

**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  
CONSITUTION OF GUYANA**

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**80<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1975**

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**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Speaker**

Cde.SaseNarain, J.P., Speaker

**Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C., **(Absent)**  
Prime Minister

**Deputy Prime Minister (1)**

Cde. P.A. Reid, **(Absent - on leave)**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development

**Senior Ministers (9)**

Cde.H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,  
Minister of Economic Development

\*Cde. H. Greene, **(Absent)**  
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

**\*Non-elected Minister**

*Cde. H.O. Jack, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources	<b>(Absent)</b>
*F.E. Hope, Minister of Finance	
*Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., Minister of Works and Housing	<b>(Absent)</b>
*Cde. G.A. King, Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection	<b>(Absent – on leave)</b>
*Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H., Minister of Agriculture	<b>(Absent – on leave)</b>
*Cde. C.L. Baird, Minister of Education and Social Development	<b>(Absent)</b>
*Cde. F.R. Willis S.C., Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice	<b>(Absent)</b>

**Ministers (5)**

Cde. W.G. Carrington, Minister of Labour	<b>(Absent)</b>
Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley, Minister of Information and Culture	<b>(Absent – on leave)</b>
Cde. B. Ramsaroop, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and leader of the House	
*Cde. O.M.R. Harper, Minister of Health	<b>(Absent)</b>
*Cde. C.V. Mingo, Minister of Home Affairs	

**Ministers of State (9)**

Cde. M. Kasim, A.A., Minister of State for Agriculture	
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**\*Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. O.E. Clarke,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

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

Cde. C.A. Nascimento,  
Minister of State,  
Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

**(Absent)**

Cde. K.B. Bancroft,  
Minister of State - Regional  
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

\* Cde. W. Haynes,  
Minister of State for Consumer Protection

**(Absent – on leave)**

\* Cde. A. Salim,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

**(Absent)**

\* Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael,  
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

### **Parliamentary Secretaries (8)**

Cde. J.R. Thomas,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of National Development

**(Absent)**

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

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

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

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

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

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

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

Cde. M. Corrica,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Works and Housing

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

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

### **Other Members (16)**

Cde. J.N. Aaron

Cde. L.M. Branco

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh

Cde. K.M.E. Jonas

Cde. M. Nissar

Cde. L.E. Ramsahoye

Cde. J.G. Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. 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 – F.A. Narine

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

2.12.75  
2 p.m.

National Assembly

2. -2.10 p.m.

**Prayers**

**Public Business**

**Motion**

**Approval of Estimates of Expenditure 1976**

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1976 totalling \$552,203,002.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply*

**The Chairman:** The Heads and Divisions which we will consider today are those which fall under the responsibility of four Ministers: Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection, Minister of Information and Culture and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House. They will not necessarily appear in this order. We will commence with the Heads and Divisions for the Ministry of Information and Culture, pages 52 to 55.

**Head 19 – Ministry of Information and Culture**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$4,562,802 for Head 19, Ministry of Information and Culture, stand part of the Estimates.*

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

**Mrs.DaSilva:** Sir, are we doing it as usual, page by page?

**The Chairman:** Yes, pages 52 to 55. Proceed right through.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Thank you, sir. On page 52 I will deal with items (20), (24), and (25). I have no questions on page 53. On page 54, items (93), (102), (103) and (104); page 55, subheads 7, 18, 20, 25 and 26, and under Capital Expenditure page 56, subhead 3. I will take items (20), (24) and (25) together because the principle of the question applies equally to all three items.

Items (20) under Films Unit deals with the Principal Films Officer; item (24), Cameraman II and item (25), Sound Engineer. The question I wish to ask concerns the amount of money that we are asked to vote for 1976. Under item (20) \$9,516 is voted, under item (24) \$9,612 is voted and under item (25) \$7,320 is voted. I wonder what happened in this year, 1975, that the full amount that was asked to be voted in the Estimates was not used up. In the case of item (20) instead of \$9,516 we used only 44,758. In the case of item (24) instead of \$8,784 we used only \$6,850. I see for the Sound Engineer the Approved Estimate was \$4,824 and the Revised Estimate was \$5,700. In 1976 we are now being asked to provide \$7,320. Could the Minister please tell us whether these vacancies were not filled until late in this year and whether his Ministry is running short staffed, because now we seem to be asking for the full amount as we originally voted in 1975.

Page 54, item (93), Director, Institute of Creative Arts. The establishment vote for 1975 and 1976 call for five persons. In 1975, we were asked to vote \$60,000 and we only used \$35,600 as the Revised Estimates show. We are now asking for the same amount of \$60,000. In this instance, is it the same as the other sections of the Films Unit to which I referred previously? It also says "Director" which gives one the impression that there is one Director. Is the Director having this big salary or are there various sections in the Institute of Creative Arts having various Directors? I am wondering if it should be "Directors" of the Institute of Creative Arts or could the Minister explain to us how this operates and how it is headed.

