficulties. But obviously the posts are necessary or else they would not have been provided. If they are not filled there must be some lack of efficiency as a result of this. Can the hon. Minister tell us what are the prospects with respect to the filling of these posts in 1975? As I said, the provision for draughtsmen is deliberately under – estimated because of the vacant posts.

Dealing collectively with items (49) to (56) on page 104, I recall that last year I asked about the vacancies in this Buildings Division. There were several vacancies, according to the admission of the hon. Minister, and one notice that there are various amounts provided which have been significantly under spent as for example, in the case of the Deputy Chief Architect, Assistant Quantity Surveyors etc. Will the hon. Minister tell us what the position is? Has there

been an improvement since the 1974 Estimates and what are the prospects for the efficient operation of this Building Division in 1975?

Page 105, item (70) Supervisors, Rebuild workshop. The 1975 approved estimate was \$19,800, the revised estimate is \$17,975. It is not a significant under pending at all but I want to take this opportunity to ask what is the general position with respect to the Rebuild Workshop. In these days when we are trying to pool our servicing facilities, does the Rebuild Workshop Cater for repairs to vehicles belonging to other Government Departments? Or is it so fully occupied with repairs in its own Ministry's that it cannot handle other Government vehicles?

My experience is the far too long a time is taken to effect these repairs on vehicles. Perhaps this is due to the lack of proper supervisors since there is an under spending in the category of supervisors. We certainly like the hon. Minister to tell us what the position as regards to this Rebuild Workshop is and whether it could be used to help out other Ministries.

[At this stage the hon. Prime Minister entered the Chamber.]

May I welcome the hon. Prime Minister in this honourable House for the first time during this debate, sir, and tell him we are very pleased to see him & hope that we will have the pleasure of hearing his voice in spite of the way in which it was taxed during the week- end with those very unpleasant announcements.

On page 106 I shall deal generally with the Hydrometeorological Division. We note that there are some vacant posts but this Division seems to be operating very efficiently, by and large, and we would like to say a word of thanks for the very regular weather reports supplied by it.

On page 106, I wish to comment on the Electrical Inspection Division. I spoke last year about this and I am glad to see that my plea for an increase in staff in respect of this Division has brought forth an increase of seven in the staff of this Division; I hope that this is enough. But we are still getting complaints in respect of the operation of this Division. When we

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take into consideration this the tremendous job that this Division has to do we feel that it is worthy of even further consideration by the Government.

Let us appreciate that with the Government's housing programme accelerating, as is stated in the Budget Speech, these officers will be required to do electrical inspection in every single house or housing unit that is put up which is wired with electricity. We have the private sector also building houses "perhaps more than the Government" in the South Ruimveldt areas. Those houses also will have to be inspected.

Then there is the rural electrification programme where, an electricity expands throughout the country, as houses are wired, the electrical inspectors will have to go to those areas and inspect everyone of those houses and issue certificates after they are satisfied with the wiring thereof.

This is a tremendous job and therefore I feel that not only should the staff of this Division be further extended but also that they should be provided with even more vehicles. In fact, they do not have many vehicles now. They should be provided with vehicles to make them perform their jobs efficiently. Right now it is a known fact that very often transportation has to be provided for the inspectors for them to go and do their jobs.

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I heard one complaint that the vehicles attached to the Division spend half the time in the workshop. They are not the traditional land rovers and perhaps that may be one of the reasons. But the vehicles do not seem to be standing up to the rigours of going about the country and into the various areas.

Perhaps this is also the appropriate time to ask the hon. Minister what plans he has for decentralising the services of the Electrical Inspection Division. Electricity is being provided throughout the length and breadth of Guyana; this is the great boast of the Government. Surely it is time for us to decentralise this Division because at the moment people in the country areas

who want on inspection have to come all the way to Georgetown in order to make the necessary arrangements.

There is just one item on page 107. The sum provided in the 1974 Approved Estimates column for item (105), Surveyors, is \$315,300, the revised estimate is much less, \$256,116. We know of the problems facing the country with respect to surveyors; we were told about what the Government is doing to remedy the situation. We would like to know how many vacant posts there are. Provision is made for sixty – one and it would give us an idea of how we are progressing if we could know how many vacancies there are this year so that next year we would see whether the number of vacancies has in fact been reduced.

Page 108, Head 34, Subhead 1, item (122), Trainees. The approved estimate for 1974 was \$20.000 for these trainees. The revised estimate is only \$9.680, so we are spending much less in respect of training. Training, in a developing country like Guyana, in a specialised department like the Ministry of Works and Housing is very important, so I am very perturbed to see this level of under spending. What is the provision for 11 Trainees; how many are we training to cause this reduction in the level of expenditure?

On page 109, there are new posts which are being listed for the very first time in the tidying – up operation which seem to be going on in every Ministry other than the Ministry of - as the signboard states: - “The General Secretary of the People’s National Congress and Minister of National Development.” His Ministry has a block vote. All the other Ministries are attempting to give us in Parliament a realistic picture and to actually itemise the various posts. Such is the operation on this page 109.

I want to ask a question about one of these new posts, subhead 1, item (148), which deals with Agriculture Corp Evaluator. [Interruption] This is the problem we face when the Party takes over and the Government Is subservient to the Party. The Party takes over even in the House. We cannot speak because the Leader is speaking.

Item (148) relates to 3 Agriculture Crop Evaluators on salary scale A9. The sum asked for in 1975 is \$10,854 and I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Works and Housing? What are their functions? what do they do which is consistent with the responsibilities and the operation of his particular Ministry of Works and Housing? We pay particular attention to the word "Agriculture".

The listing of the details that the hon. Minister has so very generously given us is continued at pages 110 to 112. The itemisation finishes on page 113, we should like to deal with item (270) Station Allowances, on page 113. The amount of money that the Ministry realistically estimates that it will be spending for 1974 is \$32,000. That is what is reflected. But, in 1975, the Ministry is asking for \$150,000 for Station Allowances. If only \$32,000 is being spent in 1974, why is it that the Ministry anticipates that the sum of \$150,000 will be needed in 1975, that is an additional sum of \$118,000. This not consistent.

In the Ministry of Energy and National Resources, the estimate for Station Allowances went down considerably for the year 1975. In this case, it is going up considerably. The Minister who is acting for the Energy and National Resources. has said that his Ministry is reorganising and therefore there will be less spending. Maybe the Ministry of Works and Housing is doing the opposite thing and that is why that Ministry needs to spend more. Would the hon. Minister tell us?

I shall deal with the last item on page 114, subhead 36, Maintenance and Operation of Unallocated Plant and Equipment including Workshop Equipment. The legend states: "New Subhead." The amount being sought is \$385,000. This is something new and as such we should like to know something more about it. Could the hon. Minister elaborate as to what this new subhead is? What will it do and from which head were the expenses met previously? I do not know anything about it. This is something new and the expenses must have been met from somewhere else in the past. Could the hon. Minister tell us?

On page 115, I would like to deal with subhead 43, Stone Crushing Plant – Makouria and Teperu. The amount being requested for 1975 is \$1,800,000. We have been spending a

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tremendous sum of money on this subhead both in Capital and Recurrent Expenditure particularly in respect of the Teperu Quarry.

3.30 p.m.

I remember very distinctly that when the hon. Minister Mr. Hamilton Green was the Minister in charge of this Ministry, he boasted in this honourable house that the Government was determined to bring down the price of stone and that it would be doing so very shortly. He said the stone producers were very terrible sharks, that they were rapacious people or words to that effect.

He was very emotional about it and he said that the Government would produce enough stone to supply the public. He said the price of stone would go down so that the public would stop buying from producers and patronise the Government, or the producers would be forced to bring down their prices. However, the prices have not gone down and the Government is still not producing enough to sell to the public.

Obviously, the Government quarry is being run at a loss. If we look at the bottom of 116 where it says, "Deduct " and list, "Issues of Stone", at subhead 101 and "Transportation of Crushed Stone", at subhead 103, we will see those amounts are both \$100 less than the amount being asked for as expenditure. On the very Estimates we end up with a deficit of \$1. When we take into consideration that not only there is expenditure in respect of the plant at Teperu and Makouria, but also there are administrative charges in Georgetown, the charges for supervising Georgetown Head office staff, the executive staff that would be supervised, as I said and when we evaluate those services we will see that these quarries are being run at a loss.

When will we reach that stage, which the hon. Minister Hamilton Green talked about, when we will so produce that we will be able to sell to the public and also to bring down the price from the very high level at which it is at the present moment? There is nothing I wish to refer to on page 116.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Housing.

The Minister of Works and Housing (Mr. Naraine): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member the Leader of the Opposition raised a question about the adequacy of the Planning Unit. I should like to let the hon. Member know that during some part of last year the Ministry had engaged a firm of international consultants on management, whose recommendations have recently been received. This firm or management consultants, is called I believe Urwick International, and its recommendations are now being implemented in relation to systems and management for the Ministry.

Any attempt to try and evaluate what the section was doing in relation to sums of money spent would be erroneous because, in addition to what was spent here on the people in these various posts, a substantial amount of work has been done by these consultants. Further we are in the process of filling certain additional posts like chief Engineer, Services and Chief Engineer, Maintenance, in addition to the Economists, so that the Planning Unit can be beefed up to do a better job than it has been doing in the past. We have not yet made any additional appointments because the recommendations were not available to us until recently.

Items (32) and (43) dealt with under spending. The hon. Member was right in that there are in fact, two vacancies for Senior Supply Officer and there are people acting up in those positions. I am informed that steps have been taken to have these posts filled substantively. In case of item (43), Draughtsmen, there are a few vacancies: I understand these have been advertised, people have applied, and the vacancies are about to be filled.

The hon. Member raised the question of vacancies in the Buildings Division and asked whether in the Buildings Division, there was any improvement. I should like to advise him that there has been improvement. We now have a Senior Quantity Surveyor and a Quantity Surveyor, and one has been acting up. We have had to take the Chief Draughtsman to act as an Assistant Architect, and the position is that we have been able to overcome some of our problems by utilising Guyanese architects who are in private practice. We have been able to do our programme of work in this way.

Item (70), Supervisors, Rebuild Workshop. The position at the rebuild Workshop is that at the present moment it cannot serve all other Ministries. We try to serve other Ministries in

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some limited way in terms of heavy machinery, draglines, bulldozers and trucks. Presently, the Chief Mechanical Engineer assistance from that country with a view to constructing a completely new workshop which will work along with this rebuild workshop. We have made arrangements to purchase from East Germany, on very soft – term credit. \$7 million worth of equipment and the workshop to be constructed will service those additional items of equipment as well as those already in the system.

