

**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**

68th SITTING

2:05 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, 25th JUNE, 1975

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

(Absent – on leave)

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT – PEOPLE’S NATIONAL CONGRESS (50)

Prime Minister (1)

Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E, S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development

Senior Ministers (8)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C., Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice	(Absent)
*The Hon. H. Green, Minister of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation	(Absent)
*The Hon. H.O. Jack, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources	
*The Hon. F.E. Hope, Minister of Finance	
*The Hon 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	(Absent- on leave)
 Ministers (6)	
The Hon. W.G. Carrington, Minister of Labour	(Absent- on leave)
The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley, Minister of Information and Culture	(Absent)
The Hon. B. Ramsaroop, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House	
*The Hon. Miss. C.L. Baird, Minister of Education and Social Development	
*Dr. the Hon O.M.R. Harper, Minister of Health	(Absent)
*The Hon. C.V. Mingo, Minister of Home Affairs	

***Non-elected Ministers**

Ministers of State (9)

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

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

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

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

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

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

*The Hon. 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)

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

(Absent)

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

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (17)

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

(Absent – on leave)

(Absent – on leave)

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition – Liberator Party (2)

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

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

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

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

25.6.75

National Assembly

2:15 – 2:20 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Minister of Agriculture up to the 30th June, 1975.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Report of the Transport and Harbours Department for the year ended 31st December, 1975.

[The Minister of Works and Housing (Communication)]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2 OF 1975

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/1975 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totaling \$3,253,355 for the period ending 31st December, 1974.”

[The Minister of Finance]

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope): Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution of Guyana I certify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of 1975, schedule of Supplementary Provisions on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$3,253,355 for the period ending 31st December, 1974 and I do so move the Motion.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Singh): Mr. Chairman I propose to speak on items 1, 2, 8, and 9, but preface my speaking with a few general remarks.

I am alarmed at what appears to be the Government's haphazard attitude towards the country's financial affairs, the country's accounting procedures. In December of 1974 we were presented with the Estimates for 1975 and in these Estimates were the revised figures of expenditure for 1974. These we debated for several days in December, 1974. Now, at the end of June, 1975, 6 months later, we are told that there were advances made in 1974. This is what this schedule says. "Schedule of Supplementary Provisions advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1974." These are additional to the figures which these estimates contained as the revised figures for 1974.

The total of this paper is \$3,253,000. It means that our revised figures for 1974 are out by approximately 3 ¼ million.

If we look at page 24 of the Budget Speech, where at the top it said, this compares with the deficit of \$1 million projected at the beginning of the year for 1974 but the net surplus actually produced was \$39 million minus \$31/4 million which we are not being asked to approve which leaves \$351/4 million minus or plus, that is, taking into account any surpluses there may have been on the revenue side.

2:20 – 2:30 p.m.

Sir, these figures, my contention is, could have been presented to the nation a long time before now instead of at the end of six months, so that we could have had, at an earlier date, a

more realistic pictures of what our financial position was at the end of 1974, an update one may say of the 1975 estimates. Surely if those advances were made in 1974 they could have been presented long before today. We are now at the end of June 1975. This is what worries me: we do not seem to be paying attention to giving the nation the latest figures as regards our financing and our financial procedures.

Turning to the Schedule of Supplementary Provision proper, dealing with item 1, Head 2 – Supreme Court of Judicature, subhead 4, Transport and Travelling. The voted provision was \$38,500; the previous supplementary provision as sought and approved was \$10,000; supplementary provision now sought is \$9,000. The legend states: “Voted Provision inadequate due to increase in activity.” When the Supplementary Provision of \$10,000 was voted in 1974 – and I seem to recollect it was round about November 1974 – the legend stated, “increased rates in travelling allowances.” Now an additional \$9,000 is being sought and this makes a total of \$57,000.

But let us note that the amount asked for in the Estimates for 1975 is only \$49,500. So we have an expenditure of \$57,000 during 1974 but the amount requested for 1975 is \$49,500, a marked decrease in the amount for 1974. Obviously the question arises: What is this increase in activity which occurred in 1974 but will not occur in 1975? Because in 1975 they are not requesting as much money! Is it that once again, later in the year we will have an application for a supplementary provision to increase the vote of \$49,500 for 1975 in order to meet this increase in activity? It is not in Financial Paper No. 3 so maybe the request will come later. Or is this increased activity something which will not continue?

In respect to item 2 - Head 3, Magistrates, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, the voted provision was \$69,500. We voted last year November an additional \$17,000, now we are being asked to vote \$5,000 and the legend states: “Increased number of cases in Berbice and Essequibo districts.” The total amount being requested for 1974 is \$69,500 plus \$17,000 and now \$5,000, making a total of \$91,500 for 1974. But only \$87,000 was requested and approved in 1975. Again the question arises: Will there be a drop in the amount of cases in Berbice and Essequibo? Is that the reason why we are asking for a lesser amount in 1974 than in 1974? Or is it that again

we will later in the year – and I will remember this – another paper for a supplementary provision on this vote? We cannot reconcile the figures for 1974 and 1975 as they stand at the moment.

I move down to items 8 and 9, Head 8 – Public Prosecutions, subhead 5, telephones. Head 9 – Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, subhead 5, Telephones. I will take them together as they both deal with telephones. Members of this House will remember that over the last two years I have spoken *ad nauseum* about the prompt payment of telephone accounts. The former Minister Dr. Kenneth King who was in charge of corporations at the time agreed with me. I am sure the present Vice Chairman, the hon. Minister Mr. King... **(Interruption)** Mr. Chairman, like your predecessor it may be necessary for you to rule before the end of this session that the appellation “comrade” is not the official appellation in this House. **(Hon. Members (Govt.):** Not yet.) There are those who say not yet. That remains to be seen. If it is that these members really regard this House as a mere rubber stamp... there are those who say it is and I have sometimes taken pains to explain that in some cases the Opposition has been able to get Government to change some of the things it put forward. I am very pleased about that. But if we are going to sit over there and say that it is merely a question of time and it is merely a rubber stamp, then maybe I had better stop saying that the Opposition has been able to get the Government to change some things on some occasions.

I would have to think that we are sitting over here and serving no useful purpose. Let us wait and see whether that bit of legislation will pass and then we can make pronouncements about it. Before that, let us keep our mouths shut. *(Interruption by Dr. Reid)* I seem to recollect very distinctly that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister made changes in the legislation relating to the slaughter of animals as a result of my discussion with him. Do not now spoil it by presupposing and saying that you are merely a rubber stamp over there.

Dealing with the question of telephones, the hon. Minister Mr. King I am sure will agree that it is absolutely necessary for these corporations to be able to operate on a sound economic basis. If they cannot have their bills paid they in turn will not be able to pay their bills. I happen

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National Assembly

2:30 – 2:40 p.m.

to know that the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation has not been able to meet all its commitments. For example, it still owes a lot of money to Cable and Wireless for overseas telephone calls made. I am in sympathy with the Corporation. How can it pay its bills when such significant sums of money are owing to it by the Government and it is in the unfortunate position where it cannot cut off the telephones?

2:30 – 2:40 p.m.

If, in the times in which we are living the General Manager, or somebody high in the telecommunication Corporation, cuts off the telephones of a Government Ministry, he would be looking for another job. That is the reality of the situation at the present moment. So what happens? The telephone bills remain unpaid until the Government chooses to bring an application for supplementary provisions to pay what? “To provide for the payment of outstanding accounts for 1973” this legend states. Item 9 just states “To enable payment of outstanding telephone accounts.” Whether that goes back to 1972, 1971 or 1970 one does not know.

I do not wish to keep harping on this. I make an earnest appeal to all Ministries to instruct their accounting officers to get down to the job of finding out what the arrears of payment are. This is June, 1975. After 1½ years have elapsed the Government is asking for money to pay off its 1973 accounts. Is this not a ridiculous state of affairs?

The Ministries, I will say, must instruct their accounting officers that unless they change this pattern they would be disciplined. It is a highly unsatisfactory situation and they must be disciplined for this. Some effort must be made in this matter. I am not even satisfied that these figures are realistic. Look at them! Public Prosecutions, Telephones, voted provision \$4,000; supplementary provision \$500. Is this realistic for 1973 or is it a guess? One would have thought that if it was arrears of accounts for 1973 there would have been a specific amount. It is testing our credibility far too much to ask us to believe that the arrears come out to a nice round figure of \$500. That is pushing us too far.

Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, voted provision \$50,000; supplementary provision voted last year, \$40,000; supplementary provision now being sought, a nice round figure of

\$50,000. And this is not for this year; it is for 1974: “To enable payment of outstanding telephone accounts.” One can understand that if the Government is asking for provision for 1973 it will ask for a nice round figure to square it off, but when (it is) asking for a past year like 1974 one would expect that the Government would ask for the exact amount due for 1974 and not for a round figure of \$50,000. Where will this end? When will we get the exact figures? When will Government put a stop to what has been happening here? Also, I would expect that an office like the office of the Prime Minister would be the one to set the example. That is all for this first page, sir.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was at pains to criticise the Estimates before us on the ground that in the case of the telephones, for instance, we have been allowing substantial arrears to build up in the Corporation. I gather that the thrust of what he was saying was that we should attempt to pay our bills to the corporations promptly; in this case, the Telecommunication Corporation. But, sir, much of what he said may well have gone unsaid because the whole purpose of this paper was precisely to do what he says – to pay promptly.

If he had observed, these items listed here represent sums already paid from the Contingencies Fund which means that accounts have already been paid. In recognition of the policy that we should pay the Corporations promptly, we did not wait – as the hon. Member mislead himself into believing – for June to ask for the funds. We paid last year out of the Contingencies Fund. So, sir, I hope the hon.

Member recognises the need, before he criticises, to understand the paper before him; this is important, sir. Mr. Singh: These accounts were paid after the Estimates.) These accounts were not paid after the Estimates; they were paid from the Contingencies fund in 1974, and they are being brought now for the first time to clear the fund.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition also raised the other issue of the increase in the provisions in the Estimates, but, it will be observed in many cases that during last year, every effort was being made, particularly in the areas of travelling and telephones, to restrict and to curtail expenditure.

There are cases, however, where the ministries are, in fact, able to prove that additional work has to be done involving additional travelling or additional forms of expenditure. Where those are justified, we make the provision and it is no logic to feel that those same circumstances will continue into the following year, so one will find that there are circumstances where the Estimates for 1975 will exceed the total provisions, original as well as supplementary, for the previous year and this would largely be in those areas where special circumstances occurred in 1974 necessitating increases which circumstances there is no reason to believe will continue into 1975. So, there is more than a mere mathematical logic to the preparation of these Estimates and I hope the hon. Member recognises that.

The Chairman: Any other Member would like to reply to the Leader of the Opposition?

Page 2

Mrs. Singh: Items 11 and 16. Item 11, the heading is Ministry of Information and Culture, Broadcasting (general). The voted provision was \$16,050; the supplementary provision now sought, and already advanced from the Contingencies Fund in 1974 is \$10,463. What interests me is the legend: "To meet outstanding accounts for Guyana Broadcasting Service G.B.S.." The G.B.S. I would think, generates its own funds principally from advertising and that sort of thing. I have never seen this kind of legend before and the question I would like to ask is whether the Ministry the Ministry picks up the deficit of the Guyana Broadcasting Service? If so, whether this has been a recurring deficit? We have never been told and we do not know what the finances of G.B.S are like. What kind of accounting does the Service have? What kind of a budget does it operate on and particularly, if it can be said now, how much was the deficit in 1974?

2:40 – 2:50 p.m.

Was the deficit merely \$10,463, or is there more and this is only to meet outstanding accounts? The legend states: "To meet outstanding accounts for Guyana Broadcasting Service", and I am wondering whether it means outstanding accounts owing by G.B.S., or whether it could possibly mean, outstanding accounts owing to G.B.S. It needs a bit of clarification and that is

what I am looking for. Is it merely that the Ministry of Information owes G.B.S. these moneys and payment is to be made not merely for G.B.S., but in favour of G.B.S?

The other item is item 16, Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, Maintenance and Operation of Land, Air and Water Transport. the voted provision was \$325,000; supplementary provision approved last year in November was \$131,000, and after the approval in November or some time thereabouts, an additional amount of \$156,9777 was advanced from the Contingencies Fund. This was to meet, as the legend states, “increase in price of fuel.”

One wonders whether this additional amount is not in fact an increase in the quantity of fuel rather than an increase in the price of fuel because we were told at the time that \$131,000 represented an increase in price. One wonders about this particularly in view of the fact that we have been informed that police land rovers and police squad cars have been seen openly conveying female “relatives” here and there about the place. My information is that it is alleged that police vehicles have even been driven against the traffic along the one-way Woolford Avenue during the restricted hours. I wonder whether the hon. Minister can shed any light on these very serious allegations.

Mrs. DaSilva: I have a very short comment on item 15, Head 20 – Prisoners Rations. The supplementary provision now being sought for the Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, subhead 11 – is \$4,000. The legend states: “To meet increase in cost of foodstuff.” Not so very long ago, in this House, the hon. Minister of Home Affairs was detailing for us the number of people who are in prison – the prison population – and he was able to show us that the number has been going down each year. We were talking about the work to be done on the prisons and the overcrowding in prisons. While we appreciate that the cost of food is also going up each year, how is it with a smaller prison population there is need for more money to meet increased cost of foodstuff? Could the hon. Minister tell us?

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): I wish to congratulate the hon. Leader of the Opposition for the definitely specific thrust in his questions and, of course, they warrant specific answers. The answer to his query is that these accounts are owing by the Ministry of Information to G.B.S.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo): In respect of the question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Singh dealing with item 16, Maintenance and Operation of land, Air and Water Transport I wish to say that there has been an increase in the price of fuel which necessitates the extra amount which we seek to have now. There might also have been an increase in the quantity of fuel which used. That is because of the fact that the fleet of vehicles used by the police was increased and so there must have been more activity. Perhaps we can add to the legend that there was also an increase in the quantity of fuel.

As to the allegations which he made, I promise him to have them investigated.

On the question raised by the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, again I should like to tell her that she is confusing matters. The item, Prisoners Rations, indicated under subhead, Police, does not deal with prison at all. It refers to meals supplied to persons who have been locked up by the police.

The Chairman: Page 3.