Now we come to items (102), (103) and (104) on the same page 54. These concern Coaches, Sports Organisers and Superintendent of the Sports Hall. The vote for Coaches was \$38,536 in 1975. The Revised Estimates show that we used the sum of \$45,971. Now we are

**2.12.75**

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**2 -2.10 p.m.**

being asked to vote \$82,836. It is not double but it is certainly a big increase from \$45,971 to \$82,836. I am wondering if the hon. Minister could tell us about these coaches; if all 18 are engaged, how they operate; and if the sum of \$45,971 was spent in 1975 how could \$82,836 be now asked for. Has the number been increased? We ask the hon. Minister to explain that.

**2.10 p.m.**

Item 103, Sports Organisers. We were asked to vote \$27,000 in 1975 and we actually used \$20,975. It appears to me that in every instance there seems to be a shortage of staff. This is what I am trying to get the hon. Minister to tell us. Have they got enough people to operate in this section?

The Revised Estimate for the Superintendent of the Sports Hall is \$2,754. There is apparently only one person for that vote of \$4,728 which is rather high. It cannot be just an increment that is taking it up to that amount? We are not questioning the post, we are not question what work the Superintendent does. We just want the hon. Minister to explain why this figure appears so high.

Now we come to page 55. This is Ministry of Information and Culture. As has been known for a long time, we feel that this is one Ministry where the Government could do some paring without hurting and give additional money to other departments for instance, the Ministry of Health which is so important. We appreciate the necessity for a Ministry of Information and Culture; we appreciate the work this Ministry does. We know that a lot of this work is party propaganda. I suppose one has to accept that is the prerogative of the Government in power to do this. But we feel that in this instance we should cut our coat according to the cloth. And this is one Ministry that should try to do this.

For example subhead 7, Distribution Expenses (Publications). The legend says "Expanded distribution programme." The Government asked for \$25,000 in 1975. The sum of \$65,000 was spent as the Revised Estimate shows. But now we are asking for \$40,000. Surely, if



the Distribution Expenses have expanded, is not a realistic figure seeing that we spent \$65,000 this year. And if, as the legend says, it is expanding, well, obviously more is needed for next year. This is what we are talking about. We appreciate that you cannot give us the money to the last dollar or to the last cent. But we feel that the Estimates should be more accurate in order to give us a truer picture of the real position of things as they exist and to avoid the necessity to come next year with numerous Supplementary Provisions.

The next subhead is 18. It deals with Expenses – Film Censorship. I am not querying the expenses of the Film Censorship Board but I am merely using this to ask the hon. Minister if he has any idea if anything has been done about the cinemas charging half price with the excuse that no half price tickets are printed.

It seems that not only are the parents of the children being robbed but the Government is being robbed of revenue because if the state on their income tax returns form that they charge half price for children, when they are charging full price, what happens with the difference in money? Could the hon. Minister say if anything has been done about this and if it is true that Government does not print half price tickets for children?

We come now to subhead 25, Sports and Games. \$42,000 was asked for in 1975. The Revised Estimate shows that we used \$192,000. We have been told in the Budget Speech and yesterday by the hon. Minister Mr. Desmond Hoyte, indeed by the hon. Prime Minister himself, about Government's accent on sports in the coming year. If we used \$192,000 this year as the Revised Estimate shows this year for Sports and Games, if the Government's accent is on Sports and Games, how could \$167,000 be enough? Why did the Ministry not ask for a more realistic figure? We would like the hon. Minister to explain how his Ministry arrived at \$150,000.

Subhead 26, Public Relations Programme. The amount of \$50,000 was voted in 1975. The sum of \$506,337 was actually spent, as the Revised Estimates shows. And now for 1976 another \$300,000 is being added to make it \$800,000. We feel that an explanation is owing to the

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citizens of Guyana because \$300,000 more on a Public Relations programme is quite a large amount. And the legend says "Expanded Public Relations Programme in the United Kingdom, North America and Europe." We appreciate the value of Public Relations.

Again I repeat that we appreciate the fact that the Government of the day has the prerogative to use its machinery as propaganda for its party politics. But it ought to have some kind of conscience when it talks about social justice and egalitarian society, and yet it allows the expenditure of the taxpayers' money to move from \$50,000 Approved Estimates for 1975 to \$800,000 and then just casually says "Expanded Public Relations Programme in the United Kingdom, North America and Europe." Surely, this is not good enough.