I do not think it would be true to say that delays in having repairs to equipment are due principally to the workers in the rebuild workshop. It is true that there are delays, and delays are due to the slow rate at which spare parts can be obtained from certain merchants in the street, because of either their inability or their disinclination to keep adequate stocks of spares. I believe that the Chairman and General Manager of the Guyana Rice Board had to make their own arrangement for having tractors and combine repaired and spare parts brought in, although there are local firms who are agents for the equipment. It is for this reason that the Government feels that it has to control external trade. We cannot rely any longer on some of the business placed to service equipment from which they make very handsome profits. The hon. Member, I am sure, must have heard the Prime Minister making this release a few days ago.

3.40 p.m.

I shall not say anything about the Hydro-meteorological Technical Assistance, item (86), because we are not in the habit of praising ourselves. It is very good to hear that the Labour of the Opposition has come out in praise of this Division.

In relation to item (89), Chief Electrical Inspector, I shall like to point out that I was heartily impressed by the remarks made by the hon. Member because year after year he has been asking me where are these houses we are building. It is the first time that he has come out and openly admitted that because of the massive housing programme which we are undertaking there is a need for substantial improvement and an increase in the number of people required to inspect these houses which are getting electric lights when a few years ago they had to use lanterns and candles. It not only shows that we have a massive housing programme but it also shows that we are putting electric lights in every home. I should like to assure the hon. Member that as the

[Mr. Naraine continued]

programme expands we shall make sure that all services and the people required to maintain these services will be provided.

In relation to item (105), Surveyors, there are 26 vacancies in an establishment of 61 Surveyors. I think that hon. Minister of Agriculture drew attention to the shortage among Surveyors. There is a training programme. We are very conscious of this shortage and we have every intention of filling these vacancies from the training programme at the Technical Institute. We have been able to overcome some of this problem by taking Survey Technicians who have been assisting. These are people drawn from those who did not get through all the subjects of the examinations but nevertheless people who are qualified to carry out particular functions. But the number of vacancies is 26 and it is relatively high.

Item (122), Trainees. Again we cannot judge the size of the Training Programme in relation to the amount of money spent here because a number of people have been getting virtually free training at the Technical Institute and the University of Guyana. If we spend less it mean, in fact, that subsidies have been afforded to the training programme which exists at the University of Guyana and at the Technical Institutes. As you know, these training programmes will be given free from September and, therefore, we may very well find next year that, although we may have a larger training programme in terms of money, the Ministry may have a smaller allocation as shown on these Estimates. But the money will be spent elsewhere.

Item (148), Agriculture Crop Evaluator. There are three posts. How do they fit in? The Ministry in its road programme and by its activities have to go through areas of land on which there are crops. Therefore, we need crop evaluators to make an assessment of the crops which have to be destroyed so that compensation can be paid to the farmers.

Item (270), Station Allowances. The answer to this is very simple. The items on which the hon. Leader of the Opposition did not raise any questions related to people who formerly were paid from Works vote and were paid their station allowance and their overtime from this vote. I am taking items (270) and (274) together. Since all these workers have now been put on

Establishment, their earning will no longer be charged against the Works vote. We, therefore, need to increase the sums provided for overtime and station allowance. For this reason these sums have increased substantially.

Page 114, subhead 36, Maintenance and Operation of Unallocated Plant and Equipment including Workshop Equipment. This item was challenged but I would like to explain that this is a most essential item because when items of equipment and plant are used on the job and when that job comes to an end the plant is returned to some station or workshop; the plant or equipment must be put in readiness and good working conditions for the next job. It is essential to the necessary repair as the plant is moving from job to job. This sum of money is to provide for the necessary spare parts and labour required to put back the equipment into good order. As I said, in the past when u move from one job to another, as the new job was about to start, there was a massive rush to get the plant repaired before it could be moved. This resulted in delays and inefficiency. This item will try to correct that deficiency that exists in the system.

3.50 p.m.

Item (43), Stone Crushing Plant. I do not think what the hon. Leader of Opposites has said will in any way give us a true relationship between the cost of production of stone in the private sector. These plants do not work on a profit basis and therefore what we attempt to do in these Estimates is to project a sum of money that is required to run them. The quarry products are sold at a price considerably less than what is demanded by the private sector. The price is so fixed that when you sell all the quarry products to the Government departments and Ministries you just about recover what you have expended and it is not profit-oriented as in the private sector.

Therefore we really cannot compare these figures.

In relation to production, I do not think myself that it was ever the intention of Government, by putting the plants into operation, to close down the other producers of quarry

[Mr. Naraine continued]

products. One private plant went out operation but that one went out of operation because of gross inefficiency. I think the Secretary of that company knows well that it went out of business because of gross inefficiency. But the other plants have been operating reasonably well. They operated well because they are owned by local people and because of the Government operates a stone crushing plant, we were able to put constraint on the prices which they charge for their stone.

I should like to suggest that it is unreasonable and irrational to assume that with the increasing cost of spare parts, higher wages and salaries, increased cost for fuel, increased cost of transportation that the price of stone will come down. It just cannot come down and if we have been able to hold the price, then I think we have done very well indeed. The production at the plant will be improved and we will be getting more production as the years go by. The hon. Member will see later on that there is further capital to be put into the crushing plant so that we can keep carrying out improvements whereby production will increase from year to year. I believe those were the question asked.

Head 34, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works) –\$24,471,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Division XXI.

DIVISION XXI – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING – (WORKS)

Question proposed that the sum of \$42,241,500 for Division XXI, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, East Bank Demerara Roads. We commend the Government for the provision of \$1 million as the legend states: “To connect Houston and Camp Roads.” But there is, in addition to that, something else that we would like to draw to the attention of the Government. Since the subhead states “East Bank Demerara Roads” we think it is appropriate to remind the Government that some parts of the East Bank Road from the Airport

to Georgetown are virtual death traps. The road is narrow, it is congested with very heavy traffic. Some foreign visitors and businessmen – not that we should pay more attention to them than to our local people – have expressed to me alarm and fright on the journey from the airport to Georgetown. As Guyanese we may have become accustomed to it when travelling up and down that road, we may be inclined to accept it, but the stark fact is that this road has claimed the lives of a number of Guyanese people. It is time for something to be done urgently to remedy the situation in the interest of our own Guyanese people. I wonder whether the hon. Minister has any plans at all at the moment to do something about that East Bank Road.

Subhead 6, Essequibo Roads. The sum of \$300,000 is being requested for 1975 and the legend states: “To complete structures and deviations Anna Regina area”. Here again I want to draw attention to the fact that the road from Hampton Court to Charity is very bad. It is still the same old red road with the very great amount of what Guyanese call, dead sand. During each rainy season it develops very bad pot holes so that travelling along that road is a very hazardous operation. There is a bus service in the area. Perhaps I should sympathise with the operators even though there have been very grave complaints about the unreliability of the service and the poor service generally that is being given by them. They need some consideration in view of the fact that they are operating on the kind of road where the cost of maintenance and spare parts is very high indeed.

We certainly look forward to the Government providing good surfaced roads there. When it does we ask the Government to bear in mind that those bus owners are operating under trying circumstances now and it would be unfair to merely push them off the road so that the nice new Government buses can be put on it and to have these small men who are doing such a valuable service at the present time, merely put out of operation.

4 p.m.

Subhead 8, Hinterland Roads. The sum of \$6 million is being requested for 1975 and the legend states: “To continue Hinterland roads.” Every time we talk of hinterland roads, we obviously call to mind the much – publicised self-help road to Brazil. We have never been told

the cost of this self – help operation which brought people from almost every part of the world to come and have a holiday while they did their little bit on the road to Brazil. The cost would have been very revealing from the point of view of seeing how economic it was to put that kind of system into operation rather than for example, having the road built by Amerindians and other skilled people. What is happening to this road? Is it being taken over by bush at the present moment or will the Ministry continue and will it be surface in the very near future so that we can have this highway leading to Brazil?

With respect to subhead 13, Upper Mazaruni Road, a correction is necessary. The note on the right states: “See note below U.N.D.P. assistance.”

When we look at the bottom of the page, however, the note states: “To purchase for an access road to hydropower site.” Obviously, that is a misprint. The note should read: “To provide for an access road to hydropower site.”

Subhead 15, Cultural Centre. This is really a “white elephant.” [Hon. Minister: “It is red and gray.”] I have no doubt that it has changed its colour due to the passage of time. The Approved Estimate for 1974 was \$1,100,000. Can one reasonably presume at \$10,000 was not done in accordance with the Government’s plan in the 1974 Estimates. We do know that the Government is asking for \$1,110,000 next year, which is the same amount that it requested for this year, 1974. The legend states: “To provide for the completion of the Cultural Centre Building.” surely, the sum shown in the Revised Estimate column, 1974, was spent. Was any significant amount of work done in 1974 on that building? How can we revise the expenditure sometimes we see no significant amount of work being done on it? The Government has put this figure down here, \$1.1 million, as the revised estimates of the cost. This is the Government’s assessment of the estimates of the cost. This is what would properly be done up to the end of the year. This is wrong.

The next question is: will this building really be completed in 1975 with this \$1,110,000? This is what the Government is requesting. **[Interruption]** the hon. Prime Minister is talking about guesses. Is the Minister saying that the sum of \$1,110,000 will complete the building in 1975 since there has been so much controversy about this building, an ancillary

question should be: can the hon. Minister say whether the Indian immigration money has been used in the erection of the building: The hon. Prime Minister announced that that money would be diverted towards this building. Has that, in fact, been done? If so could we know the amount that was utilised? If that has not been done, maybe the hon. Minister would tell us whether there has been a re – thinking of the position and whether the money will not now be used in respect of this Cultural Centre.

Subhead 16, Government Buildings. The sum of \$4.6 million is being requested to be spent in 1975. It is a lot of money. Last year when we asked what was going to be constructed, we were told that the intention was to construct a new Customs Building for the Customs Department. We have not seen any such building round and about Georgetown. The sum approved for 1974 was \$1 million but the revised amount is \$400,000. What was done with this sum of \$400,000? Apparently nothing was done in connection with the Customs Building, unless it was in the nature of engineering drawings etc. Now, we are asking not for \$1 million but for \$4.6 million. Will the hon. Minister give us some details and tell us what is proposed in respect of the construction of Government offices in this year of escalation, 1975. When the Government is expected to do many things?