Mr. Singh: Item 18, Head 20 – Ministry of Home affairs – Police, subhead 19 – Court expenses; voted provision \$21,000, supplementary provision now sought \$9,000. This is a significant amount, nearly 50 percent of what was originally voted, and the legend seems to be far too vague: “To meet unforeseen expenses.” It does not carry us any further. I know there are some times when, for reasons of national security etc., we are told that we cannot be given details. This does not seem to be one of the cases. I think we are entitled to some further explanation of this legend. I would not have asked it were it not for the fact that it is nearly 50 percent of what was originally asked for.

Item 22 deals with the Pig development scheme. The explanation is that the provision is adequate due to the increased cost of stock feed. The voted provision was \$36,000; supplementary provision of \$8,000 is now being asked for. Perhaps the hon. Minister should examine this project very carefully in the light of the explanatory note. If he cannot do so now, will he tell us whether he considers that this project is profitable, or whether he should not give it serious thought and consideration whether it might not be discontinued if it seems to be eating up \$20,000 more than was originally intended to be used for it?

The Ministry estimated that \$36,000 would be needed. It is now asking for an additional \$20,000. It may be quite true that there is an increase in the cost of stock feed but I am told that stock feed is being subsidized also. Is it not time for us to examine this? What is the return? Is the return from this Pig Development project satisfactory? Does it compensate for this amount of expenditure? Maybe we should turn to some other areas where returns are, perhaps, more remunerative. I am not saying that you must cut it out and have the people employed do nothing at all, but let us look at alternatives if it is not a profitable proposition.

Item 23, Head 34, Ministry of Works and Communications, (Communications). This is, again, our old recurring friend “Telephones”. The voted provision was \$35,000; the supplementary provision now sought is \$23,126 to provide for the payment of outstanding accounts; for what years, we do not know. It is not stated. A Post office Corporation is now being set up and these figures do look like genuine figures. The amount of \$23,126 is stated not \$50,000 or \$500. It does look genuine and, perhaps, the hon. Minister would like to tell us whether these are the final figures and there are no further arrears in respect of the post Office department which has now been set up as a corporation.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, with respect to item 22, Pig Development Scheme, I would wish to inform the hon. Member that, as I am presently advised, the scheme is very profitable and there is no intention of abandoning it at the moment. This fits into the objectives of government to feed ourselves and Livestock Development plays a very important part in the agricultural programmes. We would like to set an example and this scheme will continue because I understand it is very profitable (*Interruption*) this is a question I cannot answer at the moment. If you table a Question I will supply the information.

With respect to the other question on item 18, Court Expenses, I am informed that during last year there was a lot of court activity where witnesses had to be brought from far away areas in the hinterland. This can be very expensive and it is something that you can never estimate accurately. So there is a lot of activity by way of bringing witnesses from the hinterland and other areas and this added to the expense.

Mr. Naraine: The question asked on item 23 relates to whether this is the end of arrears or whether we will have to pay arrears in the future and, if so, at what time. I am not in a position to say what time these arrears apply to. But what happens is that some of these accounts take a little time before they are questioned. If they are in doubt a lot of queries are asked and it takes time before they are settled. That is why we end up with these arrears so often.

The Leader of the Opposition was very kind to us in saying that this is reasonable and we have a Post Office corporation. This House knows that he has been on a rather long holiday and obviously the hon. Member was not in touch with events taking place in his country. I wish to inform him that we are still discussing and planning to have the corporation set up but it is not yet set up.

The Chairman: Page 4. Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, sir. Item 26, Personal Emoluments: It deals specifically with supplementary provisions now sought. The legend states: “To provide for the reclassification of posts of Principal, Vice-Principal, and Instructor from 1st January, 1970.” The supplementary provision being sought is \$24,312 for the reclassification of three posts. This seems to mean, and the hon. Minister would correct me if I am wrong, that there will be back pay of \$24,312 to these three persons. What worries me is that the Civil Service generally was not given any such retroactive payment in 1973 when all salaries, as I understand it, should have been regarded from 1969. This, I understand, was a moral commitment by the Government.

A further matter that worries me, even though it is not directly connected to this, is something that I have been looking at recently and that is increases. Here we have increases for three people with back pay, unless I am mistaken of \$24,312. Small men such as Judges; chauffeurs will be getting, I understand, an increase – paltry though it is – of \$6 per month from February. I had hoped that they would have got it from earlier than 1975, perhaps from June 1974 so that these small men could feel like real men. They have not even got this increase as yet. I understand it is in train and perhaps I could take this opportunity to ask the hon. Minister of finance to see what he can do to speed up this small increase. I am looking at these figures and

wondering how it is that these three people are so fortunate to have, if I am correct, back pay of \$24,312 from 1970.

I will move on to item 27, Head 55, Ministry of Health, subhead 4, Telephones. These figures here are really very significant. The voted provision for telephones in the Ministry of health was \$100,000. The previous supplementary provision, that is, what we passed additionally last year November, was another \$100,000, was another \$100,000. Now we are being asked to approve of nearly another \$100,000 - \$93,124 – and the legend states: “To provide for the payment of outstanding accounts.”

3:00 – 3:10 p.m.

Maybe it is time, in view of these large amounts, for the hon. Minister to cause an investigation to be made into the whole telephone system of this Ministry of health. Maybe it is time to take out some of these telephones and put locks on the remainder in order to cut down on this kind of expenditure. This is nearly \$300,000 to be spent in one year, but, of course, some of it may be outstanding.

If, on the other hand, the hon. Minister finds that this level of expenditure is genuine and it is really, in fact, necessary in view of the tremendous importance of this Ministry in the national life then, perhaps, we need to look further to see whether the voted provision of \$150,000 for 1975 is realistic. If we look at page 62 of the Estimates, the voted provision for 1975 is only \$150,000. So that, if we have estimated \$150,000 for 1975 and we have spent \$293,000 in 1974, something seems to be wrong somewhere. Perhaps the hon. Minister would explain.

Item 28, Head 64 – Ministry of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation, subhead 3 – Miscellaneous. The voted provision was \$43,460. Supplementary provision voted towards the end of last year was an additional \$15,000. Now we are being asked to vote another sum of \$16,097, and the legend merely says “To meet unforeseen additional expenditure.”

We all know that miscellaneous covers toilet paper, soap and all the other small items that have been enumerated to us here. I am not asking for an enumeration of toilet paper and soap and the rest of it. What I am saying is that the total supplementary provision amount to

\$31,097; \$43,460 was what was considered by the Ministry to be adequate for 1974 but they asked for \$15,000. And they are asking for an additional \$16,097. In other words, they are asking for \$31,097 in addition to the \$43,460.

Miscellaneous votes are not normally excluded to that extent so I think an explanation is necessary. We should not merely be told “unforeseen additional expenditure” unless we are going to be told that toilet paper and soap cost \$31,000 more.

Item 29, Head 64 – Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, subhead 32, Expenses, Kuru Kuru Cooperative College: The voted provision was \$638,000 and the supplementary provision sought is \$104,000. The legend again is very vague. It says: “Voted Provision inadequate to meet unforeseen expenses.” They may have been unforeseen expenses but in view of the fact that the sum being asked for is one sixth of the voted provision, I think it is necessary for us to be told the nature of these unforeseen expenses.

With respect to item 30, Head 65 – Ministry of Local Government – subhead 19, Expenses, Central Food Unit, the voted provision was \$213,465 and the supplementary provision now sought is \$107,793. That is more than 50 percent more and again it says: “Voted provision inadequate to meet unforeseen expenses.

Now, this is not an increase in the cost of foodstuff or anything like that. I am taking the legend literally, “unforeseen expenses”. And if we are asking for an amount which is 50 percent more than what was originally estimated, then merely telling us unforeseen expenses is not enough. I think we are entitled to know what these expenses were, quite separate and apart from any increase in the price of foodstuff. That is not what the legend tells us. If the legend is wrong, fair enough, we will be told that the legend is wrong.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education.

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman with respect to the provision of \$24,312 for home economics, I want to point out that there is an error in the legend. It should read “Instructors” rather than “Instructor”. This provision was made for the Principal, Vice Principal and 13 Instructors, that is for 15 people. Because of the significance of home economics for development it was found

necessary to enlarge the responsibility and the role and function of teachers of home economics and we had to re-grade these posts.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, with respect to item number 27, Head 55 – Ministry of Health, subhead 4, Telephones, I wish to state that the actual expenditure with respect to telephones for that Ministry for last year was \$200,000. The \$93,124 really was used to pay off some outstanding accounts for 1973.

The hon. Member wants to know whether the \$150,000 which is provided for 1975 would be enough. When the estimates were prepared for 1975 it was projected that there would have been new switchboard in June, 1975. The present telephone system in the Ministry more or less consists of independent lines which cost more because there would be more rental. It was felt that at least the cost would come down.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of works and Housing.

Mr. Narain: Questions were asked on items 28, 29 and 30. The general answer to these questions is that during the year 1974 there was escalation of prices particularly of imported materials, but more particularly in relation to these items there was an expansion in the activities of the Ministry in terms of the teaching of cooperatives at Kuru Kuru College in terms of self-help and community efforts, and aided self-help housing where food is supplied to a limited extent. Because of these increased activities it became necessary to incur additional expenditure and that is why we find ourselves today having to vote these supplementary amounts.

3:10 – 3:20p.m.

The Chairman: Page 5. Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Sir, I cannot help but comment on item 35, Head 70. Ministry of Finance, subhead 4, Telephones, because of the great disparity between the figures estimated and the final figures. The voted provision estimated for telephones was a mere \$25,000. Supplementary provision voted was \$95,000. One would have thought that when they asked for supplementary

provision of \$95,000 in addition to the \$25,000 that would have covered all, if not all, of what was required to meet outstanding accounts. Now we are being asked for an additional \$25,000.

There must have been somebody in this Ministry who could have realised, when they were estimating expenditure for 1974, that \$25,000 was most unrealistic. It had to be grossly unrealistic, if we eventually approved of \$95,000 plus \$25,000, a total of \$120,000. How can we say that we estimate \$25,000 to be our expenditure for 1974 and we are forced to ask for an additional \$120,000? The disparity in the figures is so great that it alarms me because I feel that somebody in this Ministry of Finance which is supposed to show an example should have realised that \$25,000 could never be adequate for 1974.

Item 36, Head 71 – ministry of Finance – Accountant general, subhead 18, special Visits and representation at External Conferences: Nearly half a million dollars was voted in 1974, then \$60,000 was requested by supplementary provision, and that was passed so that the voted provision was \$475,000; the supplementary provision is \$60,000. (Interruption) And a further supplementary provision for 1974 now being requested is \$75,000. One appreciates that it is necessary for there to be special visits and representations at external conferences, etc. one knows that that is necessary but what is surprising, what one has to gasp at is the large retinue, the large amount of people who seem to be traipsing along, to be part of these special visits and representations abroad.

The C.P.A Conference is a special conference which is held every year for the members of Parliament to keep in touch with what is going on, and the passages are paid for by the C.P.A. we are talking about these visits to various countries, not the visit so much, but the amount of people who are taken along on these visits. My appeal is for the Ministry to take a good hard look at this and to cut down on the big retinue of people who accompany these ministers and others on their trips overseas.

Moving on to item 38, Head 73 – Ministry of finance, Inland Revenue, subhead 10, expenses of Board of Review: The voted provision which was thought to be adequate for 1974 was \$20,000. The sum being asked for as supplementary provision is \$15,500, nearly three quarters as much, and the legend states: “to effect payment of arrears to members of the Board with effect from

1st January, 1973.” Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to give us some details of these payments of arrears. Have thee Members been given increases? Have their rates gone up? One would presume from the legend that is the case. If that is the case, what is the rate payable to them now? How are they paid? Parliament is entitled to know this; it is not a confidential matter.

As a subsidiary question, I remember in the 1975 Budget speech the hon. Minister did speak of paying some particular attention to the speeding up of appeals from the Income Tax Department. Has anything been done? Has the Board of review been extended or revamped? There were proposals in the Budget Speech and perhaps he can give us an interim report on what has been done to remedy the situation. It was obviously, in his own words, an unsatisfactory state of affairs. What has been done since the Budget speech was made to put into effect what was promised in the Budget Speech.

Item 40, Head 76 – Ministry of Finance, Public debt, subhead 552, Thames Guaranty Limited – Interest:.. Nothing was voted originally but supplementary provision was voted to the tune of \$87,696. I remember asking a question and we were told that a property was purchased in London and these were payment due. At that time, one would have thought, and this was in November last year, that the Ministry would have known what the entire transaction was and would have come to us for all that was needed for 1974, but we had an advance from the Contingencies Fund, an amount of \$29,123 to meet, as the legend states, “payment of interest on mortgage in respect of property acquired.” I am just wondering whether there was any special reason why this was not asked for at the same time that the supplementary provisions were asked for or if it relates to some other property. I had presumed, perhaps erroneously, that these two amounts relate to one transaction. It could be that it relates to (1) the Guyana office in London and, (2) some other building that may have been bought for residential purposes. If this is the case, would the hon. Minister please tell us.

Item 41, Head 76, Ministry of finance, Public debt, subhead 553, Purchase of Property – Canada: The sum requested is \$20,244 to provide for repayment of mortgage on property acquired. Could the hon. Minister tell us where this property has been acquired in Canada in view of the fact that we seem to have offices in several places in Canada. I did visit some of them.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, it would seem that it is very difficult to please the Opposition. Last year the Leader of the Opposition cajoled this side of the House about paying up arrears and when we, for once, took him very seriously and made attempts to pay the arrears even to the extent of taking money out of the Contingencies fund, we hear the hon. Member again criticising us for making these estimates. In fact, if he had taken the trouble he would have seen that these were outstanding accounts and that what the ministry of Finance was, in fact, doing was attempting to get together all the arrears and get them reconciled with the Corporation concerned, then pay the arrears.

What we certainly did now know, sir, is the final position because a number of those accounts were in dispute and that is why they were in arrears. Therefore, it was difficult to know at what point and at what amount they should have been settled, and I think the hon. Member should recognise this. In fact, I hope we do not have a repetition of this because he will find more of this as the departments work with the telecommunication corporation and settle the amounts in dispute and make provision for payment.