I particularly think of Foreign Affairs and when we talk about our Embassies abroad and about publishing and publicising and we comment on the high figure, we are told that our High Commissioner to London, to the Court of St. James also services the European countries. Fair enough. There are many opportunities there, by his presence to publicise to the people there. Because when we leave our country and go anywhere, we ought to be Ambassadors for Guyana. That would be a way to go about the Public Relations Programme without putting on an additional burden of \$300,000 which seems excessively high to us.

The last question is on page 56 which deals with the ---

**The Speaker:** Hon. Members we will proceed to that after the hon. Minister has answered. Hon. Leader of the House.

2.20 p.m.

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde.Ramsaroop):**  
Cde. Chairman, if I may take page 52, subhead 1, item (20) first, Principal Films Officer. On the face of the Estimates, it is apparent that there is a disparity between the Revised Estimate of 1975

and the Estimates as presented to this House as of 1976. That is true *ex facie*. The reason for this, however, is that after the Estimates were put up in 1975 and approved the post was filled. Hence, the whole sum of \$9,516 is reflected here. The incumbent, however, of that post was promoted and vacated the post in that year, 1975, around the middle of the year, so the post had to be filled and it was filled for part of the year. Hence, the reduced figure of \$4,758. For this year's Estimates we revert to the full figure of \$9,516.

Relative to item (24), Cameraman II, this post was not filled at the commencement of the year; it was filled later in the year. Hence, the discrepancy between the 1975 Revised Estimate, the latter showing a reduction on the Approved Estimate for 1975. In the Estimates for 1976 we again refer to the persons working for the whole year. Hence, \$9,612. So in fine, although the estimate for this post was approved for 1975 it was only filled when we were deep into the year and not at the commencement of the year.

The same principle applies with respect to item (25), Sound engineer. The post was not filled at the beginning of the year; it was filled later by someone whose salary had to be negotiated as a result of which he was paid at a higher scale than he would normally have been paid. This is because of the high calibre of the person who was required for this job. Hence, remuneration was offered commensurate with the quality of the job.

With respect to page 54, it is true that there is an apparent error in item (93), instead of reading "Director" it ought to have read "Directors". The hon. Member would know that consequent upon the setting up of the Institute of Creative Arts, five departments have been established, to wit, the departments of drama, dance, creative writing and music, and the persons to head these departments will be appointed during 1976. Hence, provision is made for the full payment of their salaries.

Item (102), 18 Coaches. Here again *ex facie* a discrepancy is disclosed between the Approved Estimate of 1975, the Revised Estimate of 1975 and what is sought for 1976. Let me

hasten to say that this was deliberate and in keeping with Government's policy to accelerate the pace of development in the field of sports. It was a positive more and rather than reflecting a diminution of personnel as has been observed by my hon. Friend there has been a substantial increase of personnel. At the beginning of the year, for example, there were 7 coaches only. At the end of the year, however, I understand that there were 18 coaches. It was apparent that the Ministry has been accelerating its drive to obtain more coaches to promote the sports programme.

The same thing applies with respect to item (103), 9 Sports Organisers. At the beginning of the year there were 6 Sports Organisers, and at the end of the year, the number was 9. Here, too there has been an increase in the personnel to promote sports.

With respect to the position of Superintendent, Sports hall, provision was made for that person in the 1975 Approved Estimate, but the person was only recruited about midway in the year. I understand that here too the salary of that person had to be negotiated. An attractive salary had to be offered the post of Superintendent, Sports hall because this is a fairly important position, the job entailing great responsibilities and dedication.

Relative to page 55, and the queries thereon, we will start with subhead 7, Distribution Expenses (Publication). It is true there is a disparity between the Revised Estimate for 1975 and the Estimates as presented to this Parliament for 1976. The reason for this, as I shall develop in a short while, is the fact that during this year a number of Press Attachés will be appointed to man press centres in important parts of the world like the United Kingdom, North America and Europe. Consequent upon the appointment of the Attachés the necessity for distribution of literature that has been done now from the Ministry will be minimised. In other words, rather than distribution taking place from Georgetown, as at present obtains, distribution will take place from the centres in which the Attachés are resident. For example, in terms of communication, the distribution of literature that emanates from Guyana, there will be no need for that to be done. Hence, a reduction on this vote. But, amplifying this further, this vote contemplates expenses

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**2.20 -2.30 p.m.**

exclusively incidental to distribution *simpliciter*. I shall deal a little later with the actual procurement of information material. This vote contemplates distribution expenses for documents that are produced by the Ministry of Information and Culture, for example, "Guyana Today", a very useful document. I think I had had occasion to submit this document once to the attention of this House and to point out that it is a very useful, interesting and very illuminating document on Guyana.