Subhead 18, Purchase of Equipment. The amount being requested here for Purchase of Equipment in 1975 is \$2 million. This does not include an amount for roads, which is shown in the Roads section on this page. It is not for Workshop Equipment which is shown lower down. Will the hon. Minister give us some idea of what kind of equipment we will be buying here? We do not want the kind of answer which reduces the matter to the ridiculous when the Government tells us: a couple of bolts and nuts and that sort of thing. We want the big items because it is a large amount of money. We are not asking stupid questions.

4.10 p.m.

Subhead 24, Revised Laws of Guyana. We note the sum of \$632,000 in the Revised Estimates column. We are now being asked for the sum of \$252,000. What I should like to know is: Is this for more copies of the volumes or is it merely to pay arrears on our original printing bill?

In any case, it would be interesting to know that was the number of sets of laws that the Government ordered and what the total cost was. It would give us an idea of the cost of this operation: how many sets of laws were received and what was the total cost?

In respect of subhead 28, Special Projects, we look at the legend and we see, “To complete special projects.” The amount being sought is \$50,000. Could the hon. Minister give us an idea of what these special projects are?

I made a request for details in respect of 32 and 33. This is in respect of the Pure Water Supply Division and I think the hon. Minister will recall that we had shared very grave concern in respect of this division. We both were anxious for work to proceed expeditiously in respect of pure water supply. We would like to know what progress is being made in this field. We know that the programme what off to a bad start; we know it is very much behind hand. we wonder how much we have able to catch up now that we see \$1 million is being requested to be spent for water supply (Force Account), and \$4.5 million is being requested to be spent on water supply (Contracts), making a total of \$5.5 million in respect of pure water supply, will the hon. Minister give us an idea of the programme, what areas will benefit from the works proposed for 1975?

The Chairman: we will sit continuously until 5p.m. I am advised that at 5 o'clock we should complete the Estimates. Please proceed hon. Minister.

Mr. Naraine: I should like to assure the hon. Member that work will not be taking place only between Houston and Camp Street. Work is presently going on at the Sarah-Johanna deviation and there will be other improvement along that road.

In respect of subhead 6, Essequibo roads, it is true that at one time, about a year and a half ago the section of road beyond Dartmouth going to Charity was in a bad condition but that road h has been improved considerably. The sub-base and the base of the road have been improved and I think that if the hon. Member takes another trip to the Essequibo Coast he will see that substantial improvements have taken place. What we hope to do this year is to take out a very had turn and a very bad bridge at Anna Regina and therefore there will be improvement

between Bush Lot right on to Henrietta. This would make this section of the road from Adventure to beyond Dartmouth a very good road with a bituminous surface.

Subhead 8, a question was asked about the hinterland roads. I should like to say that this money will be spent as follows: \$2.26 million will be spent on the forestry road going to Mabura Hill; \$2.5 million on the road Orealla to Crabwood creek; and \$1 million on the road Kumaka ,Parima to Teperu. The last will link the Linden Highway, to the Essequibo River , to Teperu, then to a point on the bank of the Mazaruni, where again a bridge will be built to join to the Upper Mazaruni hydro-power road .

In relation to the Madhia-Annai road, the hon. member knows that work is going on and, out of this a sum of \$150,000 will be made available to the Army. The Army has been carrying out and will continue to carry out improvements on the road so that we will be able to approach Lethem and the Rupununi through Madhia-Annai.

There is a correction. The explanatory note to subhead 12 should read, “To provide for feasibility studies of feeder roads. Anticipated U.N.D.P. Assistance.” The note below subhead 13 will read, ‘see note below’, and the note below should read, “to purchase bridges and construct an access road to the Hydropower site.” I believe those corrections will have to be made.

Subhead 15, Culture. What was known as the Indian Immigration Fund will still be utilised in the construction of the cultural centre. There is no change in that position. It is a small sum by comparison to what will be spent totally on this cultural centre. The amount of \$1.11 million to be expended provide certain furnishings. We will work to try to get this date of completion accomplished during 1975.

Subhead 16, Government Buildings. This is what we did in relation to the customs bond and the customs office. In 1974 we did a design of the new customs office and a sum of about \$200,000 has been spent on the customs bond at Kingston. There is still some money to be spent on the customs bond at Kingston.

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4.10 – 4.20 p.m.

During 1975, the following works will be started and/or completed: Office of the ombudsman, Customs Building : Offices for the Ministry of Foreign affairs, Supreme Court, New Amsterdam, additional offices for the Ministry of Education, Office in the Ministry of Trade, an extension to the existing premises, the completion of the Customs Bond- half was done during the year; the next half will be done next year -the Regional Ministers' houses and offices, a block of flats for public officers, offices for the Director of Audit, a laboratory for GUYWA and the commencement of a building for the Ministry of Finance, which, in fact, when completed will accommodate the co-op Mortgage Finance Bank and Agricultural Bank. In addition to that it is hoped to construct another block of offices and this will be constructed either at D 'Urban Park or at some selected site. Those are the items which comprise the \$4.6 million.

4.20p.m

Subhead 18, the purchase of Equipment. With respect to the sum of \$2 million, I have already alluded to the equipment being purchased German Democratic Republic. Next year we will have to pay down for the equipment valued at \$14 million, which will arrive over the over the next year or so. This will be about \$380,000. Equipment has been ordered and will arrive in the country between now and next from the People's Republic of china and that will be about \$1.2 million. Then there are certain Sunday items adding up to approximately \$420,000. Those are the details in relation to that.

Subhead 24, Revised Laws of Guyana. With respect to the sum of money put here, I am afraid I cannot answer all the questions asked but I am sure the hon. Member can get this information from the hon. Attorney-General's Office. What I should like to say is that the books of law and went to a particular point of time and since then revisions of laws and new laws are being added. since the book are prepared so that additional material can but put in as it arrives, it is intended to be a continuing process so that the laws can be continuously brought up to date.

Subhead 28, Special projects, is a very small subhead and these special projects are done where there are important of some particular building they are occupying for some

[Mr. Naraine continued]

particular purpose. The Minister will use his discretion in allocating sums of money from this so that these special things can be done for the people in those particular communities.

In relation to subheads 32 and 33, I thought that subhead 33 was explained in that we are to have the water supply projects started in the Linden area. We have meters to be installed and a few other incidental works to be done between Soesdyke and the Friendship area in that major water improvement scheme. In relation to subhead 32. Water Supply 9Force account), works will be done virtually all over the coast. For instance, in the West Coast canals area a new well will be put in. On the islands, water improvement works will be done. We have already done some on the Essequibo Coast. Work will be done on the East Coast and on the Corentyne coast whereby there can be a general and continuous improvement in the water supply for the several areas.

Division XXI, Ministry of Works and Housing – Works – \$42,241.500 – agreed to and order to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members I shall only allow fifteen minutes more for this head page 117.

DIVISION XXII – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING –

WORKS – IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – WEST COAST DEMERARA PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,450,000 for Division XXII, Ministry of Works and Housing – Works, IBRD/IDA Projects, West Coast Demerara Road Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXII, Ministry of Works and Housing – Works – IBRD/IDA Projects, West Coast Demerara Road Project - \$3,450,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 118 and 119.

HEAD 35 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING**(HOUSING)**

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,103,620 for Head 35, Ministry of works and Housing – Housing, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I am afraid; I am forced to ask only one general question. There is now Housing Corporation yet I still notice posts here and things which one would normally expect would have been done by the Housing Corporation. For example, the Housing Estates are going to be taken over by the Housing Corporations. Have we removed some of the posts, Housing Estates Offices, etc, from this subhead, posts that would normally go into the Housing Corporation? How much will the Housing Corporation take over from this particular subhead?

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, the Housing Corporation is not set up to carry out maintenance work and as the hon. Member knows the Ministry of Housing has several thousand rental apartments, self – help houses, all over the country and several hundreds of rental – purchase houses. These will still have to be maintained and the Housing Ministry will still have to initiate and process applications for housing lands, aided self – help housing. What the Housing

Corporation will be doing is developmental work in terms of developing new housing estates, whether for and on behalf of the housing Ministry or on their own, for sale to the general public. This will come out in the run of things. But it is principally for developmental and what is shown here in the Estimates will be for the self – help housing and maintenance of existing Government Estates.

Head 35, Ministry of Works and Housing – Housing - \$1,103,620 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 120.

**HEAD 36 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING
(HOUSING) – TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING**

Question proposed that the sum of \$327,669 for head 36, Ministry of works and Housing – Housing – Town and Country Planning, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 36, Ministry of Works and Housing – Housing – Town and Country Planning - \$327,669 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 121.

**DIVISION XXIII – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING
(HOUSING)**

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,980,000 for Division XXIII, Ministry of Works and Housing – Housing, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXIII, Ministry of Works and Housing – Housing - \$7,980,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates,

The Chairman: Page 122 and 123.

**HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING
(COMMUNICATIONS)**

Question proposed that the sum of \$643,025, for head 37, Ministry of Works and Housing – Communications , stand part of the Estimates.

Head 37, Ministry of Works and Housing – Communications – \$643,025 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 124 and 125.

**HEAD 38 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING -
COMMUNICATIONS – POST OFFICE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,264,799 for Head 38, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications), post office, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I am being put in a strait jacket. I will ask only one question here so that it will have a chance to speak on the Prime Minister's Head, which I am sure you will not deny me.

The Chairman: You are most welcome.

Mr. M.F. Singh: In respect of this Head 38, I shall ask just one general question. We have been told that there will be established a Post Office Corporation yet we see that we have been asked to vote money for the Post Office for the entire year, 1975, and that forms part of the general amounts which have made up our total budget, Will the hon. Minister enlighten us on this? Will these monies be spent? What will be the relationship between the Post Office Corporation that is supposed to be set up and all these posts here?

4.30 p.m.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, we had to put the estimate as it is because before the Post Office Corporation can be established certain legal instruments will have to pass through this House. If the hon. Member looks he will find that revenue is derived from the Post Office and therefore although expenditure is shown here in place revenue is shown. This kind of estimate can cut off at any particular time. There will have to be arrangements in terms of people being offered jobs in the Corporation. At this point it is difficult to say whether all these people will be in the Corporation but when the Corporation is formed then either these people will be with the Corporation is formed then either these people will be with the Corporation or they will have to be put on other jobs. These estimates can come to an end at any particular time without any difficulty.