With regard to item 36, Special Visits and Representation at External conferences, this, the hon. Member knows, is a vote which can never be projected with certainty. The hon. Member himself travelled abroad. I suspect that he has knowledge of the conditions and the changing levels of cost. And I hope sir, of the value some of those visits do bring to this country because the hon. Member himself assisted in the inflation of this particular vote.

I am sure, sir, he would say – and I would be the first to agree with him – that expenditure on his behalf out of this vote did bring good results both to him and to the country. Having said that, sir, and having recognised that, I hope he will recognise that it also holds true for other people who travel abroad and who have to be paid for out of this vote.

There was a question on item 38, the board of review. I am sorry, I am not in a position to give the hon. Member a precise and most up-to-date position with regard to the Board of review but I will take the first opportunity after today to do so.

On the question of item 40, Thames Guaranty Limited, it is true it does appear that the interests could have been projected almost finally to the end of the year but this was not so because the interest structure is not fixed; it is a percentage point above the base rate which itself is a changing base so it is a case that one is never certain what is the final rate of interest one has to pay. Sometimes it could be less, sometimes it could be more. The base rate in the U.K. is a changing base rate.

With respect to item 41 which is the Purchase of Property in Canada, this is really the resident of our High commissioner to Canada and the property is situated in Ottawa. The precise location, I am not in a position to give at this moment.

The Chairman: Page 6. Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Item 43. This is a new subhead under Head 78 – Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Hydraulics, subhead 18, Special Grant to Drainage and Irrigation Board for the Operation of Pumping Stations, and the sum being asked for is \$295,388, nearly \$300,000. The legend states: “To provide for a grant to the Drainage and Irrigation Board.” Sir, I am certainly not objecting to this grant to the Drainage and Irrigation Board. Let me make that pellucidly clear, but there must be some explanation for this grant. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would take this opportunity to explain to us the rationale for it.

I also know from having been a minister of the Government and having had the Drainage and Irrigation Board under me, that there are substantial arrears owing to this Drainage and Irrigation Board and there has admittedly been difficulty in collecting these arrears. I wonder whether the hon. Minister will tell us what, if any, new efforts are being made to collect these arrears and, if he can, what the level of the present arrears are like.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Kasim.

The Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. Member is fully aware that last year the cost of fuel went up pretty high. In fact, the cost of fuel last year went up by nearly 300 percent and Government had to give a loan to the Drainage and

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3:20 – 3:30 p.m.

Irrigation Board to assist it. But we found that there are certain areas where rates are pegged and the Drainage and Irrigation Board cannot do anything in adding the additional expenditure incurred so government thought it wise to give a grant and to remove this loan so that it could be a grant to the Drainage and Irrigation Board.

On the other point, we are making every effort to see how we can collect the arrears that are now outstanding, but I am not in a position to say how much progress we are making.

The Chairman: Section “B” Capital estimates. This Completes consideration of all the items.

Question

“That the Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set out in the Financial Paper No. 2/1975 – schedule of supplementary Provision on the current and Capital Estimates totaling \$3,253,355 for the period ending 31st December, 1974.”

Put and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial paper No. 2/1975 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the committee in the said resolutions.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

3:30 – 3:40 p.m.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/1975

Be it resolved:

“That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/1975 – schedule of supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totaling \$62,283,649 for the period ending 31st may, 1975.”

[The Minister of Finance]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Hope: In accordance with article 80(2) of the Constitution of Guyana, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended the Motion for the approval of Financial Paper No. 3 of 1975, for the consideration of the National Assembly, and I so move.

The Chairman: The motion is proposed. We will now consider the Schedule page by page. Hon. Members, in order to facilitate the hon. Minister of State for Agriculture who has to leave as early as he can, we will take the items listed under the Ministry of Agriculture on this Supplementary Paper. Page 8, item 39, and on page 9, items 40 and 41.

Mrs. DaSilva: It is just by way of information. Item 40 deals with the subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. The voted provision was \$500,000 and the supplementary provision now being sought is \$195,000, to provide for a subsidy on pork. I take it that this subsidy is to help pay the increased cost of amounts paid to farmers for pork.

Why I chose this subhead is that I want to ask the hon. Minister a question in connection with stock feed. This, of course, links up with the pork because the pigs eat the stock feed.

I am thinking now of the mills at Belmont, Mahaica. In the manufacture of stock feed, they are supposed to state on the bags containing the stock feed the percentage of each of the various ingredients that make up the stock feed in the bag. We have been made to understand that in a particular instance, when it was alleged that the stock feed was supposed to contain 18 percent protein, a group of independent people got together and sent the stock feed for analysis by Analyst overseas. They were told that only 11 percent protein was contained in that stock feed.

What really does the government do about the processing of the stock feed to see that the standard is maintained. When the pig farmers pay the price, they expect to get certain properties in the ingredients in the stock feed, and this is not so. Could the hon. Minister say if anybody goes into the manufacture and checks that what the stock feed is supposed to contain, it does contain, and that if it says 18 percent protein is there, 18 percent is there and not 11. Could the hon. Minister tell us something about this?

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, this is the first time it has been brought to my knowledge that the stock feed is not up to the required standard. I can give the hon. Member all assurance that I am going to bring this to the attention of the Chief Veterinary Officer, for him to go into the matter and to see whether there is any foundation in the allegation that is being made. I would be very much surprised to know that the percentage has been reduced to 11 percent when 18 percent is stated. Something is wrong. I am positive that the Ministry of Agriculture will not support such action.

I will give the hon. Member the assurance that he will go into every detail and make sure that the standard is as required.

The Chairman: Section “B”, Capital Estimates. Page 1. Does any hon. Member wish to say anything on it?

Mr. Singh: I should like some information in respect of item 6. This is a new subhead under the Ministry of Agriculture, Feasibility Studies. The sum being asked for here for 1975 in June, 1975, is \$759, 965, and the legend states, “To provide for Feasibility studies at black Bush Polder and Tapakuma.”

We would like to know whether these feasibility studies have actually been started. What is involved here? Feasibility studies, presumably in respect of extending these schemes at Black Bush Polder and Tapakuma, perhaps the hon. Minister would like to elaborate on the Government’s intentions and what the people who are doing the feasibility studies have been asked to do.

Ancillary to that, are Guyanese contractors doing the feasibility studies. Are we receiving help from the World Bank, or I.D.A., or any such agency? We would like to know because we are interested in the expansion of schemes like these.

3:40 – 3:50 p.m.

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, this amount here is required to meet the balance of many due to Hazra Engineering Company and Aubrey Barker Associates for feasibility studies at Black Bush Polder and Tapakuma, and to approve of such funds being placed under Division XVII Ministry of Agriculture IBRD/IDA Project, Tapakuma Irrigation Project feasibility studies. This is the expansion of the second phase, I understand, for the Tapakuma Project and also the improvement of the Black Bush Polder. That is all the information which I have now that I can give to the Hon. Member. There is nothing further I can add to this.

The Chairman: You are free to leave Cde. Kasim. Hon. Members will go back to page 1.

Mr. Singh: Sir, I would like to start by making some remarks in respect of this entire Financial Paper No. 3/1975. In this paper we have a request for supplementary provisions for a total of \$62,283,649. A short while ago we had before us in this honourable House paper No. 1 of 1975 and that as a request which was passed for supplementary provisions for \$97,000 for National Service to the tune of \$17,426,800. We have just finished Financial Paper No. 2 and that as a total of \$3,253,355. By far, the largest is this Financial Paper before us. When we add the total, we get \$82,963,804, nearly \$83 million.

In December 1974, you will remember that we spent a lot of time and energy printing a very big book here. We are all acquainted with this book, "The Estimates, current and capital, of Guyana for the year 1975." We printed a Budget Speech 1975 to go with this. This was a very well thought out document, balancing the Budget, balancing our figures, putting the whole thing together and balancing it out. On page 3 of this big book, the Estimates, we have details given for 1975 and I will read just part of it: "Current Expenditure for 1975, \$303,862,238; Capital Expenditure, \$227,326,740, making a total of \$531,188,978. That is what was very nicely set out in this big book of Estimates for 1975. What is the position? We say that we want to spend \$83

million approximately more than is listed in the estimates here. I know these figures are only estimates but the fact remains that what we are asking for is \$83 million more. The question arises: Are these Estimates or are they merely guesstimates?

I spoke of the Budget speech for 1975. Let us look, for example, at page 23 where it sets out very nicely and in great detail, “Financing the Programme – Current and capital”, and I will read only short parts of it. At the bottom of the page, the third paragraph, it states and I read”:

“Thus, Mr. Speaker, with current Expenditure forecast at \$303 million and capital revenue anticipation at \$369 million the Government’s Current Account should return a surplus of \$66 million. This compares with the deficit of \$0.1 million projected at the beginning of the year for 1974, but the surplus actually produced was \$39 million.”

We know that that cannot be corrected now because when we passed the figures for 1974, advances from the Contingencies Fund, that amounted to \$3¼million so that that would need adjustment. The book went to great pains to say exactly how these Estimates would be financed. It states in the third paragraph on page 24 under Capital Financing:

“In aggregate, therefore, loans, grants, credits, and a budget surplus in 1975 will finance the capital programme to the tune of \$189 million. This leaves a financing gap of \$38 million. It is expected that this sum will be met from drawing on the budgetary surplus recorded in 1974...”

...which needs adjustment now...

“and some limited new borrowing on the international money market and the Domestic Banking system.”

It goes on:

“In short, Mr. Speaker, provided that the weather remains favourable thereby enabling the expected increases in national output to be realised and provided further that the international economic situation does not deteriorate in any significant way, there seems little doubt that the capital programme as proposed would be financed without any serious difficulty.”

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This was really dealing very much in detail with this programme here. But what is the programme now? What is the position now? The Minister told us how the 1975 Estimates would be financed. Is he now not under a moral duty to tell us where this extra, approximately \$83 million, will come from? I am not saying that it cannot be realised. But, I do not know. I know what he told us here. Is he not under a moral obligation now that the figures have so radically changed to tell us what the latest position is, to update what he told us in the Budget Speech and tell us exactly where we stand in respect of this \$83 million additional that is now required over and above what was put down in these Estimates here?

He will tell us, and we all know that these figures are not accurate. They cannot be; they are Estimates. but it is not outside of the Estimates by \$1 million, \$2 million \$3 million or \$10 million. It is \$83 million and that is why we ask where the money will come from. If he is not under an obligation to tell us then it would make nonsense of a Budget Speech. What is the point of preparing a Budget Speech and giving all these details if we are not entitled to know when the figures change, where the financing will come from to meet this? Therefore, I have every confidence that the hon. Minister will tell us where the extra financing will come from to update his speech here, to update his very well balanced figures here and to tell us where the extra money will come from. I am looking forward to that.

3:50 - 4:00 p.m.

My fear is, and this is a fear that has been echoed in many circles, that the recent tendency seems to be the Government to regard financial control and accounting procedures - and this is very emotional on their part – as some sort of colonial institution which should be honoured in the breach rather than in the observance. All these fancy things that the colonial powers imposed on us – budget estimates, budget speech, the tendency seems to be that there are all things that belong to the colonial era. We are doing it so far, therefore, we will continue to do it but we need not pay too much attention to it because it is something imposed on us by our colonial masters.

That is what I am afraid of and my fears increased when I noticed some recent facts. What I am saying is evidenced by the fact that the Ministry of National development has been allocated the sum of \$2½ million for 1975 with another half a million dollars for capital and not one single word of detail was put in the Estimates about it. And now in this very paper at item 131, that same Ministry is asking for an additional three quarter million dollars again with absolutely no detail. All they list in that ministry is a Permanent Secretary, a Principal Assistant Secretary and an Assistant Secretary. That is all.

Will anybody be able to say with any degree of confidence that that is the only staff that that Ministry has? Of course, they have more staff. What kind of staff have they got? How is it regulated? How are they recruited? How can the Director of the Audit properly audit such expenditure when he has got no guidelines but just block amounts put down there and nothing further? How can he be guided as to whether an expenditure is correct, whether it is over and above what it should have been? He has nothing, absolutely nothing to go by. All he has is a vote which says Ministry of National Development and \$2.5 million plus \$0.5 million plus another \$0.75 million.

The impression being given is that this business of auditing and accounting is something that belongs to the colonial past and we need not pay too much attention to it. That seems to be the impression given. I would like to be given an assurance that I am wrong. I would welcome an assurance that I am wrong and I would welcome it for another reason because if this is the type of financial control...

Mr. Hope: What item are you on?

Mr. Singh: I am speaking generally, on the whole financial paper. I would welcome an assurance from the hon. Minister that what I am saying is not true because we have Government corporations and Ministries who have said that the rationale for establishing Government Corporations is that they want them to run efficiently. They want them to get away from government red-tape. They want them to be able to operate economically, efficiently, to pay their way and to be able to run on a streamlined way as good businesses are being run, but government must set the example.

If Government has financial regulations and financial controls and they give the impression to the Corporation – and let us remember that a lot of these corporations have financial officers who are former Civil Servants and if government gives the impression to them that nothing matters, where will we end up even with the Government corporations?

I am advocating that the Government pay more attention to giving us realistic estimates. I am not concerned with what society we are under. I am firmly convinced no matter what the society – yes, I am concerned about the society and I am concerned with where we are heading, but what I say is this: no matter what society this Government chooses to try and impose on us the fact remains that for it to be an orderly society we must have proper budgeting, we must have proper financial control and to my mind that is absolutely necessary in any society. I would like the hon. Minister to reassure this House and the government Corporations and the public in general that he does not regard accounting and financial control as merely some colonial institution to be ignored but something which must be observed even by this Government. I also repeat my request that the hon. Minister bring this document up to date and tell us where the additional finance will come from in view of the fact that this is now out of order.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh, I was at a loss to know which one of the pages you were really speaking on.

Mr. Singh: This is preface to my remarks. I said I was speaking on the entire paper. I have nothing further to say on page 1.

The Chairman: You don't have anything to say on page 1. Page 2.

Mr. Singh: Sir, on page 2, Head I, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, subhead 3 – item 5, Miscellaneous - the voted provision for 1975 was \$18,500. The supplementary provision now being asked for is \$22,800 which is more than the original voted provision. I did some research on this. In 1973, the actual expenditure was \$16,915. Even if the prices were doubled, then one would expect that they would merely have sought another \$18,500. But they are seeking here not an additional \$18,500 on what was originally voted, but an addition of \$22,800 which makes a total of \$41,300 for 1975. The legend says: “Voted provision inadequate due to increases in the price of stationery and the quantity used.”