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4.30 - 4.40 p.m.

Head 38, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) – Post Office, \$4,264,799 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 126.

HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (COMMUNICATIONS)

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS DEPARTMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,786,022 for Head 39, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) - Transport and Harbours Department, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 39, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) – Transport and Harbours Department - \$4,786,022 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 127 to 129

HEAD 40– MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (COMMUNICATIONS)

CIVIL AVIATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,150,151 for Head 40, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) - Civil Aviation, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Again I will incorporate everything into one general remark. In respect of our international Airport and item (50), Senior Airport Attendant, there is widespread dissatisfaction, principally by the people who work at the Airport, in respect of flooding when the rain falls. I have been there and the Customs Officers have complained to me bitterly about their unsatisfactory conditions of employment with the building being flooded. They have also complained about the fact that very frequently the pure water supply goes off and they are left without any water supply. After a hard day they cannot even have a bath and the toilets cannot be flush. I have complained before about the restaurant facilities. They are still – and I can find no better word to describe them – abominable. The service is sloppy; many items are not available as befitting an international airport with the standards we claim. I have mentioned this in the past to

the hon. Minister. Has he had a chance to look into it and what can be done to make the situation much better at our international airport?

Mr. Naraine: In relation to the water supply at Timehri there is a pump that is needed and provision has been made in the Estimates. The pump has been ordered and should be in the country shortly. In respect of the general arrangements and facilities, I myself have not heard too many complaints about flooding but I have heard complaints about the dining room and certain other things. We are going into the question right now in relation to the services and I can only assure the hon. Member that everything possible will be done to give better and better service at this international airport for not only the people who work there but the people who use the airport. I hope that whenever we discuss this matter again there will be no need to raise this question.

*Head 40, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) Civil Aviation - \$1,150,151
– agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

The Chairman: Page 130.

DIVISION XX1V - MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING

(COMMUNICATIONS)

Question proposed that the sum \$8,773,400 for Division XX1V, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) stated part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Just one question. What is the position as regards the new control tower? I understand the foundation has been put down but nothing else seems to be happening.

Mr. Naraine: Work is going on at the control at Timehri and only this morning I signed an agreement for a lift to be ordered for that control tower. Work is going on, the foundations might have taken a long time because it is quite a heavy and tall building but I am sure that work has been completed, the rest of it will be going up more rapidly.

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4.30 - 4.40 p.m.

Division XXIV – Ministry of Work and Housing (Communications) - \$ 8,773,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 16 and 17.

HEAD 1 – OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$121,328 for Head 1, Office of the President, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 1, Office of the President - \$121,320 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.40 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 29.

HEAD 7, PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$774,020 for Head 7, Public and Police Service Commissions stand part of the Estimates.

Head 7, Public and Police Service Commissions \$774,020 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 32 to 34.

HEAD 9, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,502,550 for Head 9, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Sir, I am dealing with subhead 1, item (19) to (47). These are position in the Youth Division and in the Guyana Youth Corps. We have been told in this House that the Youth Corps has been absorbed by the National Service. We expected that the Youth Division would have been absorbed in the same way, yet here we find that all these posts are

retained except the Director and Assistant Director of the Guyana Youth Corps, item 922) and (24) respectively, According to the legend , these officers are on secondment. We still have the other 33 staff members and 22 Youth Organisers and officers. What are they doing?

National Service is costing \$11 million. This is another \$300,000 approximately. Why are we keeping them here instead of either scraping this list and putting everything over to the National Service or making some other arrangement? We have gone to the stage of listing these posts making the staff like the staff of a Ministry. They were never listed before and one wonders at the need for this listing in view of the fact that we do have National Services. It does seem a terrible duplication to be having National Service \$11 million and also expenditure for Youth Division and Guyana Youth Corps to the extent that is reflected here in the Estimates.

Page 33, item (57), Duty Allowance. This was not reflected in the 1974 Approved Estimates. It appears in the Revised Estimates column. It is a small amount, \$1,440, but these little things add up. That was stuck in the Revised Estimates column and in the Increase or Decrease column there is shown “\$1,440” but, contrary to practice, no explanation has been given as to why this Duty Allowance of \$1,440 has been stuck in the Revised Estimates with a provision of \$1,440 for 1975. Who is getting this \$120 per month and for what reason?

We shall deal with subheads 2 to 6 together because the legend states that these subheads includes provision for Youth Division. Subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, approximately \$53,304; subhead 3, Miscellaneous \$18,500; subhead 4, telegrams, \$1,000; subhead 5, Telephone, \$105,000 and subhead 6, Library and Publications \$7,500. What I am specifically talking about is the legend which states; “includes provision for Youth Division.” What is being said here is that in this money being requested for 1975 is an amount of money which is entirely attributable to the Youth Division. Why do we need monies here for the Youth Division when we have National Service?

Maintenance and Operations of vehicles, subhead 10. The Ministry’s Revised Estimate for 1974 is \$4,700, yet \$16,000 is being requested for 1975. If \$4,700 is sufficient for 1974, why do we need \$16,000 for 1975, bearing in mind that this \$4,700 is the assessment for the year of crisis.

In respect of subhead 13, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries, one has to ask questions about this because there seem to be so much that could be hidden inside this allocation. In the 1974 Approved Estimates the sum asks for was \$75,468: the 1974 revised figure is \$86,662 and the estimate for 1975 is \$96,435. Not a word has been given in explanation of the increase in the last column of \$20,967. Every year the amount of money spent on this subhead keeps climbing up.

In 1973, the actual amount was \$40,777; in 1975 it is \$96,435. How many of these Ministerial private Secretaries are there? What is their status? They seem to be neither permanent, pensionable nor non – pensionable because they are listed under Other Charges. Presumably, they are not recruited through the Public Service Commission. What are their qualifications? Who decides on taking them on? They seem to be in the position of casuals and I must express some concern for these people. If they are not civil servants, is it fair that we should keep them like this under Other Charges? If they give service for years and years, should we not make them civil servants? Should we not put them on the Permanent pensionable Establishment and remove them from this very insecure category of Other Charges?

When I was looking at the estimates for the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs on page 37, I did notice that that Ministry has Confidential Secretaries too. I would presume that those are perhaps for that particular Ministry and therefore these Ministerial Private Secretaries must be for the Prime Minister's "Ministers", if I can refer to it in that way. Perhaps, the hon. Prime Minister will say what he proposes to do with these "Other Charges" people and give us some other details about them.

On page 34, a quarter of a million dollars is being asked for in 1975 for subhead 18, Promotion of Youth Work and for subhead 19, Maintenance of Youth Camps, \$ 10,000 is being requested. Surely these expenses should now be absorbed in the National Service vote. Do we need to duplicate almost everything with national Service? Why can we not centralise this? If the Government has decided that there must be National Service, at least let us not indulge in this additional squandering of the taxpayers' money. Lets pool it all in one bulk and have it properly administered instead of fragmented as at the present time.

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[Mr. Singh contd.]

4.50 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham)

The Prime Minister: The Youth Division is separate and distinct from the Youth Corps and the National Service. The heads and items here provide for the administration within the office, and the scope of activities and duties cover unorganised youth sometimes, and youth organisations which may not be directly connected to either the Youth Corps or the National Service. There is, superficially at least, a point well made with respect to these officers whose posts appear on page 32 under the sub – title Guyana Youth Corps. The Guyana Youth Corps is to be absorbed by the National Service but it has not yet been absorbed . Furthermore, it is necessary to leave these posts here to maintain the pension ability of the posts until the persons absorbed in other positions created for them.

I should like to assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we take his point that so far the Guyana Youth Corps is concerned, it should now become part of the National Service. It will. It has not yet. There is difference between fact and intention. [Interruption] My Deputy is never wrong. I can be wrong.

The provision for transport, telegrams, telephones, and library and publications, includes a provision for the Youth Division. We are not saying that all of these costs are attributable to the Youth Division. We are not saying that all of these costs are attributable to the Youth Division but a proportion of the amount is referable to the Youth Division. The Youth Division happens to under the office of the Prime Minister now. Until August of this year, it was under another Ministry, the ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, so that the expenditure on these item with respect to the Youth Division, which would have been found in other Ministry, is now found here. That legend is supposed to explain in part the accretion which no doubt my hon. and learned Friend has identified.

Item (57). The duty allowance is for two women secretaries who work with and are junior to the Prime minister's Confidential Secretary, because they work very long hours.

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4.50 – 5 p.m.

there are occasions when these young women work right through until midnight or after , and since they are on the Fixed Establishment they are not entitle to overtime . We thought there should be some token of appreciation for their devotedness, their loyalty, their sense of duty and capacity to work hard. **[Interruption]** And if they work for the Prime Minister, ex mero motu they work for the party because the Prime Ministership is indivisible from the post of leadership of the People’s national Congress.

We do not concede that we have to be limited by the old concepts passed on to us by our former imperialist masters. **[Interruption]** That is the difference. We have initiative and imagination. Mr. Chairman, as Jesus asked – the hon. Member’s brother would have told him – “Was man made for the Sabbath of the Sabbath for man? “ Were we made for the Constitution or the Constitution for us? “ My son, my son, how long does it take you to learn? You were associated with me for four years but nothing washed off.

Under subhead 13, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries, I must say that my hon. and learned friend knows how they are appointed. They are purely political appointees at the pleasure of the appointers. When my hon. and learned friend was a member of the Government , there were two or three Ministerial Private Secretaries who were appointed , not even by the Prime Minister, because it was a coalition then ; they were appointed by his leader and I never question the appointments or the dismissals . Some of them were dismissed when their political loyalties became suspect. There is nothing wrong in that. These are political appointees. This is something one finds in every system regardless of the ideology of the system or the structure of the State. In many cases they are under contract but contract which permit of easy termination of services one way or another. Normally it is never more than a month. Persons who accept these appointments, like persons who accept ministerial appointments, know that there is a certain amount of uncertainty. They come into it with their eyes wide open, but I can assure the hon. Member that termination of services never takes place capriciously.

As the duties of the Government and the scope of the development programme increase and widens respectively, it sometimes, as has happened recently, becomes necessary

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for one to appoint someone who may be described as a “programme chaser”. The Government may know there are four, five, six projects in being, may know that there are supposed to be certain projects undertaken by certain friendly governments or through certain agencies, and the Prime Minister himself wants to keep a tab on these projects, to see how they going – not to dictate or push anyone but to keep a tab on them. Well, these are programme chasers of that type not the official programme chaser who covers the whole scheme of things, the technical adviser. The Prime Minister uses this subhead for such appointments.

In the majority of cases, if I may show my appreciation for the new found solicitude of the Leader of the Opposition for these people, the contracts carry a 22 ½ per cent gratuity provision so there is that sort of compensatory provision since they are not eligible for pension, not being on the fixed Establishment. There is nothing unusual about this under any system. Further, this subhead covers the manipulative staff who service the ministerial private secretaries.

Subhead 10, So far as the increase for the maintenance and operation of vehicles is concerned, I would submit that the legend properly explains that the increase is due to the number of vehicles to be maintained. But the whole Government establishment is being looked at. We find that sometimes there has been exercised a parsimony false economy of not spending enough on maintenance, only to find subsequently that vehicles, machines, fall into desuetude earlier than they would have, with obvious loss to Government. We thought we would beef up maintenance apart from increasing the number of vehicles which have to service this Ministry. Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, it should be noted that this Ministry has increased in size in that Youth now come under the Office of the Prime Minister.

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5 p.m.

I am grateful to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for suggesting that subheads 17 to 22 should properly come under the National Service head. That is proposed. I should like to assure him that it is the logistics that are giving some difficulty now. I hope that next year all of these provisions will come under, and will be taken care by, the National Service vote.

Head 9, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - \$1,502,550 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 35.

HEAD 10 – OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$17,193,725 for Head 10, Office of the Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The expenditure for 1975 is approximately at the level of \$17.2 million. This is being requested for the Guyana Defence Force. It is alarming that expenditure on this Head continues to increase at such a rate. Just two short years ago, in 1972, you will note that it was approximately \$7 million. Now for 1975 we are asking for approximately \$17 million.

I remember listening recently to a lecture by a very senior Government Official and he distinctly said that because Guyana realised that she cannot stand up to the military strength of her powerful neighbours she has to spend a much greater sum on Foreign Affairs to achieve diplomatically what she knows she cannot do with her army. And he went on very proudly to boast that in the diplomatic field Guyana has been able to meet the threat against her territorial integrity by Venezuela and by Surinam. He said this has happened purely because of her

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foreign service of her diplomacy , of the way in which she was able to rally to her side other powerful country – supporters and get world opinion in her favour and get world opinion in her favour.

In view of this and with the establishment of National Service, should we not now take a second very realistic view – in the words of the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Trade, Mr. Frank Noel, “Let us take a head look at this,” I remember distinctly how many times in the Cabinet and in the Economic Sub – Committee he would say “Let us take a hard look at it. “ Should we not take a long, hard look at our expenditure under the Guyana Defence Force and see whether in the interest of tightening our belts, in the interest of conserving our funds, we should not try to effect reductions under this Head?

We note that in spite of all the activities that we have been told are being indulged in by the Guyana Defence Force to Feed, House and clothe, their farming activities seem to be bringing in returns on the face of it here of only \$300,000 which is the sum against Issues of Farm Produce. Of course, we do realise that they put work in the land. The clearing of land and putting it under cultivation is also on asset. But one would have expected that we would have seen than \$300,000 as deduction for the issue of farm produce. Again we make the appeal. Could we not take another hard look at our Guyana Defence Force and try to cut down on the escalating expenditure?

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman , in the first place some of the items that have to be provided under Head 10 are items, though they consist of materials like uniforms , ammunition and the rest , that are imported and one has to provide for escalation in prices of goods which we have to import. Every attempt, of course, is made to have the maximum production of things needed here but there are some things that we are not yet in a position to produce. Therefore, that is one element that does account for the increase.

Further, members of the Guyana Defence Force, like most persons in the public sector, are on incremental scale. That is another element, so to speak. Thirdly, the population of Guyana is increasing and with it the services that are required increase in size and scope and,

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therefore, the Guyana Defence Force has also increase in size . I am not in a position, nor am I permitted, to give my hon. and learned friend the present size of the Guyana Defence Force.

There is also another element in this increase as against last year; that is pensions for member of the Guyana Defence Force. There are, therefore, four elements which have contributed to the increase. I should like to say further that the national Service cannot be an alternative to the Guyana Defence Force. The National Service, in certain circumstances, can be a supplement, so to speak, to the Guyana Defence Force but not a replacement or substitute for the latter. It must not be forgotten that the Guyana Defence Force is not a “spit and polish” army. For instance, one would have noticed under the earlier head dealing with the Prime Minister’s Office that there is an amount in relation to the closing of the dam at the Tumatumari Hydro – Power Station. The supervision is being done by the Hydro-Power Unit but the basic work is being done by member of the Guyana Defence Force.

When one goes to various parts of the country one sees the Guyana Defence Force involved in community activities which , perhaps , are not measurable in terms of dollars and cents but are measurable in terms of the contribution to the well – being of the community, the spirit of national self - reliance and the happiness of the community, these , I confess, may be difficult elements for my hon. and learned friend to understand but I try my best to explain to him every year and hope that in time to come he will appreciate these niceties.

It is true that Guyana ha not got the financial strength, capacity, to be engaged in a long drawn – out clash of arms with any of its neighbours. It is true that, as the world seeks more and more to find peaceful solutions to disputes and problems, we use, have used and will continue to use our diplomatic efforts, which have been fairly successful so far because of our international standing, to solve or get rid of these disputes.

5.10 p.m.

But Mr. Chairman, there are two points I want to make. One is that the Guyana Defence Force must be able to hold any enemy at bay at least for a few days or a few weeks.

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5.10 p.m.

The second point I should like to make is that the Defence Force is also supposed to come to aid the civil power in cases or emergency. I would have thought that, for instance, when there was the breakage in the East Demerara Water Conservancy it was primarily the Defence Force that took care of the mobilisation of the materials etc. and even the transportation of people to the schools where they had to stay for a few days and in some cases a few weeks.

One tends to fall into the error of thinking that the Defence Force, or an army, is primarily an organisation to be brought into play, or activity only when there is a confrontation with an external force. May I re – emphasise that the Defence Force is to come to the aid of the civil power in cases of natural calamity.

Head 10, Prime Minister – Guyana Defence Force - \$17,193,725 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 36.

DIVISION V – Prime Minister

Question proposed that the sum of \$13, 301, 00 for Division V, Prime Minister, stand part of the Estimates.

Division V. Prime Minister - \$13,301,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 39.

HEAD 12 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$17,530 for head 12, Ministry of Public Corporations, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M. F. Singh: I just want to make one point here. I want to take this opportunity to note that this is the Ministry of Public Corporations and more and more of the

business which traditionally used to be carried on by the Government is now being taken over by the Corporations. We have as recent examples the proposed Housing Corporation, the small Industries Corporation, the Forest Products Corporation and very shortly there will be the Post Office Corporation. These are areas that used to be audited by the Director of Audit. Therefore they used to come under the scrutiny of Parliament through the Public Accounts Committee.

I should like to appeal very strongly to the hon. Prime Minister to let the audit of these corporations be done by the Director of Audit, instead of having the present system of private auditing. Even the Minister of Finance is not satisfied with private auditing because he has recently said in his Budget Speech that companies will be audited on the premises by the staff of the Inland Revenue Department. There seems to be some dissatisfaction with respect to private auditing.

I am casting no aspersions against the firm of private auditors, or private auditors generally, but I do say this is an area in which we are given the opportunity of looking at the accounting system through the Public Accounts Committee after the audit by the Director of Audit. Surely if he and his department are good enough to audit Government accounts then there is no reason why they cannot be good enough to audit the accounts of Government corporations also.

I am sure that if there is any legislation necessary to affect this it is not outside of the capacity of the Government to enact legislation to make it necessary for the corporations to be audited by the Government Auditor. The Government claims and has shown that it is almost omnipotent; it can do anything it wants; it can change the Constitution as it proposes to do. If it is necessary to have legal authority than let it enact legislation to allow the Director of Audit to audit these accounts.

The Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that there are certain activities of the Government which we want to have relieved of the normal procedures of the bureaucracy. There are certain business activities which would be better done or carried out for the benefit of the State and people by a corporation or company. Secondly, if as Government extends state activities into a number of sectors and subsectors and either takes majority shares or purchases or takes over business enterprises, it would be placing an undue strain and extra burden on the normal civil servants to give them the responsibility to be in charge of or carry out the day – to – day business of these new enterprises.

As Government looks at the picture from time to time, it does identify some activities like those of the Post Office which are really not activities for normal civil service structure. for instance , the Post Office carries on the business of printing and selling stamps, it carries on the business related to philately , it carries on the business of being a means of communication by way of telegram.

These are normal business exercises and Government would like to be able to monitor them and see whether or not they are paying their way and whether or not they are efficiently carried out. It is not that we say that Government is profit – oriented and wants to be sure it makes a profit. We want to see that these duties and activities are efficiently carried out and in time we may find another institution. So far, Government has identified the Corporation as the institution which permits of the sort of monitoring and identification of areas of inefficiency and areas, of course, of efficiency.

There are some of these corporations whose accounts are audited by the Director of Audit. As a matter of fact. If I remember correctly, the Public Corporations Act does provide for the Director of Audit being the Auditor if it is so decided.

There are two questions about that. First of all, the auditing of the normal civil service accounts business is somewhat different from commercial auditing and therefore it would mean. As has already begun to happen, that the staff of the Director of Audi will have to be increased and expanded. Them is seems to me that if we were to decide that the Director of Audit would be responsible for auditing all the accounts we would have to think seriously of

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creating a new section of the Audit Department, a section to deal with the commercial auditing of the Public Corporations.

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I would like to remind my hon. And learned Friend that even if the Director of Audit were to be responsible for the auditing of all the account of all public corporations and companies and business enterprises in which the Government is involved, these accounts still would not come to Accounts Committee because under the Public Corporations Act, which, in fact, is an amendment of the Public Corporations Ordinance of 1962, the Accounts Committee does not go into the accounts of public corporations and public enterprises.

However, under the Public Corporations Act and as a matter of tradition the accounts for these various corporation are published and laid on the on the Table. Any Member who wants to raise any matter arising from these reports may do so, if I remember correctly, under the Standing Orders, by way of Resolution or Motion. Therefore, there still is maintained the ultimate parliamentary control because of the right of the Member of Parliament to place on the Order Paper a Motion or Resolution in relation to any matter arising out of the audited accounts of any public corporation.