My impression was that the Central Stationery store, under the ministry of Works – and I may be wrong – supplied stationery to all Government Ministries and Departments. What, in fact, is the system? What, in fact, is the system? Do they bill the ministry and that is why they are asking for this additional amount? Does the Ministry of works bill the Office of the Prime Minister? Even if that is so there seems to be something radically wrong, sir, since other ministries have not asked for anything like this under supplementary provisions due to price increase. This here says: “Voted Provision inadequate due to increase in the price of stationery and the quantity used.”

4:00 – 4:03 p.m.

If we admit that there are increased in the prices of stationery and we look at all the other Ministries we do not see any significant request by the other Ministries for such an increase under their miscellaneous vote. And in respect of the quantities used, we are still alarmed that that could have amounted to as much as \$22,000. If you estimate that you will use \$10,300 how do you end up with a miscellaneous vote of \$41,000. I think this Ministry should set an example and an explanation is necessary.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid: This is not difficult to understand. The value of work that goes on and the many things that have happened already for this year – and I am certain in other Ministries you will find this too in the miscellaneous items. In this case this Ministry has indicated what the major item is. The quantity has increased and all of us know the price has increased very significantly, thus this amount is required. Even if other ministries have not yet indicated their requirements, I am sure that before the end of the year the increase in the price of stationery will affect them because all over the world the price has gone up very significantly.

The Chairman: Let the Assembly resume.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: The Sitting is suspended for half an hour.

Sitting suspended at 4:03p.m.

Sitting resumed at 4:30p.m.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Before the suspension was taken, we had just completed page 2. We move on to page 3, Page 4. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Just a short comment on item 13, Head 17 – The Attorney General, Deeds Registry, subhead 1 –Personal Emoluments. The figures are not significant; the amount asked for is \$13,520 to provide for the creation of a series of posts. The post that interests me is the office of Assistant Registrar on the salary scale A25. I wonder whether this is for the Land Registry. I remember last year raising the question of the establishment of land Registry in the other two counties. The legislation setting up the Land registry clearly stated that a land registry must be established in Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice. At the present moment, there is only one in Georgetown so that people in New Amsterdam, on the Corentyne and in Essequibo have to come to Georgetown. I rather suspect that this may well be a provision for that. Could the Hon. Minister confirm whether this is in fact in relation to the setting up of the Land Registry in New Amsterdam? If it is in New Amsterdam when will the Land Registry in Essequibo be set up? The law does call for it to be set up and we are in fact breaking the law but not having had it set up so far. The law does call for it to be set up and we are in fact breaking the law by not having had it set up so far.

4:35 – 4:45 p.m.

The other matter I wish to point to – and here again I guess the answer will be the answer that I received before – is the discrepancy in the salary scales of the Assistant Registrar in the Deeds registry and the Assistant Registrar in the Supreme Court. The Assistant Registrar in the Supreme Court is on salary scale A27 and the Assistant Registrar in the Deeds Registry is on salary scale A25. That seems to be all wrong. There are two equally important departments. They used to come under one Registrar in the days when I was attached to the Deeds Registry. I worked in the Supreme Court Registry too. In my opinion, there is no reason whatever why the Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court should be on salary scale A27 when the Assistant Registrar of the Deeds Registry is on the lower scale of A25. I suppose we will be told that this is

due to the job evaluation, but I am sure if the Government is strong enough about it this anomaly could be corrected.

The Chairman: Page 5. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Sir, I am perturbed that so many Ministers are absent. I spoke at length about the budget and the business of finding the additional money and I got no answer. I asked about an important department like the Attorney General's and I got no answer. What is happening, sir? Is it worth getting up and asking any questions at all if this is going to happen? I am perturbed about it. It may well be that I will have to make a decision about this because there is no point in making a study of this paper, spending sleepless nights and standing up for what? For the reporters to record it? And sometimes they do not even put it in the newspapers. It is a very frustrating state of affairs.

Page 5, item 15, Head 18 – Ministry of Information and Culture, subhead 27 – Public Relations Programme: The voted provision was \$50,000; the supplementary provision now sought is not \$50,000, not a hundred percent – it is over four hundred percent, \$221,377. The Ministry estimated all it needed was \$50,000 for this Public Relations Programme. Now in the middle of the year it wants \$221,377. There is no note here saying that this is an advance from the Contingencies Fund. The Ministry is asking to spend \$221,377 between now and the end of the year when the original vote was only \$50,000 and the legend states: “To provide for community mobilisation.”

What is community mobilisation? We have a Ministry of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation. Is this some sort of husband and wife joint venture? Does this not belong to the Ministry of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation? Is the Ministry of Information doing mobilisation and the Ministry of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation doing mobilisation also? What sort of joint venture is this? In December \$50,000 was considered enough; now \$221,377 is needed. Some explanation is needed about this double mobilisation that seems to be going on between these two Ministries.

My hon. Colleague wants to speak, sir.

Mrs. DaSilva: I just want to make a small addition to that same item 15 under the Ministry of Information and Culture, Public Relations Programme. My leader, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, dealt very realistically and forcefully with the additional increase of 400 percent and asked for details of what this community mobilisation is all about. Well, sir, I want to ask a question of the Hon. Leader of the House whom I think will probably be dealing with this Ministry in the absence of the hon. Minister of Information and Culture.

Seeing this item is under Public Relations, could he tell us what is being done to awaken the interest of the parents so that they will make use of the facilities offered for the immunization of children which, by law, is required before they enter into school? This school term will soon end and then there will be the September term with the new school year. Many of the new multilateral schools will be going full tilt. Are the facilities of the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information and Culture being used at all to help to get across to the parents the necessity of having these children immunised and telling them where the centres are? I do not know if I can push so far as to ask the Minister to identify the centres for information of the parents so that they can know where to send their children. Maybe that is something I ought to leave for the Ministry of Health.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether with your leave I can deal with the last observation first.

The facilities and services of the ministry have been used already and will continue to be used for the promotion of this programme of compulsory immunisation of children. I cannot, at this stage, indicate to this House where the centres will be situated but as part of the publicity that will be given to this programme that information will be provided to the public in Guyana.

There has always been a great mystique surrounding public relations programmes. For some people, maybe understandably so, because public relations are tied up in the human mind with propaganda and we always envisage propaganda to be a bad thing.

In the modern conception of development, as we in this government understand it, information is an essential ingredient of development for development to reach the people and for people to participate in the process of development people must know what is happening, how they can get involved in community projects, in cooperative projects, developmental projects; men and materials are needed, equipment is needed and, therefore, there must perforce be a legitimate expenditure on an item of this type.

This concerns development, not only here, but to get Guyanese, who may be abroad, involved. Government must at all times have a programme to attract Guyanese to come back. Indeed, one may submit that propaganda is a form of education. This item has no relevance to national mobilisation as it is understood within the context of the ministry of National Mobilisation, but will certainly assist that ministry to develop that sense of awareness that is so indispensably necessary if there is to be national mobilisation. I have already referred to the question of cooperatives and community development.

There is the concept that is abroad now of developments supporting communications, and information is supportive in the context of that concept, supportive of development, and there are many people who believe that the information services are not costly services. But they are costly services; the prices of printing materials for example, have gone up very rapidly. We have spoken earlier about radio time.

These are legitimate items of expenditure that a programme of this type will envisage in order to promote community mobilisation. Indeed, community mobilisation here is construed in the context of national mobilisation.

I hope with these few explanatory remarks I can dismiss some of the phantoms which may be in the minds of the persons who have asked these questions. Public relations programmes are essential to development and it is with a measure of confidence that we are initiating programmes that will bring about that type of development.

The Chairman: Page 6.

Mr. Singh: Item 21. This deals with subhead 5, Lighting under Head 20 – Ministry of Home Affairs – Police. The sum that was considered necessary for 1975 was \$37,000. I certainly would expect that when this sum was put down the accounting officers in the ministry would have sat down, would have thought, considered exactly what they felt would be used up by way of electricity for 1975, and after such deliberations and considerations, they came up with the figure of \$37,000.

What amazes me is that the Ministry is now asking for an additional \$144,000. Something is wrong. What has happened since they estimated to make the \$81,000 required for 1975? I have no quarrel with them coming and saying: “This is our estimate for 1975; our estimate is \$181,000 because of so and so.” But when the Government comes in the middle of the year and says: “We thought it would be \$37,000 but we are asking for \$144,000 more to make it \$181,000”, then I ask the question: Why? And I ask further, is it some sort of spending on lighting? It could be.

Maybe I am helping by suggesting; maybe it is some kind of additional spending for some special illuminations, some special lightning, that went on. If this is so, then the further question is: Are we going to spend in the vicinity of \$181,000 for lightning for the Police department for 1976, or will the expenditure for 1976 revert back to \$37,000 which they thought the 1975 expenditure would be? What is the position? What has resulted in this request for \$144,000?

Going on to item 25, Head 20 – Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, subhead 23 – Passports, the sum originally asked for was \$30,000 and the supplementary provision being requested is \$2,000. That is a small amount. It is not significant in terms of the other requests, and the legend states: “To meet increased cost of passports.” I merely want to know what the system is. I was led to believe that a bulk of passports had been ordered, that it cost “X” amount of dollars to pay for them, and that bulk would represent several years supply of passports. I am wondering whether this is merely \$2,000 to pay off that bulk bill, or whether there will be a recurring amount even though we may have ordered a two or three year supply of passports. What is the system in respect of these passports?

Mr. Mingo: On the question of passports, we have in hand a fairly large order for passports but there has been some extra increased expenditure involved. This \$2,000 is merely to meet this increase.

On the question of lighting, the \$37,000 which was provided originally was to pay for lightning in the rural areas served by plants and that sort of thing. Lighting in the areas which were served by the G.E.C. was paid for formerly by the Ministry of Works and Housing. From 1975, the arrangement has been changed. The Ministry of Home Affairs has to meet this Bill and so we have to request this extra provision.

The Chairman: Page 7; page 8; page 9; page 10; page 11.

4:55 – 5:05 p.m.

Page 11.

Mr. Singh: Item 45, Head 31 – Ministry of Economic Development – subhead 1, Personal Emoluments. The amount of \$104,399 is being asked for additionally. Unlike the Ministry of National Development this Ministry has set out in a very detailed and very specific fashion, exactly how these moneys are going to be spent. The first thing I must do is to commend this Ministry for having given details as compared with the Ministry of National Development which has consistently refused to give any details of its expenditure.

But here, we have a variety of additional posts being listed with these details that I spoke about and we have already said that, as compared with the Ministry of National Development, no details have been given. Because we have no details from the Ministry of National Development, we have no way of knowing whether there is any overlapping between the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of Economic Development or whether, as we suspect, the Ministry of National Development is merely using Government funds, taxpayers money, for Party purposes and that is why they are not giving us any details. Since both of these Ministries are concerned with the development of Guyana – one is Economic Development and the other is National Development – could the hon. Minister say what is the interrelation between his Ministry and the Ministry of National Development?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Economic Development is charged with certain specific areas of responsibility by his Excellency the President. More strictly, the Minister is charged with those responsibilities and the Ministry is the agency through which those responsibilities are discharged. It will be recalled that the Ministry has the responsibility for planning and, therefore, it is concerned with the physical plans related to the development of this country and has responsibility for ancillary services and agencies such as the Statistical Bureau. It also has responsibility for industrial development and also for all matters concerned with the economic progress and economic activities of a developmental nature.

The Ministry of National development has a different kind of responsibility. We contend that development cannot be counted merely in terms of physical or material things. Development is a very complex process. It has many facets. But central to our concept of development is the involvement of people and, therefore, the ministry of National development has a peculiar and overriding responsibility for getting people involved, generating an understanding of, an enthusiasm for, Government's activities and generally mobilising the nation for development.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition may, perhaps, find some difficulty in undertaking this concept of development. But we have said time and again that development really is about people and the real measure or task of development in a country is really the improvement in the quality of life of the people. So this agency, this Ministry of National Development, is crucial to our whole development process. The Ministry of Economic Development looks at the physical things.

We believe that merely putting physical plans or bringing physical plans into being, recording them on paper, drawing up finely written and scholarly development plans, are not sufficient in themselves. Indeed, if we only did that we would be involved in a sterile exercise. We, therefore, have to mobilise people and there must be an agency which mobilised people on the basis of an ideology. You do not mobilise people in a vacuum and you do not mobilise people on the basis of some airy statement about benefits. You mobilise them around an ideology which they understand and to which they are committed. I hope that my explanation serves to shed some light upon the problem which obviously has been besetting the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Chairman: Page 12; page 13; page 14; page 15. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Page 15, item 50, Head 52 – Ministry of Regional Development, subhead 9 – Expenses 6, Regional Offices. The sum originally requested for 1975 was \$10,000. That was considered adequate for 1975. The sum now being requested, like so many other heads, is \$32,812 and the legend states: “To provide allowances for members attending Regional and Sub-Regional Council meetings.” We were told, and I spoke about this, that some of these Regional Officers and Regional Ministers – and I expressed my opinion about this – do not seem to be able to achieve very much in the line of getting things done in that things still have to come to Georgetown for final decisions. But we are now being asked to provide allowances for members. I wonder whether the hon. Minister could give us some details on this. These are obviously not Local authorities. There are members attending Regional and Sub-Regional Council meetings. Would the hon. Minister tell us how these members are chosen, what is the system, what allowances are they paid and what rates are they going to be paid? I think I am right in saying that most of the Local authority members are not paid anything. If I am wrong I would be very pleased if the hon. Minister would correct me.

5:05 – 5:15 p.m.

It seems as though we are going to pay members attending Regional and Sub-Regional Council meetings. We would like to know all about this system, how these people are chosen and what rates of allowances they will be paid.

Item 52, Head 33, Ministry of Regional Development – Interior development, under subhead 1, Personal emoluments: If we look at the legend there is *inter alia* a reference to the creation with effect from 1st May, 1975, inclusive of seven offices of District Administration Officer I on salary scale A14. And it goes on to list a number of other officers. Then at the bottom of page 16 if I may refer to it, “(ii) abolition with effect from 1st July 1975 inclusive, of three offices of Senior District Administration Officer on the salary range A26.”