Head 12, Ministry of Public Corporations - \$17,530 – agreed to and ordered to stand to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: pages 41 and 42.

HEAD13 – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$570,592 for Head 13, Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Sir, this is the Head dealing with the Public Service Ministry and I would like to make a general remark and ask some questions briefly.

Traditionally, civil servants were supposed to be non-political and impartial. Now that the hon. Prime Minister has announced that the Party is supreme and the Government is subservient to the Party, does this mean that civil servants will now have to be P.N.C. members and P.N.C. activists? Does it mean that they will have to be involved in political activities generally?

I have been talking to civil servants and already they are very, very worried. Some, of course, have jumped on the band wagon. They are drifting along with the tide and, in fact, getting very much involved. Others, however, are afraid. They have been forced or coerced into attending indoctrination courses like the one recently held at Tumatumari. They have been asked to take part in political activities and to attend rallies and marches and so on and, out of fear for their future, fear for their jobs some of them have, in fact just taken the easy way out and have done what they were asked to do.

But, what does the future hold for those who merely want to serve honestly, impartially, independently and not be involved in Party activities, and in politics generally? What will happen to those people who are set in their ways and, perhaps, want to maintain that impartial position?

I think that now that the P.N.C has the majority, it will cavy out its intentions do. In fairness to those people who have reached, perhaps, the end of their careers in the Public Service or very nearly so, it is perhaps the fairest thing to allow them to retire with full benefits, with full pension right. Let them go rather than force them to prostitute themselves and to sell their consciences in order to survive in their jobs. If the Government does not want them, let them go but do not force them to be involved in politics if they prefer not to be involved.

I make a plea for these people for these people. We cannot stop what the Government intends to do. Already we see the hon. Deputy Prime Minister putting up outside a Government office a signboard: "Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress and Ministry of National Development." A political post is being exhibited on a Government Office. If that is the pattern, is it not time for our civil servant to be very, very, worried indeed?

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I think it is time that the Government give some consideration to these civil servants who have served very well in the past, who have kept themselves clear of politics, who have been impartial, who have given the best part of their lives serving without any idea of not doing the right thing. They have served well. Let us give them some consideration.

There may be other subheads we should comment on but we will not involve ourselves in the small matter here because there are many big matters that we need to attend to. However, I should like to mention one small matter that needs some correction. That is, subhead 1, item (28), Telephonist. The sum voted in 1974 was \$1,920; there is no provision in the Revised Estimates column for 1974 but the same amount is asked for in 1975 \$1,920. To understand this, we must look at page 42, subhead 4, Telephones. We note the approved estimate for 1974 was \$32,000. The revised estimate for 1974 was \$25,470 and the estimate for 1975 is only \$20,000. If we look at the column on the right-hand side reflecting increases and decreases, we see “\$12,000” and the legend states: “switchboard previously provided for no longer required.”

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I commend the Public Service Ministry for this economy. It is doing away with its switchboard; it is no longer required, and this results in a saving of \$12,000. If there is no switchboard and the Ministry is making this saving are need to be told why we are still being asked to provide for a telephonist in 1974 when in 1974 there is no provision, in keeping with what the legend said. There is nothing in 1974, but in 1975 the Ministry want her back. I wonder whether the decision has been reused and the Ministry is re-introducing the switchboard.

I want to mention subhead 6, Restructuring of the Public service. It is a small amount of money and presumably there are still a few matters left over from the job evaluation which will have to go on.

The Prime Minister: No man can operate in vacuo and this legend about the impartiality of civil servants is utter nonsense. One does not see it anywhere. Under colonial times, we were told that the civil servant was impartial, neutral. But he took every single order

from, and sought at all time to please, that most political agent in this country when it was a colony, Her Majesty's or His Majesty's representative, the Governor. Nowhere in the code for civil servants is it stated that a civil servant may not indulge in politics. The provisions which hitherto appeared in the code precluded the civil servant from writing publicly or being publicly involved in political activities.

Now the type of accusation we hear coming from the hon. Leader of the opposition we have heard before- from his predecessor in office, but his predecessor in office, when he was my predecessor in office, had a number of civil servants most active in politics. I conceded at that time that if one is to take a realistic look at the circumstances in Guyana, this alleged neutrality of the civil servant is something that bears no relevance to our circumstances. I cannot see how you can ask a man to take orders from a politician is talking about. If the Government has as its objective the increase in the number of co-operatives to understand what you are talking about unless it is explained to them?

A career as a civil servant is a voluntary career. No one need remain there. It is even more voluntary than that of politics because there is no supporter of yours to come to you and say, "please stay to save us" I understand the supporters of the United Force went to the leader of the United Force and asked him to do. If there is any member of the public Service who claims that he has been to attend any rally, I would ask the hon. Leader of the opposition, not to give me his me. Because coercing a person can achieve no results. And just in case the hon. Leader of the opposition does not know, the Pensions Act was amended some time ago and allows persons to retire from the Public Service and at the discretion of the cabinet-I suppose he will say the Cabinet must not have discretion. 4 Any person retiring may be given all the fringe benefits and superannuation benefits as if he had served his full time.

He speaks of persons selling their consciences. Indeed, they are despicable who want to sell their consciences. But this Government has no money to buy such law-grade material, to waste its money on low-grade material, and any public servant who believes he has to sell his conscience to keep his job is confessing that he is incapable of making a living elsewhere, because if he is so good and he is so competent, in the context of increased

opportunities, he could have got another jobs. In other words, the Civil Service for him is a have, is a shelter.

No wonder, one young man, when asked what was his ambition in life, said he would love to be a retired civil servant. He had in mind such people who has sold their consciences because of their incompetence merely to gain the favour of those they believe have power. But let me hon. and learned Friend that , so far as I am concerned, I am a sufficient judge of human nature and human competence not to want to make use of these lineal descendants of Esau. I prefer the lineal descendants of Jacob.

My hon. and learned Friend during the course of his remarks said the Government is subservient to the party . It all depends on how one looks at it. My hon. and learned Friend ‘S preference is perhaps for , subservience to the colonial masters , then subservience to the neo – colonialists , then subservience to the big capitalists all of which he thinks can develop this country. I never said that the Government is subservient to the party. I said the party is paramount to the Government. A different point of view. We look at it from different angles. It is a question of the Government being subservient, but of the party being paramount, and for his benefit I will explain. Since the party includes in it the Government and every member of the Government, the political Government is a member of the party and a member of the party’s councils along with other comrades, a concept which he cannot understand.

Perhaps he should be invited to one of these “indoctrination” courses as he calls them; I would merely say “education courses”. So faulty is his education that he describes Madewini as Tumatumari. The very first lecture on this course is geography – know Guyana. If you ask him where Leeds is, he would know. And if you asked him where Glasgow is, he would know, but when it comes to Guyana, he does not know the difference between Tumatumari and Madewini. He has to be de- brainwashed, and I would remember to the General Secretary of the Party that letter be send to my hon. and learned friend, for whose potential, I have the highest regard, inviting him to attend the next course.

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And now Mr. Chairman, are we going to spend our time chasing shadows? There is an allusion to the fact that at a certain building you see “Office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C. and Ministry of National Development.” Now, who is the Minister of National Development? The General Secretary of the People’s National Congress. You expect him to be schizophrenic or you want him to be a little boy running up and down; spending one minute as Minister of National Development and then running around the corner or down the road and spending the rest of his time being the General Secretary? let us accept the fact that the General Secretary of the party is the Minister of National Development and the Deputy Prime Minister. Mr. Nixon, Mr. Ford, all of them accept the fact that it is Brezhnev they go and talk to. Do you think they will go and ask Podgorny or Kosygin. They go and talk to Brezhnev, the paramountoy of the Party, and do you think that Brezhnev is going to say “This is a Government building therefore let me just go to a Party building that is only necessary until the public can identify. But the hon. Leader of the Opposition himself came here and spoke to me as Leader of the P.N.C. rather than as Prime Minister. The hon. Member himself admits that this schizophrenia is disgusting.

Finally, I should like to say a few things quite seriously. Firstly no public servant is coerced to support the People’s National Congress. My hon. and learned Friend knows better than that. He knows that I know who are the U.F. Member of the Service and there has been no discrimination against them. In fact, we facilitated a certain U.F. Member in becoming his Adviser and paid out of public funds for remuneration.

Secondly, no one is being asked to sell his conscience. But, thirdly this Government has seem it fit to expose senior public servants to the rationale behind the Government’s thrust and development programme, has sought to expose them to what informs the Government , The People’s National Congress in ideological terms. More of these public servants who have been so exposed have been asked whether they are members of the P.N.C. and they have not been asked to become members of the P.N.C. Let me repeat. No one has been

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asked whether he is a member of the P.N.C. and no one has been asked to become a member of the P.N.C.

So long as the People National Congress is led by me, and as long as the People's National Congress is the political Government of the day, let me say this: That I am prepared to turn the Nelson eye to whatever provision there may be with respect to civil servants taking part in politics. They are free to take part in politics.

Further, we do not believe in the so – called “neutrality.” How can a public servant who is neutral enthusiastically push a self – help programme in a housing co-op? How can a neutral civil servant, neutral as between exploitative capitalism and the humanitarian socialism, be asked to push a programme when there is an application for a plot of Government land by a co – operative and by a rich landed proprietor? The neutral civil servant will say “Well, let me examine the circumstances. This landed proprietor has had experience operating agriculture lands. This landed proprietor has had experience operating agriculture lands. He had large holdings and he is a man of considerable wealth and property as a result of his expertise in agriculture.” Excellent. That is the neutral civil servant. But we do not want that type. If we have that type how will the little man ever get a break? Only three of the little men in the co-op ever held a cutlass, perhaps only three or four of them know the difference between cassava and eddo. They know nothing about management. They have to be helped, they have to be assisted, they have to be trained.

Will, the old criteria be applied? As my hon. and learned friend said. “People cast in the old mould.” I borrow his words. I am guilty of plagiarism. The neutral civil servant will say “Give the big man.” What happens? This is contrary to the philosophy of this Government. That is contrary to what the people put us in Government to execute and furthermore that neutrality is a chimera because that is neutrality in favour of the old order. In other words , I have a piece of cake to share; I divide it and I give my friend the bigger half and then I say I divided it in half and I am neutral.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot last forever. But so long as I am here those are my beliefs. That is my credo. When I shall have been removed either by the divine or by the people, let someone else, with a new concept, come in and run this Government and let me tell my hon. and learned Friend the alternative to the People's National Congress is – And further I say not. [Mr. Singh: "You are always threatening me."] I am not threatening you, I am reminding you of the palpable facts of life and existence in Guyana.

With respect to the telephones, there still remains need for a telephonist. The system we operate at the Public Service Ministry is not as modern as the one at the Office of the Prime Minister, the big switchboard. But there is a system which needs a telephonist. Out of a desire to curtail expenditure, we were not proceeding with the installation of a switchboard. But it may well become necessary, in the light of events during the course of the year, for us to put in the switchboard. I must confess that I think this is false economy that the office of the head of the Public Service should not have a switchboard. I am going to plead with the hon. Minister of Finance to bring the proper supplementary later for us to put in a switchboard and then we shall need not one telephonist but, at least, two or three.

Head 13. Public Service Ministry - \$570,592 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION VIII – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,756,650 for Division VIII, Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimates

Division VIII, Public Service Ministry - \$3,756,650 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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The Chairman: Pages 26 and 27.

HEAD 5 – AUDIT

Question proposed that the sum of \$721,623 for Head 5, Audit stand part of the Estimates

Mr. M.F. Singh: On the last occasion I raised the question of Audit reports and the hon. Minister of Finance said that they were late. I pointed out that under the relevant legislation the accounts for the preceding year should be presented by the 30th April of the following year. It seems as though we are very much in arrears. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would care to report on what is being done to bring down the arrears.

The last Audit Report presented to this honourable House was presented in 1968. We appreciate what the hon. Minister said on the last occasion. We should like to know what is being done to have the accounts presented promptly by 30th April of the following year and to have the reports laid before the honourable House.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance [Mr. Hope]: Mr. Chairman, I should like to advise the hon. Leader of the Opposition that with regards to the reports of the Director of Audit the 1969 Report is with me now for submission to the Cabinet and I am further advised that the reports for the years 1970, 1971 and 1972 are to be concluded and completed in the coming year 1975. We are increasing the capacity of the relevant departments to process these reports rapidly and, in effect, provision has been made in certain Ministries for proper and modernised computer systems to enable the more rapid processing of the data. Three reports are due for completion I am told in 1975.

Head 5. Audit - \$721,623 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: page 31.

DIVISION IV – OTHER SERVICES NOT UNDER MINISTERIAL CONTROL

The Chairman: Hon. Members please note on your copy of the Estimates that due to a Printers omission the sum of \$31,000 had been omitted under the heading of total, “Other Finance” and sub- totals accordingly.

Question proposed that the sum of \$31,000 for Division IV, Other Services not under Ministerial control, stand part of the Estimates.

Division IV Other Services not under Ministerial control - \$31,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 191.

HEAD 76 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,091,640 for Head 76, Ministry of Finance stand part of the Estimates.

Head 76, Ministry of Finance - \$4,091,640 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 191 and 193.

HEAD 77 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE**ACCOUNTANT GENERAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,801,693 for Head 77, Ministry of Finance – Accountant General, stand part of the Estimates

Mr. M.F. Singh: Just two short question on page 192. Subhead 13, Crown Agents Charges. I notice we are still using the Crown Agents. After all the emotionalism which has been stirred up about colonial institutions I wonder how it is that the Government is still using the services of the Crown Agents.

Subhead 15, leave Passages – Public Officers. We all know that this year public officers were told that they would not be allowed to go on leave because of the economic situation. I think the public officers understood that this was a temporary measure and now that the economy has improved we wonder whether the hon. Minister would care to make some pronouncement as to how long this restriction will last, whether next year public officers will be allowed to go on leave or whether the same restriction will apply and what the position will be in the future.

Mr. Hope: Sir, with regard to subhead 13. Crown Agents Charges, I think it would be appreciated that in many cases where things have to be purchased it is not merely the act of purchasing which is involved but also the question of inspection, the technical Knowledge which has to be applied to many of these things and which we found it convenient to use the Crown Agents rather than doing it ourselves, particularly where we do not have the expertise or it would be more expensive to get people up there to do the necessary inspections. In fact, we have been finding it necessary to use Crown Agents to some extent even though to a larger extent we are using the facilities of our High Commission Office in London.

With regards to the leave passages for public officers, you will remember that I said in my Budget Speech that even though things had certainly come out much better than we had dared hope at the beginning of this year the circumstances which necessitated those measures have not been entirely removed. I also said that in the circumstances, all the things we did this year we needed to do next year if we are to ensure that the gains we have made this year are in fact retained.

In the operation of this system, the public servants have found it, I am sure, very useful. They have not been able to go on vacation leave abroad but they have been able to get all their leave passage spent in a variety of ways including the purchase of houses, the re-payment of mortgages as well as the building of houses. I venture to advise the hon. Leader of the Opposition that many civil servants have found the present system very useful. I pointed out earlier that international circumstances have not improved that we could in fact relax our efforts and I would think that would apply to this question as well.

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Head 77, Ministry of Finance, Accountant General, \$2,001,639 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 194 and 195.

HEAD 78 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,787,174 for Head 78, Ministry of Finance – Customs and Excise stand part of the Estimates.

Head 78, Ministry of Finance – Customs and Excise - \$2,787,174 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

6. p.m.

The Chairman: Page 196 and 197.

HEAD 79, MINISTRY OF FINANCE – INLAND REVENUE

The Chairman: On page 196, under subhead 1, item (22) has been omitted. Please insert under establishment 1973 “3”, 1974, “3”, 1975 “3”; item “(22)”, under Personal Emoluments. ” Revenue Collectors, A 12, \$9,000.” The addition is correct; it is just an omission.

Question proposal that the sum of \$3,516,354 for Head 79, Ministry of Finance, Inland Revenue, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M. F. Singh: I spoke at length in my contribution to the Budget Debate in respect of the Inland Revenue Department. I have no wish to go over that whole field again. I am sure the Minister heard what I said though he did not have an opportunity to answer me. But, there are one or two things that I should like to ask about specifically and if the hon. Minister cares, he can volunteer any other information with respect to what I said generally.

One question is with respect to the Property Tax. The hon. Minister did say in the 1974 Budget Speech that he would remove the restrictions on the limitations of indebtedness in respect of the Property Tax – only a certain amount was allowed, 50 or 20 per cent. The question we would answered is, how soon will the legislation come forward to implement his recommendations? That is what he told us in the 1974 Budget Speech – that something would be done. I presume that something is being done about it.

The second question is with respect to the Board of Review. I did point out that this board operate originally. It is operating more like a full – fledged Court of Appeal than anything else. I pointed out, for example, that decisions can be as long as 13 pages - as is this decision that I have in my hands here from the Board of Review. The members of the Board seem to want counsel to represent the people who appeal. They hear Counsel on both sides. They sit only for very short periods every day – an hour, an hour and a half and from what I can gather, they earn \$40 a day.

I did make some recommendations about the system which obtains in Trinidad. I should like the hon. Minister to tell me what the system is in Trinidad. I should like the hon. Minister to tell me what the system is in Trinidad and ask him if he could investigate that system. But certainly some work should be done to streamline the system which, at present, obtains in this particular Ministry.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the matter of property Tax Property Tax Act implement those proposals which I announced last year . The matter was delayed because there were one or two questions which had to be thrashed out and settled with the Insurance Companies which posed a peculiar difficulty. I think this issue have been settled and we should be able to bring the Bill to Parliament the next time Parliament site.

With regard to the Board of Review, we recognise that there are a large number of cases before the Board of Review and that, in fact, the appeals are not being determined as rapidly as one would have wished. It is for this reason that we propose, as I mentioned in the Budget Speech, to expand the Board of Review, increase the membership, appoint a number of Board of Review, increase the membership, appoint a number of vice – chairmen or co – chairmen so that

we will have the Board of Review sitting in three groups simultaneously, each chaired by the chairman or co – chairman or deputy chairman, the idea being to facilitate the movement of appeals.

If an appellant wishes to arm himself with a lawyer, I do not think it is our right to object to that. Similarly, I think it is only right that the Board of Review should give a thorough examination to the appellant's case. This may involve long written decisions but I am sure that is not the order. I am sure there are many shorter decisions. There might be long ones but there might be justifiable reasons for long decisions.

There is one other matter I should like to clarify. In the Budget Speech I referred to the fact that Inland Revenue Department intended, from time to time, to carry out audits on the premises of Companies. I think the hon. Member misunderstood me and thought that what I was talking about was the ordinary commercial audit about is the audit, the complete examination of the books and the figures which the Inland Revenue Department has to do in pursuance of its jobs of taxing the companies. That is the kind of audit which will be done on the premises in order to make of audit a little more efficient and a little less complex.

Head 79, Ministry of Finance –Inland Revenue - \$2,516,354 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 198

HEAD 80 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE – POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK

Question proposal that the sum of \$100,514, Ministry of Finance, Post Office Savings Bank, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 80, Ministry of Finance – Post Office Savings Bank - \$100,514 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 199

HEAD 81 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE – PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

Question proposal that the sum of \$2,133,015 for Head 81, Ministry of Finance, Pensions and Gratuities , stand part of the Estimates.

Head 81, Ministry of Finance – Pensions and Gratuities - \$2,133,015 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 200 and 210.

HEAD 82 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE – PUBLIC DEBT

Question proposed that the sum of #322,232 for Head 82, Ministry of Finance, Public Debt, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 82, Ministry of Finance – Public Debt - \$332,232 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 211.

HEAD 83 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE**REVISION OF WAGES, SALARIES AND RELATED PAYMENTS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$20,100 for Head 83, Ministry of Finance, Revision of wages, Salaries and Related payments , stand part of the Estimates.

Head 83, Ministry of Finance – Revision of wages, Salaries and Related Payments - \$20,100 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 212

DIVISION XXXII – MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$20,100 for Head 83, Ministry of Finance, Revision of wages, Salaries and Related Payments, stand part of the Estimates

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Head 83, Ministry of Finance – Revision of Wages, Salaries and Related Payments - \$20,100 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: This concludes consideration in the Committee of Supply of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1975.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply considered and approved of the estimates of expenditure for 1975 with the following corrections:-

(1) Re – numbering of Head 32 as Head 33;

(2) Re- numbering of Head 33 as Head 32;

I now ask that the Motion be put.