There seems to be some sort of re-organisation going on in this interior development Ministry. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would brief us on it, because it goes on to pages 16

and 17 and there are a variety of posts involved here. So there is obviously some re-organisation going on here.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, may I preface my reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition by referring him to the Declaration of Sophia in which the Prime Minister of this country and Leader of the People's National Congress, set out quite clearly the direction in which this country is going and some of the organizational techniques which we will be using in order to achieve our goals and objectives. And he said that it was necessary to mobilise the nation. It was the task of the Party and of its executive arm, the Government, to mobilise the nation, and I quote:

“In every sphere and not merely for periodic elections and in support of specific actions and development and programmes...”

What the Prime Minister was saying, Mr. Chairman, was that in order to develop this country we have to mobilise the people on a permanent basis for the task of development and this was the point I was trying to make when I was explaining the peculiar functions and responsibilities of the Ministry of National Development a moment ago.

The whole regional system is an institution for development. It is, Mr. Chairman, not a mere administrative system, and during the Budget debate in December last year I was at particular pains to explain the structure and functioning of the Regional system, and also what we hope to achieve by this system.

The Regional system involves people. It is a system which is built around the involvement and participation of people in the work of development, in planning the development of their particular communities from identification of projects through all the processes of decision making to implementation. And in the regional system there are two main councils which involve the people. One of them is the Regional development Council which is

chaired by the Regional Minister who also happens to be the party Regional Chairman. On that Council is represented people from all the significant organisations within the region. Farmers Association, Housewives Associations, Loggers Association, Trade Unions, Religious Organisations, Sports Organisations so that at that level of the region the people can become involved in a number of tasks concerned with the development of their regions.

In the past we have made the mistake of attempting to plan from the centre. People sat down in Georgetown and made all sorts of grandiose plans for people in the North West and in the Rupununi and in the Corentyne. It was the sort of mistake which was made not only in Guyana but in many developing countries circumstanced as they are.

But we have recognised the error and what we hope to do now and what, in fact, we have been doing is planning from the bottom so that the people themselves who know best what their needs are and what their particular regions can produce, have a responsibility for identifying the development needs of their areas and through their various regional and sub-regional bodies, throwing up ideas, suggestions, projects and so on which eventually come through the regional administration, through the regional system to the National Planning Secretariat. So that our planners then are in a better position to frame national plans in accordance with the needs and the aspirations and expectations of people.

Since most regions stand to be fairly large they are divided into a number of sub-regions. So that there are also sub-regional development councils with the specific task of looking at their smaller geographical area and doing substantially the same work as the Regional Development Council except that it is at the level of the sub-region that there is real action. It is there that people will be looking at development on a day to day basis and looking at development in terms of the kind of development I have been talking about, development which touches the welfare of people, which improves their quality of life in small areas, perhaps in ensuring that a blocked drainage trench is cleared, in ensuring that some area of land which is fertile but which needs only impoldering, is impoldered; in ensuring that that bridge over the drainage trench which leads to people's farms and which has fallen down is repaired very quickly so the farmers can get to and from their farms.

The hon. Member says that that is a function of the Local Authority but the greater part of this country is not under the Local Government system. And in any event this kind of mobilisation of people that we are talking about is wider than the bounds of Local Government. It takes in people who have no opportunity to participate on a day-to-day basis in the work of local government and local authorities and, in fact, on all of these councils, the Local Authorities are represented because the Local authorities represent only some agencies of mobilisation.

I have pointed out that you have all kinds of agencies, all kinds of organisations through which people are mobilised. Sports organisations, religious organisations, and industrial organisations are the organisations whose members we have to reach and whom we have to influence to participate in the process of development.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the members of these councils come from far and wide. They are not paid, but in order to attend council meetings they incur expenses and it is only right that they should be reimbursed their expenses and this provision here is intended to do just that. If a man does not incur an expense because he lives right near to where the meeting takes place, well then, he gets nothing. But if a man has to pay a boat fare or taxi fare to reach to a council meeting, well then he is reimbursed.

What we are talking about, Mr. Chairman, is an entirely new, novel and, indeed, revolutionary approach to the whole system of Government Development.

The hon. Member remarked that this regional system has achieved nothing and that many decisions still have to be referred to Georgetown.

5:15 – 5:25p.m.

I should like to advise him that the regional system has made significant strides since it was first established about two years ago. In fact, at a conference of Regional ministers which was held at Lethem from 13th to 16th of this month, all regional ministers and their officers were able to report that there is now a growing acceptance of regionalism; there is growing cooperation by the governmental and other

agencies within the region; and they have been about to point to significant achievements which have resulted from operations of the regional system.

The system, of course, is still evolving. There are still many things to be done; but much work is being done. I hope that by the end of this year the hon. Leader of the Opposition will himself become converted to regionalism and will be able to recognise the importance of this system of Government and development which involves the people.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has drawn my attention to the fact that I did not deal with the question he raised on the seven offices of district Administration Officer. It is hoped that ultimately the regional administration will have total responsibility for managing all government personnel, vehicles, equipment, projects, finances, within their respective boundaries. Obviously, as we move towards this objective we find that there are many officers and many agencies which provide overlapping or duplicating services. For example, the old system of district commissioner has gone, and the district commissioners have now been incorporated into the regional system as Assistant Regional Administrative officers. Similarly, the A.D.C.s will go. They will now be designated District Administrative officers and themselves come within the ambit of the regional system.

The Chairman: Page 16; page 17; page 18. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Just a short question. I notice on page 18 that under item 53, Head 53, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), subhead 1 – Personal Emoluments, a lot of posts are created and a lot of them are marked “Supplementary”. For instance, Supernumerary Chief Works Officer, Supernumerary Deputy Chief Works Officer, Supernumerary Chief Engineer (Roads), Supernumerary Assistant Chief Engineer, (Roads), Supernumerary specialist Engineer, Supernumerary Deputy Chief surveyor, Supernumerary Principal Assistant Secretary, etc. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would explain the reason for these supernumerary officers, because as I explained it, the supernumerary is in addition to the substantive holder of the post. How long will they have these supernumerary posts as listed here?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Housing.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, the position here is that with the upper Mazaruni Power Development Project there is need for building a major road of about 180 miles, and we have decided that rather than inviting consultants and foreign contractors we would do this out of our own resources from local funds utilising local personnel. The project will last several years; the road part may last 2 to 2½ years and the continuation on the power site may last up to about 5 years. Since we have had to take people out of the existing stream and second them for such long periods on this road project and ultimately to the hydropower project so that they will not lose their promotional opportunities, it became necessary for a number of supernumerary posts to be created for them while allowing the substantive parts to be filled by others remaining in the general run of things.

The idea is that in addition to this unit for hydropower development and roads there will be other things – drainage and irrigation, agricultural forestry etc. they will need to have a unit with permanent staff. All we are doing is preserving the positions of those officers who are now seconded to so that when this unit becomes permanent they will fall into place.

5:25 – 5:35p.m.

The Chairman: Page, 19; page 20; page 21; page 22; page 23. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Sir, I would like to speak on items 56 and 59. I am dealing first with item 56, Head 36, Ministry of Works and Housing (Works), subhead 11, Electric power and Lighting of Buildings. The voted provision was \$250,000 and now we are being asked to supply a supplementary vote of \$320,000 and the legend states very inadequately: “Voted provision inadequate.” I wonder if the hon. Minister could give us some indication. For example, in the instance of the lighting where the police were concerned, the hon. Minister of Home affairs explained that they are now on the main power supply system as opposed to when they had a generating plant. What is the explanation for the Ministry of Works and Housing having to ask t his House to supply such a fantastic additional amount of \$320,000 for lighting and electric power?

Item 99, Head 35 – Ministry of Works and Housing (Housing), subhead 8, Maintenance of Government Housing Estates: The voted provision is \$300,000; supplementary provision now being sought is \$542,000 and the legend states: “Voted provision inadequate to provide satisfactory maintenance.” I wish to comment briefly on the enormous sum again being asked for this – practically double what was originally voted and I should like to use this opportunity to try to get from the hon. Minister some specific information regarding the policy of the Government regarding government housing Estates.

A little while ago we had the hon. Minister of Regional Development using an opportunity to explain to this House and to the nation the thinking of the Government on the question of regionalism, national development, mobilisation and that kind of thing. Well, this is an opportunity for the hon. Minister of Works and Housing to give an explanation to the nation of the policy of the Government regarding the Government Housing Estates.

I say this, sir, specifically because the position that exists in the Campbellville Housing Scheme has been brought to our attention. This is a Government Estate of approximately 200 families. One hundred and twenty eight of these families have rental apartments and 72 of them have been buying their homes on a hire-purchase system. This particular government Estate has been going now for 19 years. So these 72 families have been paying on a hire-purchase system for the last 19 years.

I understand that recently – sometime during May and the earlier part of this month – there have been meetings in the Campbellville Housing Scheme for the people to decide how and what they are going to do about these houses. They are to come together to buy and own the houses. I understand, at one such meeting the hon. Minister himself, the Government Whip Miss Ackman, and Mr. Percival were there. There were quite a few P.N.C. Party activists present.

Some of these people in the Campbellville Housing scheme, as in other Government housing Schemes, are interested in owning their own homes. They went to this meeting, which was called by Mr. Boysie Bishop, the steel-band fellow, to hear about the scheme for owning their own homes. They were told, first of all, that they must form a Credit Union. This is a very

good thing as they would be able to save their money and have money in time of need. They then had a long dissertation which almost went on to be a P.N.C. meeting.

Somebody else came along to the next meeting and told them that they cannot form a Credit Union because there is already a Credit Union in existence in that Scheme. The Credit Union was not functioning; they could not get the books. They cannot shut down the Credit Union; the credit union is still there but people cannot join, so they must form a cooperative to buy the houses. There are many people who live in that area but I am speaking particularly of the 72 people who have been paying for the last 19 years on a hire-purchase system to buy their own homes and this, we have been told, is the aim of our socialist Government in an egalitarian society. The aim is for the people to own their own homes. These people want to own their homes but they do not want to own them through a cooperative, they want to own them as individual owners.

I understand that \$60,000 worth of fencing is needed to go around the Schemes, so maybe this is included in this vote of \$200,000. They do not mind coming together to help to fence the place but they want to own their own homes outright. It must be their own; they must have their own Transports.

They have been told that any member who is not desirous of becoming a member of the cooperative will have to give up his apartment. If one does not join the cooperative he cannot own the apartment. Well, that is quite wrong and against our Constitution because in Chapter 2 of the Constitution there is provision for freedom of association and if one does not want to associate with a cooperative, that is his business; he does not have to. One has freedom to choose whether he wants to or not. Why should these people not have Transports for their houses? This is what they want. They do not want their transports to be in the care of a cooperative. It would be very interesting and very educational if we could have a dissertation from this hon. Minister similar to the one we had from Minister Hoyte, on the Government's thinking on the system of private ownership of property.

I understand that there was a special group that came to meet the hon. Member Miss Ackman. About 18 people were so specially invited because they were not quite towing

the line and they did not have party cards. They were told that if they did not have party cards they could not get a house.

Could the Minister say what really is going on? Are we all being told now that we must belong to the P.N.C.? Must we all buy our houses through a cooperative? Some of these people have been paying for 19 years on a hire-purchase system and they were hoping and looking forward to owning their own homes and controlling their own transports. Now they are being told that they have to do so through the cooperative or they will have to get out of their apartments. We would appreciate it if the Minister would let us have a little dissertation a la Minister Hoyte on the question of Government's thinking on the membership of private property.

5:35 – 5:45p.m.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, I should like first to deal with item 56, Electric Power and Lighting of Buildings. As Members of the House know, at the beginning of this year it was decided that Ministries will provide in their own estimates for the lighting of buildings. There are a few exceptions; those relate to places like Wakenaam, Mabaruma, Wauna and Lethem, where the Ministry of Works and Housing still operates the plants in these areas.

One of the reasons why we have had an increase on this item is that in making the change towards the end of last year, and providing allocations for each separate Ministry, they had to make certain judgements on what each Ministry, in fact, ought to receive. Rather than providing very large sums and allowing people to be wasteful, these figures were deliberately set at certain levels, and we knew full well, in the case of some ministries, that there would be need to come back to this House for supplementary provision.

The other reason is that in the places I have called, where the Ministry of Works is operating lighting plants, there was a service given from six in the evening to about nine and ten at night, and for about two hours in the morning. Early this year it was decided that those services should be extended to twenty four hours per day and this meant, in relation to these stations, the expenditure was more or less trebled. That is the reason why we have had to come

for supplementary provision. We will have, before the end of this year, looking at the normal expenditure in relation to the various Ministries, to put in more realistic figures.

In relation to item 59, Maintenance of Government Housing Estates, I know that it is always said that ladies listen to a lot of gossip, but if the hon. Member of the Opposition would admit I called her “Comrade”, so she does not fall in that category, she does not listen any longer to these gossips. I have seen pamphlets being circulated. I do not know who the originator of them is. I do not think it was the United Force - it might have come from somewhere else - unless they admit it.

The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, I as Minister, and other Ministers and Members of the People’s National Congress, have been saying for a number of years what is our policy on housing, and I have the impression that the hon. Member must be like Rip Van Winkle and she has just come out of a long slumber. Our policy on housing is for each person to own the roof over his head.

For the people who have purchased houses in the pattern of hire purchases, we have two sets of agreements. There is the old agreement whereby they uplift their transport on the last payment of the installments, and in the case of the other one, they take a mortgage in the traditional way from some lending institution and they get their Transport as soon as the mortgage is passed. Those are the two systems that have been operating in those areas.

In relation to the rental houses - and I think these are the ones she is referring to – Government has been going around by Ministry, the Ministry of cooperatives and National Mobilisation, the Ministry of National Development, and other ministries, to assist people who are very poor and people who cannot afford very high-priced houses. It therefore became necessary for us to meet these people in groups and there is nothing evil in what we are trying to do. What we are trying to do is something that is good for them.

Where there are houses built on the terraced pattern, where there might be three, five, seven families, occupying the same buildings, here there might be a particular community centre, a particular health centre serving the area, a particular kindergarten school serving the area, a

particular steel-band serving that area and the nation at large, then we feel, and we strongly feel, that there should be ownership of these areas by cooperatives.

We have met these people and I must say that this comrade, Boysie Bishop, who has been referred to, has been one of the leading lights in pushing this system of ownership of these houses. We have had many meetings, and the comrade should have said very large meetings, where the majority of the tenants attended and have agreed. We have selected a block in Campbellville where we will start by improving the properties by self-help, and then offer them for sale to the tenant on a cooperative basis.

There are many people, not so many but they have to be described as many when one considers the whole country where government rental houses are, who earn very high salaries, in one case as much as \$700, and insist that they must stay in a \$14 per month house, which is subsidised. I agree that these people may have to move. These people who are in this high income bracket and want to get a subsidised house at \$14 per month will have to join one of the schemes where there are hire-purchase houses. We are not throwing them on the road. We are offering them an alternative, more in keeping with their ability to pay, but they will have to give up the rental house to a more deserving case.

The reason why this supplementary sum is being asked for is that if we are going to undertake the kind of programme I have just described, we just cannot give the people the houses in any sort of state. It is our plan that before the houses are handed over to the cooperatives in the various areas, we will have to bring them to good repair because, remember, the people to whom we are going to give them ultimately are poor people who will now have to pay their installments towards the repayment of these houses. We should not give them houses that are likely to last them only a few years but such as should last them many years. The Government will provide facilities so that they can secure additional loans, from the Government or one of the Government lending institutions at periodic times, say, every three or five years, whereby the cooperatives can upkeep their houses and surroundings, and provide additional facilities for their communities.

I hope that the Members of the Opposition are now very much enlightened about our enlightening policy.

Mr. DaSilva: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make it quite clear that I understand exactly what the Minister says. Maybe he will correct me if I am wrong because I want to get my points right. The minister was talking about terraced houses. Obviously you cannot get Transport for a terraced house. But I want the hon. Minister to make quite clear to me whether all these facilities that will be available on the cooperative basis will be available to everybody living in a terraced house or a hire-purchase house, that is, a single house on their own. And most important of all, will the people living in a hire-purchase house, who own their own little home, get transports in their own names? Could the Minister please clarify that very clearly for me?

Mr. Narain: The people who have purchased their individual houses will obviously get transports. In the case of the people who are buying the rental houses, the cooperative society will get transport so that the society will regulate the development of that environment.

What we are hoping further, is that you may have an amalgamation, a federation of various societies in a particular area so that bigger things can be done, such as putting up Cooperative Consumer Shops, putting in community facilities, and carrying out general developmental projects - maybe concreting drains and things like that, which they can do on a community development basis, whereby the Government will provide the materials and they will provide the labour to have these done. We are not thinking first of individuals, we are thinking of groups, districts and regions and from regions to the whole national issue. I do not think I had previously made myself clear.

The Chairman: Page 24. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Item 63, Head 38, Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) Post Office, subhead 6, Upkeep of Motor and Water Transport. The total voted provision under this head for 1975 was \$18,000. That was what was considered adequate for the upkeep of all the Motor and Water Transport in the Ministry of Works and Housing (Communications) – Post Office. What they are asking for now is more than the original amount voted - \$19,000. It is over

100 percent more than they are asking for and the legend states: “To provide for an expansion of postal services.” What is the nature of this expansion which results in more than a 100 percent increase in the amount originally estimated? It is not for increased cost of service or anything. The legend clearly states: “To provide for an expansion of the postal service.” It is not an increase in cost. It is for an expansion. If the increase is more than 100 percent, one is led to conclude, perhaps, that this is a 100 percent expansion in the postal services. Will the hon. Minister explain what kind of expansion this is which costs more than what was originally estimated?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Housing.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, this is Motor and Water Transport, but the item that has probably been expanded most here would be Water Transport. The hon. Member might know that there are many places which have recently had to receive postal services. We have places like Kimbia. I do not know if the hon. Member has visited there yet. There is Papaya, and there are many other places, as the P.N.C. Government strives to open this great land of ours, making new opportunities for our people. We have had to arrange services following these developments and for this reason I think the meager sum of \$19,000 is not too much [Mr. Singh: 100 percent increase?] Yes, because the development has gone more than 200 percent. The coast is a narrow strip where most of the people lived. We are going into places like Kimbia, there is a better service to Kwakwani; we are going to Papaya, places that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has not yet visited, but we will give him the opportunity. If you had a seven- mile wide coast and you now have 100 miles of river – comrade, I am trying to educate you, I am not trying to waste my time. Cde. Chairman, I think the explanation would be clear to people who know Guyana and what is taking place in Guyana. But some of our Members prefer to spend their vacation outside of Guyana rather than going to Kimbia and Papaya and serve a national cause. That is why they are not well informed on these matters.

The Chairman: Page 25; page 26. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Item 70. What worries us in all these things is what one might almost call the haphazard way in which estimating seems to have been done as evidenced in item 70, Head 41,

Ministry of Education and Social Development, subhead 37, Maintenance and Operation of Land and Water Transport: The sum originally asked for was \$20,000. The supplementary provision now sought is more than 100 percent- \$21,500. The legend here states:

“Voted provision inadequate due to Ministry acquiring six new vehicles in 1975.”

What sort of planning is this? Surely you must plan and have the money allocated. It took some time for the vehicles to have been ordered, to purchase them and everything else. All this must have been known to the Ministry. Now that we have six new vehicles, not second hand ones, is it realistic that \$21,500, an increase of more than 100 percent, is required because the “voted provision is inadequate due to ministry acquiring six new vehicles in 1975.” It means that they want this money to maintain and operate the six new vehicles. How many vehicles does the ministry have? For the previous amount of vehicles that they had they considered \$20,000 adequate. For six new vehicles they want an additional sum of \$21,500. Why? I would like to know what amount of vehicles the Ministry had before the six new vehicles. We need an explanation here.

Item 72, Head 43, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Primary and Secondary Schools, subhead 15 – National Insurance: The amount of \$550,000 was voted. The supplementary provision now sought is \$142,800. This is a very significant amount of money to ask for in respect of National Insurance. The legend merely says: “Voted Provision inadequate.”

5:55 – 6:05p.m.

I saw the amount of new posts that have been asked for in this Ministry and there are only a few new posts that have been created. One wonders whether this is not another example of bad estimating because these new posts could not account for a request for as much as \$142,800. Under this subhead, National Insurance, individuals pay only a small amount in respect of national Insurance and a few new posts cannot result in expenditure of \$142,800.

Item 73, Head 43 – Ministry of education and Social Development – Primary /Secondary Schools, subhead 16: This is a new Head – Bank Charges, Teachers Salaries Accounts, and the amount requested under this new Head is \$20,000 to meet the cost of service charges for operating the accounts. Sir, I would like to know what this is all about. This is just for

information. I don't know whether this is a new system and I would like to know how it operates and what is required. I am not questioning the amount but I merely don't know anything about it.

I would like some information for my personal benefit on this business of service charges for operating the accounts.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Education.

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, with respect to subhead 37, Maintenance and Operation of Land and Water Transport, I want to inform the hon. Member that I think he is aware that vehicles are not always available when they are needed. The Ministry is a developing Ministry, the work is expanding and the allocation sought is to cover the cost of the purchase of 6 new vehicles as the legend says, and for maintenance of the six new vehicles.

National Insurance: I do not know if I heard the hon. Member correctly but that sum has to do with teachers salaries. The provision, as you saw, was inadequate. I think you have to look at the Ministry of Education as an expanding Ministry and an expanding service. You have to cope with larger numbers and then you have to cope with the different specialisations that are being offered, therefore we have increased our staff.

Subhead 16 is a new subhead. I think hon. Members you must have noticed or observed that there is an increasing number of thefts from Headmasters and so on. We have decided to open bank accounts for teachers and these charges are in respect of bank accounts.

The Chairman: Page 27; page 30; page 31. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Sir, I am well aware that I want to speak on item 90, Head 63 – Ministry of Health, which deals with a new subhead, subhead 29 – Grant to the Mahaica Cheshire Home for Spastic Children. We have been asked to vote \$7,000 to provide for a grant to the Mahaica Cheshire Home for Spastic Children.

I am well aware that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs is acting for the Minister of Health and I wish in no way to embarrass him by asking him questions to which he may not be able to give any answers. I wonder if his Permanent Secretary is able to give us some information about the running of this Mahaica Cheshire Home for Spastic Children.

As we are aware it is situated adjacent to the Mahaica Leprosarium. And there seems to be quite a bit of confusion in the minds of people as to whether it forms part of the Mahaica Leprosarium which, of course, would be very difficult and unfair to the children concerned. And also there seems to be a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the internal management of this Home.

If it is possible, we would appreciate if the hon. Minister could give us some information as to the policy and the running of this Mahaica Cheshire Home for Spastic Children.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, for the information of the hon. Member, this Home is not run by the Mahaica Hospital. It is a Home run by a special committee, the aim being to ensure that the children who are affected in this way are taken care of. If the hon. Member requires more information she should put it in the form of a question and we will bring more information to here.

The Chairman: Page 32. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Yes, sir, item 95, Head 65, Ministry of Health – Bacteriological, subhead 7 – Instruments, Supplies etc. The voted provision was \$192,000 and the supplementary provision now sought is \$63,000 to provide for payment of items ordered in 1974. If provision was made in 1974 estimates for purchase of these items, we wonder whether savings have been made in the 1974 accounts as a result of these items not having been received in 1974.

6:05 – 6:15p.m.

I just wondered whether this sum of \$63,000 was provided in the 1974 Estimates or whether there was no provision and now a Supplementary Provision is sought in 1975. I think one out of the two should have been done. Either the provision should have been provided in the 1974 Estimates or in the 1975 Estimates when presented. It is untidy to come here at this stage to ask for a supplementary provision for something which obviously was ordered in 1974.

The same for item 96, Head 65 – ministry of Health – Bacteriological, Subhead 10 – Blood Transfusion Service, where \$50,000 is requested to provide for payment of items ordered in 1974. I am sorry the hon. Minister of Health is not here but we would be very grateful to hear

a report in respect of the blood transfusion service. There has always been very great dissatisfaction with it and if there has been an improvement this honourable House would be very happy to hear of it.

In respect of item 97, Head 67 – ministry of Health – Hospitals and Dispensaries: this extends to page 33 and, indeed, to page 34. It is all embracing in that it deals with a whole range of new posts and situations in the Ministry of Health – Hospitals and Dispensaries and personal emoluments.

Under this head I should like to make the observation that we are creating numerous new posts, but what we are particularly interested in knowing about is what has been done to increase the accommodation which will be required for these new posts and indeed what has been done about the conditions in the hospitals and in the medical services being offered to the inhabitants of the country generally.

I am fully aware that the hon. Minister (acting) will not perhaps be in a position to answer all the queries I may put forward, but what I would appreciate is a note being taken by his advisers so that we can have answers or we can have the Minister alerted on his return. It has always been our contention, and we do reiterate it, that the amount of money being allocated for expenditure in this area in respect of the health of the nation has always been inadequate percentage-wise as compared with the amount of money we are spending in other areas. **[Interruption]** There are so many other areas we can think about, National Service, the Army, etc. Further on we would see where we are buying aeroplanes for the Army, that sort of thing. Certainly the health of the nation is more important, particularly now when we have been told, as we were by the hon. Minister of Works and Communications, that the Government is making such a tremendous impact in respect of going into the interior, populating the Interior, opening up the interior.

When we do that we also need to provide the ancillary services; we need to provide health services. How can we do that when even at the moment our health services are so inadequate? We talk about hospitals, but there is no doctor at the Mabaruma Hospital at the moment. **[Interruption]** If a doctor has recently been placed there then I stand corrected but at least a few months ago there was no doctor there. My information is that the Dispenser, Mr.

Swain, is not even there. I think he has gone to Russia on a course. Is there a doctor at Cove and John? I understand that Dr. Too-Kong has retired and he is just helping out. My information is that there is no doctor at Cove and John. Is that correct? Is there a doctor at La Grange? My information is that there is none.

There is also a shortage of drugs in the country not only in the Hospitals but elsewhere. This is where one has to ask the Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection to do some investigating of the External trade Bureau because the merchants and people generally are claiming that the invoices have been lying down for up to ten months and this has resulted in shortages on the market at the present time. [Interruption] There are some uniformed Members on the other side who insist on making stupid, rude and uninformed remarks. These little people want to assert themselves and answer questions and there are Ministers to answer.

One very serious repercussion in respect of this shortage of drugs is this unethical habit of substitution. Let me give an example. A doctor may prescribe a particular drug for a patient suffering from asthma.

That patient may also be suffering from diabetes. He prescribes a drug that will not have side effects in respect of persons suffering from diabetes. The patient takes the prescription to a dispensing place. The person who is dispensing does not have the particular drug; he feels that another drug which, in his opinion, is just as good for asthma can be used. So he gives the patient the other drug because he does not have the one prescribed. The doctor knows the previous history of the person; the dispensing person does not know the previous history. The effect is that the patient will have side effects in respect of his diabetes.

This is, admittedly, an unethical aspect, but we do have unethical people and this is happening. That is why it is so important for us to protect our people for us to make sure that when a doctor prescribes a certain drug that drug is in fact available. That is why we must look very seriously at the whole business of the shortage of drugs in hospitals and in the streets generally.

There is another recommendation I should like to make. We have reached the stage in this country where we should seriously consider setting up a free national health scheme. It will not

be free initially but money could be taken from the National Service and put in a national health scheme. That is what I mean. Let us do that. We are spending money in many areas, let us get our priorities right. We are talking about free education. Of course, education is free in some areas, for instance, primary education. Let us understand and appreciate that not all of us can take in education at all levels, but all of us at some time or the other need medical attention, so what we need, as a priority, is to have a proper national health scheme. Then we can start thinking about all these other things like free education. I am not sure what it involves. I am not sure how much is not free at the present moment but what I do know is that every single person needs medical attention at some time or the other. Medical help should be available to them and it is not at the present moment.

Specialist treatment at the hospitals: It has been reported to me that poor people are really being exploited at the present moment. I am told that doctors are using their clinics in the hospital to divert patients to their own personal afternoon clinics. The Government has been talking about private hospitals and taking over private hospitals. The people who keep the private hospitals in existence are the specialists. So I do not know what the Government is grumbling about.

6:15 – 6:25 p.m.