Question –

“ That this National Assembly approve the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1975 , of a total sum of four hundred and fifty eight million , six hundred and eighty – seven thousand , five hundred and twenty – seven dollars, net of appropriation – in – aid , and excluding seventy – two million, five hundred and one thousand , four hundred and fifty – one dollars, which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under mentioned schedule , and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance”

put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

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SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO.12

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House(Mr. Ramsaroop):
Mr. Speaker, may I with respect seek your leave to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 12 dealing with the Order of Business of the House to enable the Appropriation Bill 1974 to be introduced at this Sitting and to be concluded.

The Speakers: Leave is granted.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Mr. Speaker, may I now formally move the suspension of Standing Order No.12 dealing with the Order of Business to enable the hon. Minister of Finance to introduce the Appropriation Bill 1974 at this Sitting.

Question put , and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 12 suspended.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING OF BILL NO 42/1974 PUBLISHED 19.12.74

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time: Appropriation Bill 1974. [**The Minister of Finance**]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL- SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

APPROPRIATION BILL 1974

19.12.74

National Assembly

6.10 – 6.20 p.m.

Mr. Hope: in accordance with article 80 (2) of the Constitution of Guyana, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended the following Bill for consideration by the National Assembly:

A Bill intituled:

“An act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sum necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the Financial Year ending 31st December, 1975, Estimates Whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of that sum of specified purposes, in conformity with the constitution.”

I now move the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 1974.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill read the Third time and passed as printed.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Speaker: Hon. Members, as this is the last occasion on which we will sit before the Christmas holidays, may I take this opportunity of wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas. I hope that the very long holiday, most unusual in our history, will let us be refreshed and that we will return with greater vigour for the completion of our business.

I also take this opportunity of thanking the members of the staff for their help and wish them a very pleasant and happy Christmas.

The Prime Minister: Comrade Speaker – [Interruption]

The Speaker: The ruling of the chair on an occasion like this has already been that it should be “Mr. Speaker”.

The Prime Minister: “Mr. Speaker” for the time being, because, using our majority in the House, we propose to move certain Amendment to the Standing orders so that we can get rid of these imperialist forms of salutation. **[Interruption]** I apologise, and, as corrected, Mr. Speaker, but I am sure that you would prefer to be addressed otherwise.

It is usual, as we meet for the last time before Christmas, to exchange Christmas greeting in this House. I think it is more than a mere formality on this occasion and, indeed, on most occasions it has been more than a mere formality.

Christmas is a time of goodwill when we forget our differences and seek to remember our common citizenship and our common resolution to serve the people of Guyana. The year 1974, as we all know, has been a very difficult year. It has been a year when Guyana has been faced with the economic crisis with which other countries have been faced. But it has been a year during which, thanks to the assistance of the Divine and the competence of the Government, we have been able not merely to survive but also to save our economy and to have a surplus much larger than we have even had in the history of this country, even during colonial times.

While we give praise to the Divine and, I suspect, others will pay compliments to the Government, it is only right that we remember that some of the measure which were taken took the form of legislation. We had to come to the Parliament and once we are in the Parliament, we had to be under the Jurisdiction of the Speaker. Sir, you had as difficult a year as most of us, and I would like to say to you on behalf of the members of the Government side, that we wish you a good, happy, peaceful Christmas and that, of course, includes your dear spouse as well as your progeny.

In spite of the noise which have been made from time to time by the opposition, in spite of the fact that ideologically we may seem to be opposed, I am convinced, sir, that the opposition has been motivated at all time by what it considers to be right. Though you must disagree with people who start off from different premises from yourself, at least you can respect the fact that they are doing and saying what they think is right. And without the opposing views of the opposition, we might not have had an opportunity of examining more closely the theses

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and the bases from which we operate. In any case, political differences are not a sufficient reason to bring to an end a friendship that has been established over the years.

In the circumstances, therefore, when, on behalf of the Government members, I wish also the members of the opposition and their respective spouses and children a Happy Christmas, I am doing so from the bottom of my heart and with the full endorsement and mandate from the rest of my colleagues on this side of the House .

Before we meet again, no doubt, Mr. Speaker, unless some fortuitous circumstance arises, the New Year will have dawned and 1974 would have come to an end. It is therefore proper, if not apposite, in the circumstances, that I offer greeting again to you, your dear wife, and family, the members of the opposition and their respective families. That 1975 will be full of energy and further service to this Parliament, to the nation, is my sincere wish on behalf of myself and my colleagues.

Too frequently we remember those who are formally concerned and not those who never seem to catch the limelight, those whose light, perforce, seem to be hidden under bushels. In the circumstances and in this context I am mindful of the services that have been performed in this Parliament by our Sergeant-at-Arms, a man of dignity with a sense of loyalty, who enjoys his job and, from my latest information, has now ventured into the field of literature in which I wish him equal success to that which he has achieved in this Parliament. **[Applause]** He , too, has a family and to him and his family our wishes go for a pleasant, peaceful and happy Christmas and s satisfying 1975. These are my wishes on behalf and my colleagues to him.

6.20 p.m.

But think then, Mr. Speaker, of these hardworking members of the fairer sex who with our cross-talk, our interruptions, our heckling, until we are called to order by you, have had to labour. Theirs has been a herculean task. Herculean may appear impact in relations women, I wonder what word has to be found to describe or identify the quality which they possess to be able, so to speak, to leave out and forget and not hear what is not intended for the records and yet hear what will find a permanent place in the records of this House. In their own

way and in their circumstances they are geniuses. They have worked hard and have always been able to maintain smiling faces with base, from time to time, kept younger, the members on the Government side. We wish them a happy Christmas, we wish them happiness and we wish them for 1975 all that they deserve. And as we say all that they deserve we are mindful of the fact that they deserve the very maximum.

The members of the Press have, as usual. Been misquoting many of us during the course of the year. But we have blamed that, not on ill-will, but on human frailty which we, as legislators, share with them especially at this time. We are going to forget them and wish them also, a happy Christmas, merry Christmas, peaceful Christmas and a New Year that is full with achievement.

And then, there is another section that is not represented here this afternoon and I refer to those who have to those who have to dot the "i's" and cross the "t's". Looking through the calendar for this year I have noted that we have passed something like fifty bits of substantial legislation which is as a result of hard work and dedication. Very frequently people complain about Government not introducing this bit of legislation and that bit of legislation but under our present system each piece of legislation represents laborious toil and many hours. We want to send, through this medium, our wishes for Christmas and the New Year to those who have prepared the law which we have passed during the course of the year. We are not unmindful of the fact that in addition to the law which they have prepared for us they have to prepare large volumes of subsidiary legislation. They have worked hard, they deserve our gratitude and earn our best wishes.

I may, at this stage, observe that one of the things that we have to look at during the course of 1975 is whether or not the old British way of legislating is suited to our circumstances. Whether or not we should not look at other techniques of legislation, the declaratory legislation that is found in some countries which have not fallen under the British influence. The meticulous drafting which is required sometimes cause important legislation to have to wait and time and the people are not inclined to wait *in aeternum*. My Government is considering new approaches to legislation such as we know. Draftsmen in the old mould and tradition are hard to

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6.20-6.30 p.m.

come by and there is no commonweal country that I know of, including the United Kingdom, which has not been complaining of a paucity of draftsmen.

As I said at another time and in this place, was man made for the Sabbath or the Sabbath made for man? Was this Parliament made for the old forms and the old approaches? Or were the old approaches and the old forms made for the old society?

Some people are frightened by the thought of change, especially radical change. But no society can hope to achieve unless it is from time to time prepared to take a realistic look at and select what made sense before, but makes nonsense today.

The year 1975 promises to be a year when my colleagues in the Government and in the Party, both which it is my humble duty to lead, should be taking had looks or taking up radical approaches, revolutionary approaches, revolutionary approaches. We shall always be advised by the opposition.

In wishing the opposition a year of achievement in 1975 we wish for them also elasticity of mind to recognise that we are now embarking on new time. what more can I say except Merry Christmas and a fruitful 1975 to everyone whom I have mentioned and to other whom I have forgotten because of the encroaching old age. And, of course, I nearly forget those in the public gallery without without whom we would have no gathering to perform to. [**Applause**]

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, at this time as we come towards the end of the year and enter into the festive season, it is perhaps necessary to cast our minds back and review the year's activities very briefly. And after having reviewed in our minds those activities I think that by and large it is true to say that we have operated in this honourable House in a spirit of co-operation. Some things we have heartily welcomed and approved of, other we were vigorously opposed to. However, our objections never made us forget that we are all Guyanese brothers and sisters together striving to secure for everyone in Guyana a reasonable existence.

At this time of the year, in the true spirit of the festive season and in spite of all our objections to the recent pronouncements of the ruling Party, some of which we just heard, as fellow Guyanese I would like to wish you, sir, and your most charming wife and family a very merry Charismas, God's choicest blessings and our very best wishes for the New Year.

6.30 p.m.

On behalf of my party, my colleague and myself I should also like to extend those wishes to the hon. Prime Minister, his very dear and understanding wife and his family, to all the Members of this honourable House, to the Members on the Government Benches, to the staff of Parliament- I include and heartily endorse the remarks made by the hon. Prime Minister in respect of our charming ladies, the official reporters, and I must include also the members of the Press. Also I am reminded – and I am thankful to the hon. Prime Minister for this – of the staff of the Drafting Department; I share with him his sentiments about the hard work they have done throughout the year. In fact when we were dealing with the Attorney General's Office I made some remarks along these lines. I said that those very worthy gentlemen can command much higher salaries in other parts of the world but as a service to Guyana they are staying here and serving the nation. To them also we extend our wishes as we do, indeed, to all our fellow Guyanese in whatever walk of life. I share the sentiments of the hon. Prime Minister in respect of the Public Gallery and in respect of the staff operating this equipment given to us by West Germans. May we wish then all a very peaceful and enjoyable Christmas. If I do not have the opportunity to extend these wishes before the New Year may we extend our wishes for a very prosperous New Year to all of us and to all Guyanese. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Hon. Members, we are sure to meet again before the year is over. We shall meet on the 27th December.

Adjournment may I say that I shall be very grateful if all hon. Members, members of the Press and the advisors of the Ministers will join with me in having refreshments in the Committee Room. Hon. Leader of the House.

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6.30 - 6.36 p.m.

Mr. Ramsaroop: For the notification of Members the Order Paper for the next sitting for 27th December has been circulated. I move the adjournment of the sitting of the House until Friday 27th December, 1974 at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.