There has been so much talk for such a long time about improving our hospital. We have had funds raised by Radio Bingo for a long time. What has happened? Nothing very significant. Maybe what we should be is start a five-year rehabilitation programme for the existing hospital and, alongside of that, decentralise the existing hospital.

Between Rosignol and Georgetown there is the Mahaicony Hospital but what facilities has t hat got? It has one doctor, Dr. Harricharran. Do they do any particular operations, even minor operations? No. so anybody who needs even a minor operation comes all the way down from that central area – Mahaicony is almost control between Rosignol and Georgetown – to Georgetown. Why not let us put more doctors at the Mahaicony Hospital. Let us establish a surgery there and staff it with three doctors. Let us decentralise our services and save those poor people from coming down to Georgetown. Let us make that hospital capable of dealing with all but the major cases or the serious operations. That should be the pattern throughout the country.

Let us set up and staff properly one such hospital over the West Coast, at Essequibo, at Mabaruma, in those areas. Do not provide these areas with one doctor sometimes and with no doctor most of the time, as the situation is in so many of the areas at the present moment.

The time has come for this Government to realise that it has a very serious obligation to the people of this country to provide proper medical facilities. I will go further and I will suggest that those people who are suffering from, for example, diabetes and blood pressure should have their prescription dispensed without charge. I will state the reason. If one of them goes to a doctor and the doctor gives prescription, that person should be able to go to a Government agency and get that prescription dispensed free of charge. Why? It is a well-known fact that it is old people who suffer from diabetes and who suffer from blood pressure, and invariably, they are ordinary people. Some of them rely on a pension to keep them in existence and the treatment for diabetes and blood pressure is costly. I have investigated it and I was told do. The people who cannot afford this expenditure neglect their health. Eventually, they go, in the advanced stage of their illness, to a doctor. What eventually happens? They are probably taken to the hospital in a state of a coma. In the final analysis, it costs the government more because when they are taken there in a state of a coma, Government has to put them in a bed, set up a drip, give them intravenous injections, look after them, and care them. Does it not cost much less for the Government to provide free medication for those types of people? As I said, it is an undisputed fact that these people belong to the older categories – the middle-aged and people who are advanced in age – and if one feels that a scheme like this will be abused, it is a simple matter to set up a register for diabetics and people who suffer from blood pressure. The problem is then solved. If the Government sets up a register, it is a simple matter for a person to be registered and to be then entitled to treatment. The people are looked after before they get into an advanced stage of illness when they suffer more and cost the Government more in the final analysis.

These are some of the recommendations I should like to make and I would seriously urge the Government to consider these things rather than squander money in so many other areas like Freedom Fighters, Entertainment, Army, National Service and the rest. Let us spend the money on the health of the nation and we would really be looking after our people; we would really be

doing something meaningful to create the kind of society which the P.N.C. has been spouting about for so long.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, I must say that I am a bit disappointed in the contribution of the hon. Leader of the opposition. My first disappointment came out of the fact that he chose the occasion when we are discussing the creation of certain new posts in the Ministry of Health to give us in this House his Party's policy on health rather than waiting for the Budget Debate at the end of the year. He could have done this last year during the Budget Debate.

I must congratulate him too, because he seems to have taken a short course in medicine while he was away. [**Laughter**] He should realise, in the first place, that we are a developing country. We have to creep before we walk; we have to go by degrees. We cannot expect to have in this country the sort of health scheme or the sort of health plan there is in other developed countries or what the hon. Member may have seen during his tour of the United States. The point is that every effort is being made to increase health facilities throughout the country, not only in the capital but in every district of the country, the hinterland especially.

I should also like to remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the government has a national health plan which it is striving to implement and I think many of the things about which he spoke are contained in that plan. From time to time we hope to be able to implement some of the things he has spoken about.

I would wish to refer particularly to what he said about drugs, the shortage of drugs throughout the country. I wish to inform him that the Minister of Trade met members of the Pharmaceutical

Association only last week and discussed the whole question of the level of stocks of drugs in the country. I think the members of that association were satisfied that there was a reasonable stock of drugs available. The question of drug substitution was also discussed and the Minister was assured by the Association that no such thing is done without first referring to the doctor for approval.

There is another point the hon. Member should note. He was very critical about the way the E.T.B. was handling the drug situation and I wish to inform him that the import value of drugs is much higher for the period January to June, 1975, than the corresponding period 1974, so some of his information does not seem to be quite accurate.

6:25 – 6:35 p.m.

On the question of shortage of doctors, there is a shortage of doctors in the country, and the government recognises this. We are making every effort to recruit other doctors. Perhaps we are not getting by as well as we should, but the hon. Member must remember that it takes perhaps five years to train a doctor. He must be patient. Perhaps he can help us. When he goes on his trips abroad he can recruit doctors if he is interested in the service.

On the question of the instruments and supplies, the hon. Member referred to the new amount being provided in the supplementary provision. The same comment was made in relation to the blood transfusion service. I wish to inform him that it is true these instruments were ordered in 1974 and there is an increase in the provision for them in 1975. The point to bear in mind is that the prices of these things increase from time to time and we do not control this. This comes from inflation abroad and so the prices rise and sometimes we have to increase the amounts provided originally.

The Chairman: Page 33; page 34; page 35.

Mr. Singh: Page 35. Item 102, Head 71 – Ministry of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation – Local Government – subhead 1 – Personal Emoluments. We look at the legend and we see: “To provide, on the Permanent Establishment – Pensionable – for the (1) creation, with effect from 1st August, 1974 inclusive of (a) one office of Chief local government officer on the salary range A38 in substitution for one office of Commissioner of Local government on the same salary range.”

And then over the page we have the same thing in respect of Deputy Chief local Government officer, etc. There seem to be changing views about this post. Some time ago, the post of Commissioner of local Government was abolished. At that time, Malcolm Fernandes was the holder. At the same time, the post of Commissioner of Interior was abolished. In that post

was Angus Learmond, and then, these gentlemen, within a short time, were sent home. After that the posts were re-established and now we see that the designation of the post of Commissioner of Local Government is Chief Local government officer. I am just wondering whether the hon. Minister can give an explanation for the chequered career which seems to exist there.

Mr. Naraine: There has been a change in designation here and this came about because of the explanation given by the hon. Minister of Economic Development. I believe the explanation there should have been adequate because he took a long time to explain the changeover into regionalism and the changeover of certain responsibilities that will be taken over by officers in the Ministry of Regional Development from other subject Ministries. I do not think there is any need for me to repeat all that again. I believe it has been adequately covered.

The Chairman: Page 36.

Mr. Singh: Item 104, Head 72 – Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Subhead 1 – Personal Emoluments: The Ministry is asking for quite a few posts, going over to the other page, but let us look at the beginning. The legend states:

“To provide for the creation on the (A) Permanent Establishment Pensionable with effect from 1) 1st March, 1975 inclusive, of one office of Senior Clerk on the salary range A16...”

I am not asking about that; but it continues:

- “2) 1st January, 1975 inclusive of
- (a) two offices of Productivity Officer on the salary range A21;
 - (b) five offices of Wages Inspector on the salary range A16.”

I look at the 1975 Estimates on page 185. I notice that there is an employment and Productivity Division. I should like to know the functions of these two productivity Officers. I notice that the posts are being established with effect from the 1st January, 1975, and they are on a very lucrative salary range, A21, \$450 - \$658. The legend does not say that any money has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund, so that one would presume that these posts are not in existence at the present moment. Yet, they are being asked for with effect from 1st January, 1975.

What is the position? Are they in fact in existence? If so has the money been advanced from the Contingencies Fund?

There are a lot of people in this Division. There is a Labour Research Officer; there is an Economist - I doubt whether that post will be filled – a job analyst; a Statistical Officer. There has always been a shortage of economists. But now they are adding to that. When I asked about it when we were discussing the Estimates, we were told that there are vacancies in that Division. Now there are to be two Productivity Officers. What will their functions be in this respect, and why 1st January, 1975?

Then we go on to five offices of Wage Inspector. What will these Wage Inspectors do? There are a number of Labour Inspectors. There are fourteen Labour Inspectors and there are Agricultural Assessors. Now, we seem to be creating new category. I have not seen it in the Estimates before. What are the Wages Inspectors to do? Who was carrying out these functions before? Presumably the Labour officers would have been doing it? Why are we not increasing the number of Labour Officers rather than creating this limited and special category of Wages Inspector to do what Labour Officers have been doing? If they have not been doing it, why were they not carrying out these duties before? These are questions we would like answered.

6:35 – 6:45 p.m.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, changes are taking place all the time and, of course, the Ministry of Labour with its very important task in this country must be in line with these changes and developments. We need the Productivity Officers so that they can work in formulating worker education programmes. In this business of production we need people to understand more and more what is happening in this country, what are our goals and things of that kind, so that they can undertake a high degree of promotional and consultancy work in the ministry, particularly in the area of advising management in various undertakings, on ways and means of increasing productivity. I think the ministry has sits credit that, notwithstanding our problems, production keeps on increasing.

As far as the Wages inspectors are concerned, Labour Officers at present carry out functions such as inspecting business premises, investigating complaints, wages registers, acting

as Secretaries to Wages Councils, Advisory Committees, etc. There is greater need for these officers in industrial sectors so they must be relieved of these kinds of work and let the Wages Inspectors take over. Wages Inspectors, therefore, will perform these duties that I have already described. These duties do not necessarily require the high level of training possessed by Labour Officers. Therefore, we can free them to do the work that they have been appointed to do and, that is, to work really in the field, to make sure that they do their work and not sit as Secretaries and so on. So that is essential. I think those are the points.

Some other changes have taken place in the Ministry, like the establishment of CASWIG and so on, so you need more people to do this kind of work. But our two Productivity Officers are very essential to carry on the work of education. Some of these things are already happening but this is the time when we come for supplementary estimates so that the work can go on.

The Chairman: Page 37. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Let us hope we get some more realistic answers this time. Item 105, Head 72 – Ministry of Labour and Social Security, subhead 15, Supervision of Weighing of Canes on Sugar Estates: The token provision of \$1 was voted and during consideration of the Estimates it was stated that we did not need to vote anymore because this was only a token provision and the sugar industry would pay it. We had all of that during the debate on the Estimates in December, 1974 and now they are wasting our time by coming here and asking us to approve \$45,000 for the payment of these persons involved in the weighing of canes on sugar estates. The legend states:

“To meet the payment of salaries etc., for Cane Scale Supervisors on Sugar Estates. This amount is reimbursable by the Industry.”

If they wanted it, why did they not put it in December? Why put \$1 in December and then come here in June and ask for \$45,000 to pay for it and then say you will get it back from the sugar industry? If it is reimbursable why not go and ask the sugar industry to pay it then and avoid us cluttering up our estimates by not voting it in December and then coming here in the Supplementary Provision and asking for it now. What kind of accounts are we running?

Item 106, Head 74 – Ministry of labour and Social Security – Social Assistance, subhead 1 – Personal Emoluments: This is to provide for the creation on the Permanent Establishment, Non-Pensionable, with effect from the 1st January, 1975, inclusive of one office of Chief Investigator on the salary range A11; and three offices of Field Investigator on the salary range A7. Again I make the point, and I hope the hon. Minister is listening, that these posts are being asked for from 1st January, 1975. Are they in existence now or are they not? If they are in existence now it means that moneys have been spent. If that is so, then one would expect that there should have been a note here saying that moneys have already been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. That has not happened because it is not stated here.

I would like to ask a further question. What are the duties of this Chief Investigator and the three Field Investigators? What will they investigate? We know that there are 28 Social Assistance Officers. Presumably the Social Assistance Officers were doing the investigating. Why is it we are now taking away that duty? Presumably the Social Assistance Officers may not have been doing what they were supposed to do. They were supposed to be doing investigating. Were they, in fact, investigating? If they were doing it, why are we creating these additional posts now? Let us understand that the creation of these additional posts means additional expenditure. If you have three offices of field Investigator, one would expect that they will have to go out in the fields and if you have three additional bodies to do field work, they may need travelling, they may even need motor vehicle conveyance. Obviously they will spend money for travel. They will need travelling allowances; there will be travelling expenses to be paid; subsistence allowances. For that matter, there might be an increase in miscellaneous vote because they will need miscellaneous items. Of course there must be an increase in the National Insurance because they will pay National Insurance. None of this is reflected here. Indeed, none of this is reflected in respect of those other officers we discussed on page 36. So if we have these four posts, what about the cost of travelling? Are these posts still in existence? What are they going to do?

This is the last question. Item 107, Head 74, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance. I would just ask how this Division is made up in respect of the additional \$18,000 being requested as the legend states:

“To provide for an annual grant to the Uncle Eddie’s Home and also an increase in the subvention to the Guyana Society for the blind.”

Could the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this \$18,000? What goes to the Uncle Eddie’s Home and what goes to the Guyana Society for the blind?

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid: I will start with the last question first. The amount of \$1,000 per month goes to the Uncle Eddie’s Home and the balance to the Guyana Society for the Blind. So that Uncle Eddie’s Home will get \$12,000 and the balance to the Guyana Society for the Blind.

Provision for salaries for Cane Scale Supervisors: It is the usual practice to indicate \$1 in the Estimates. Then two warrants are issued so that this money can be recovered through the Contingencies Fund in advance and this is repaid by the industry at the end of the year. They work for both crops. It is what we call the small crop and the large crop.

The Chief Investigator and three Field Investigators are necessary. They functioned at one time on an open vote basis and were paid from the National Aid Board. Now we want to regularize this and let them have adequate personal emoluments. Thus this is before the House. That covers the story for now.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, before we go on, you have given an undertaking that you will try to complete this Financial Paper by 7 o’clock.

Mr. Singh: That seems a bit ambiguous. I could not give an undertaking and still say at the same time that I would try. What I did say was that I would try to finish by that time. I would not like to categorise it as an undertaking. It was snot, in fact, an undertaking; it was a promise to try.

6:45 – 6:55 p.m.

The Chairman: I thought it was an undertaking. All right, we will move on to pages 38, 39, 40 and 41. Do you want to speak on 41?

Mr. Singh: Yes, sir. Merely to reiterate that I am very very concerned, and I think the entire nation should be in respect of item 131, Head 29 – Ministry of National Development,

Head 29 – Ministry of National Development, subhead 2, National Development – expenses of, and the fact that once again the ministry of National Development is asking for \$750,000 in addition to the \$2½ million already provided and not a single word of explanation is given as to how any of this money is going to be spent.

Dr. Reid: We have explained, comrade Chairman, that this Ministry is doing some special work with people and there is no way to indicate how this will go as you go out into the areas trying to inspire people and educate them for the job of development so that they will have a cause for which they work. In this kind of work that you cannot tell in advance how it is going to go. Who are the people going to be the teachers, the number of people you will need to teach and things of that kind? Thus this Ministry has to function like this for some time.

The Chairman: Page 42; page 43. Section “B” Capital Estimates, page 1. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Yes, sir, item 1, Division V – Prime Minister, Defence Force, subhead 1 – Purchase of Equipment. The voted provision was \$1.4 million. The supplementary Provision now sought is \$4,401,000. The legend states:

“To provide for the purchase of aircraft for the Guyana Defence Force.”

How many do they have at the present moment? And let the hon. Minister not tell me this is a security matter because everybody will see the planes flying.

I understand too that the Government has recently purchased two helicopters. Have they been purchased for the Army, for the Prime Minister or for his office? This is what I am talking about, getting priorities right. Here we are spending \$4.4 million to purchase aircraft when the Hon. Minister of Health needs money to improve the atrocious health standards of the nation. This is grossly unsatisfactory.

Item 2, Division V, Prime Minister – Purchase of Equipment, subhead 3: The sum of \$9,000 is requested to enable one Land Rover to be purchased. Did the Ministry not know they would need an additional Land Rover? What is this for? I presume that, as in the case of the ministry of Education, there should be maintenance and upkeep for this one Land Rover. I do not see any Supplementary Provision being requested for the maintenance of one Land Rover. The

Ministry of Education asked for \$21,500 for six new vehicles. If the cost of maintaining six vehicles is more than \$20,000 dollars, then one Land rover must need some provision but nothing is being requested. What sort of haphazard accounting this is?

Item 3, Division XI – Ministry of Information and Culture, subhead 4, Dubbing Theatre; The voted provision is \$100,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$500,000. The planning was done in December and nothing was inserted in the Estimates.

“To provide for the extension of the Dubbing theatre to accommodate a Film Laboratory.”

Nothing was put in in December for a Film Laboratory. Now in June this year \$500,000 is needed for a film laboratory. Why was his not planned? Why was it not put in the Estimates? Why did we not cater for it? Whose funds are being used here? Are we getting assistance for this? Or are we using our own money to put up this Film Laboratory?

Here again is another case where instead of putting up the Film Laboratory we can first improve the laboratory, the operating theatre, the radiotherapy section, and the medical facilities at the Georgetown Hospital and the other hospitals. Then we can have this film laboratory and the rest of it.

Item 7, Division XVIII – Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, subhead 4 – Forestry Cooperatives. The sum of \$960,000 is being asked for to provide for the purchase of 16 sawmills. I rather suspect that this might be mobile sawmills and there are a lot of fears expressed in respect of the operation of these mobile sawmills. I wonder if the hon. Minister would tell us whether those fears have been resolves, whether people are now satisfied that the mobile sawmills will operate properly and will be productive. Will he also say where they will be deployed?

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I cannot see any reason in trying to give all the details about a force that is called the Defence Force when it comes to means of movement. The force has to move by air, it has to move by land, it has to move by water. If we are really to occupy t his country of ours called Guyana we have to have the kind of equipment that will be able to move

any place in this country and that is a very important and urgent exercise. Our friend on the opposite side ought to be very happy that this is being pursued vigorously.

This Guyana Defence Force is not an ordinary Force. It is the People's Army. When people are ill in the hinterland and so on, it is the army that must bring them out. When people need help in constructing homes or getting land under cultivation it is the Army that does all this kind of work. So this is the people's army being equipped so that it can give service to people.

I don't think the Leader of the opposition should make much noise about the Land rover. We have mentioned what that piece of equipment is. We did not name the others but we named this one. There should not be any question about one Land Rover. With the recent rise in prices and the need to equip this Land Rover properly, this additional sum is needed so that the Army can have a Land rover that can be very useful to it.

6:55 – 7:05 p.m

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

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the question of the sawmills, these are not mobile sawmills in the sense of being sawmills on wheels which move about. They are sawmills which can be removed from one place to another, but they are in fact quite substantial sawmills. We have embarked on an accelerated programme of forestry development. Having regard to our building programme and having regard to the interior development, the hydro-power road, the need for increased forestry production for our housing scheme, found it necessary to purchase the sawmills. But these are substantial sawmills. They are similar to the sawmill which has been erected at Matthews Ridge. They are sawmills which were purchased as a result of advice from experts in the Forestry Department.

The Chairman: Page 2.

Mr. Singh: Item 3, Division VIII – Ministry of Energy and Natural resources, subhead 12 – United Nations/Guyana Hydropower Inventory. A relatively small amount of money in relation to the voted provision is being asked for to accelerate work on the project. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us what stage we are on. Is this the same Mazaruni area project? I know there are two hydropower studies going on, one specifically for the Mazaruni

area and one in respect of the country as a whole. Perhaps he will tell me which one this refers to.

Item 9, subhead 14 in the same Division, Industrial Wood Pulp and Wood Products Complex. It states that this is “to provide for payment to Parsons and Whittemore Inc. of one-half of the cost of Wood Pulp Project Study, as well as bank charges.” It is always nice to know at long last we are getting somewhere with the Wood Pulp Project and perhaps he can tell us that we are getting somewhere.

Item 11, in the same Ministry: This is a new subhead, subhead 16 – Capital Contribution to the Upper Mazaruni Development Authority. This Parliament had not been told that there was anything like an Upper Mazaruni Development Authority at all. We are seeing it for the first time. We would like to know what this is all about. What kind of authority would this be? Obviously it cannot be a local authority because we do not hand out \$6 million to local authorities just like that. The hon. Minister can tell us what is the “proposed authority” to which we are granting \$6 million “to provide for preliminary expenses and initial capital contribution to the proposed authority.”

Item 13, Head XXI – ministry of Works and Housing (Works), subhead 13 – Upper Mazaruni Road: Supplementary Provision of \$10,550,000 is now being sought for the Upper Mazaruni Road. I was very pleased to hear the hon. Minister give us the information that the Ministry is undertaking the job because I had intended to ask who was doing the job, whether it was local people in conjunction with outside people and, what the position was. In view of the fact that \$10 million is being requested, one wonders whether \$10 million worth of equipment can be purchased between now and the end of the year to accelerate the project. If the equipment has been ordered and is expected, fair enough; we will realise that this is not unreasonable.

Item 14, in the same Division, subhead 16 – Government Buildings, is to provide for the purchase and reconstruction of Sankar Bros. Building and construction of bonds therein. The sum being asked for is \$1,500,000. Presumably the Government has bought Sankar Bros. Building. Has it bought Sankar Bros. Ltd.? Or is it only the building it has bought? Has it bought the business, the undertaking, the selling of cars and whatever was being done by Sankar Bros. Ltd. in that Building? We would like to know whether it is the building only or was the business

25.6.75

National Assembly

6:55 – 7:05 p.m.

of Sankar Bros. Ltd. Bought and we would welcome a bread down showing how much was paid and how much will be spent on the construction of bonds thereon etc.

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

Mr. Jack: First of all, with regard to the Inventory, there are two studies so to speak. There is the upper Mazaruni hydro electric feasibility study which was done by the Yugoslav Firm of Energo Project. That study is a study to identify our total hydro electric potential with specific reference to some of the major areas where hydro electric power can be developed, and the amount asked for is to accelerate the work so that it can be finished this year.

With regard to the wood pulp project, as Members will remember, under the terms of the arrangements which we made with parsons and Whittemore Inc. we undertook to pay half the cost of the wood pulp project study. This is what this amount stands for. We are still in discussion with the company. One would recognize that with a project as large as this, one has to make sure that caution is exercised and that we move with great particularity. I may say, however, that since the start of this scheme, as a result of inflation, the cost of the project has escalated from something like \$171 million to something nearer to \$240 million. This has been a cause of great concern to us. At the same time the price of pulp has shot up astronomically, hitting at one time last year between \$400 and \$600 per ton; since then there has been something of a decline. With regard to item 11, subhead 16 – Capital Contribution to the Upper Mazaruni Development Authority, \$6 million - the feasibility study, that is, the first phase of the total project is over. But we need to have further work done to the design stage; we need to retain consultants and to do ancillary work of a preparatory nature. For instance, we are doing the road; that is a big thing. There is also the question of studying possible areas of resettlement, doing ecological studies, identifying areas where subsidiary roads would be and thing like that. This is what the \$6 million will go to providing, and it is necessary that we have it this year because, as you know, we have already embarked upon the road and we are going full speed ahead if we are to have this hydro power station completed by 1981 and 1982.

7:05 – 7:15 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Works and Housing.

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, part of the explanation on item 13, subhead 13 – Upper Mazaruni road- has already been given but I should mention that when this scheme was originally envisaged, it was thought that it would take about four and a half years to construct. Under the present scheme we have given it a maximum of two and a half years and this means that a lot of equipment, which normally would have spread over a longer period will have to be brought in very early particularly because delivery dates on this equipment may not be very good. Some of this equipment has already been committed and some are still to be ordered. This extra money is required to effect this more compact project. In relation to item 14, subhead 16 – Government buildings, Sankar Brothers was purchased for \$940,000. The buildings were purchased and we have taken over certain agencies but we have not taken over the business as such. The \$560,000 is required for the renovation of the property and for the construction of some additional bonds which will be required for the expansion of E.T.B.

The Chairman: Page 3.

Mr. Singh: I have one question on page 3, item 23, Division XXIV – ministry of Works and Housing (Communication, subhead 6 – Construction and/or reconditioning of ships. The note states: “To provide for the purchase of two ships”, and the sum of \$3 million is being sought to provide for the purchase of these ships. We are always anxious to have our shipping ferry service improved. Could the Minister tell us about this?

Mr. Naraine: Mr. Chairman, we have to look at item 23 along with item 24, subhead 13 – Dredger. We will see that the total amount is really about \$4,400,000. It includes for the provision of a dredger to dig the waterfront in front of the wharves as well as to keep the channels clear in the following rivers: the Barima and Kaituma, the Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice. The dredger is very essential and we have to make a move immediately.

In relation to the replacement of ships we have lost at sea - a ship going to Matthews Ridge – we are trying to get that ship replaced most urgently. It may mean the purchase of a ship.

We have sent out tenders and specifications for another cargo ship that is required, and we hope to receive tenders from local manufacturers in relation to this ship.

The Chairman: Page 4; page 5.

Mr. Singh: Page 5, Division XXXII – Ministry of Finance, subhead 13 – Preliminary expenses – Cooperative Insurance Scheme. Could the hon. Minister tell us his plans about this?

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, I think it was more than two years ago that the Government indicated that as part of the expansion of the cooperative financial institutions it is intended not only to see the Guyana National Cooperative Bank expanded and see the establishment of the two development banks – one in Housing and the other in agriculture – but also to see the establishment of a cooperative insurance service. We are now in the process of working out details. We are looking for people; we are advertising for people and some initial expenses are involved. The intention of this item of provision is to provide funds for meeting these necessary preliminary expenses.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items.

Question –

“That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/1975, Schedule of Supplementary Provisions on the current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st May, 1973, or \$62,238,649.”

Put and agreed to.

Assembly resumed

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Your Honour, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in the Financial Paper 3/1975, and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

BILLS – SECOND READING

PRISON (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the prison Act.”

[**The Minister of Home Affairs**]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Your Honour, I beg to have permission to have that item deferred until another date.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Permission is granted.

Bill, by leave, deferred.

MOTION

MOTION TO AMEND STANDING ORDER NO. 35(5)

“Be it resolves that Standing Order No. 35 be amended by the substitution of the following paragraph 5:

“5) A Member shall be referred to in the Assembly either with the title “Comrade” before his surname or official designation as the honourable, Mr.”

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

The Minister of parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): Your Honour, there falls to me tonight a unique privilege to move this Motion to enable this House to use as part of the accepted parliamentary language of this House a Word which without doubt already is part of the political consciousness of the people of this country. I refer to the word “Comrade.” [**Applause**]

When historians comment on the history of the proceedings of this house they will fain recall that it was the Government of the People’ National Congress that initiated the word “Comrade” in the vocabulary of the highest forum of this land, the Parliament of Guyana. The gravamen of this motion that has been tabled under my name is an amendment of the standing Orders of this House so that a Member can be referred to in this Assembly with the title “Comrade” before his or her surname or official designation.

International Women's Year, it is appropriate that the word "Comrade be introduced in our Parliament. It is a great equalizer as it makes no distinction between the sexes in Guyana.

One of the objects of the Party to which I belong, with honour, the People's National Congress, is the pursuit of the socialist ideal ours is the belief, the People's national Congress, that some institutions in Guyana must perforce reflect the language of that socialist ideal to which we are all committed. All will agree in this House that the word "Comrade" is, and always has been, a part of the generally accepted language of socialist and socialist-oriented societies throughout the world. Historically, the word "Comrade reflects a variety of meanings, but one feature of every definition of the word has been a sense of togetherness and brotherhood. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as, and I quote: "an associate in work, play, or fighting." Indeed there are few words more reflective of a common will and unity of approach than the word, "Comrade". Guyanese have always regarded it as a badge of honour to be described as a comrade. We in the People's National congress, I think, wear that badge with dignity and with honour.

This measure before this House has another merit. [Interruption] I am glad that the comrade has spoken. There are still, blessedly, only a few people who will prefer to be addressed under the old style of this house, that is, as "hon. Members". This motion, therefore, as an alternative to the proposed new mode of address enables the old manner of address, "hon. Member", to be also used. In the highest democratic traditions of this House, the freedom of choice of expression is given those who may like their names or designations associated with the word "honourable". It is one of my abiding hopes, however, that those who still cling to the horrific "honourable" will see, like Saul on his way to Damascus, that no amount of rhetoric will stop the tide of socialism that is inexorably taking root in our country, and the triumph of the proletariat in the process.

I formally commend this Motion to this house and I respectfully ask that it receives the approval of this House. [Applause]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Motion now stands referred to the standing Orders Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ramsaroop: I wish to move the Adjournment of this House to a date to be fixed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House now stands adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Adjourned accordingly at 7:20 p.m.