**2.30 p.m.**

Then there is the other publication, *Guynews*. Recently we have started another very instructive document entitled *Patterns of Progress* which really highlights different aspects of development in the country. For example, there was a focus on rice in one of the issues. There was a focus on the bauxite industry, on forestry and timber resources and so on. These are very important informative Government documents that spell out the development thrusts as they are evolving in the context of the Development Programme.

This vote will also anticipate expenditure that may be incurred by the Small Industries Corporation, for example. The Corporation may come out with, for example, a policy on investment which might be good to publicise abroad and if a document on this is obtained, this vote will sustain the expenses for the distribution of that document. So, it serves to help our purely distribution expenses, both at the local level and abroad.

I wish to congratulate the hon. Member for drawing our attention again to what appears to be a malpractice by cinema operators in Guyana today but may I indicate to this House that since the matter was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Information swift action has been taken and I understand that presently the inspectorate of the Licence Revenue Office are investigating this matter with a view to initiating whatever prosecution or action may be necessary and expedient in the circumstances.

Subhead 20, Publishing and Publicising. This has been a *bête noire* of this House and on many occasions reference has been made to it. As I have oftentimes indicated to this House, one attaches some measure of suspicion to public relations as if public relations represent a sinister aspect of development. May I submit, Cde. Chairman, that for us, public relations represents an essential, integral part of development. Indeed, it is supportive of development and we make no apology for this apparently handsome vote here for Publishing and Publicising. This vote contemplates the type of expenditure I have alluded to already: the printing of informative documents like *Guyana Today*, *Guynews*, *Patters of Progress*, and so on.

Let me add that next year, 1976, is an important year for this country. There are landmarks in the history of the nation and no one will gainsay the fact that on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Independence of Guyana this is a landmark year for Guyana. Hence, it is anticipated that there will be, in an enhance measure more publications than we now have emanating from the Ministry of Information. It is an important year and it might be necessary during this year to give publicity to different aspects of our development over the last decade. Hence, the concept here has been to increase this vote to sustain any such exigency that may arise.

Subhead 25, Sports and Games. It does appear to the ungilded eye that Government has made a mistake here but this is not so. The Approved Estimate for 1975 does show \$42,000 being sought while the Revised Estimate shows \$192,000 as spent and there has been a reduction to \$160,000 for 1976. If I may borrow the principle of argumentation that was used by my comrade colleague, the Minister of Economic Development, yesterday, as he argued for Health and I now argue for Sports, one cannot look at this in isolation. One has to look at this in the context of what we see on page 56. Under Capital Expenditure, there is subhead 5 on the Development of Sports. It will be simplistic therefore to infer that since there has been a reduction on this subhead and to say that there is some inconsistency between Government's declaration to promote Sports and what is reflected in the Estimates. But if one reads these two

subheads together and adds Development or Sports which is to the tune of \$660,000 to Sports and Games which is \$160,000 one can see the moral evolving here.

Now, the Sports and Games vote is intended to cushion expenses like the promotion of inter-Caribbean tours. For example, next year, we may decide, in keeping with our cultural agreement with Cuba, to send a team to Cuba and it is this vote that will sustain such an expenditure. We have been signing a number of cultural agreements with friendly nations and it might be necessary, pursuant to the provisions of these agreements, to have visits to these countries and for those countries to send teams to us. It is this vote that will sustain this type of expenditure. So, it is intended, primarily for and not exclusively for, the promotion of inter-Caribbean tours and other tours.

As many Members in this House know, every year we hold in the Caribbean hockey and table tennis tournaments and next year this vote will have sustain the expenditure incidental to those tournaments.

Subheads 26, Public Relations Programme. This is one subhead, I think, on which some concern has been expressed. This vote is a new vote. This year \$50,000 was provided for it and I think it is true that next year \$800,000 is provided for it. But Cde. Chairman, this, like the vote for Publishing and Publicising, is a vote that has a legitimate reason for its inclusion in these Estimates. As I indicated to this House, some of us, particularly those of us who have read Goebbels, seem to confuse Public Relations Programme with propaganda, but it is not propaganda. This vote will sustain the expenses for the Press Attaches, the establishment of which posts I have already referred to and these Attaches will be stationed in different parts of the world and will perform a number of useful duties, generally disseminating information about Guyana, answering queries relating to the country and, supplying facts, figures and statistics on Guyana and Guyanese affairs.

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**(Cde. Ramsaroop continues)**

**2.40 p.m.**

We may be a small country, but Guyana over the last decade has been taken on a very important international profile. Some may say it is native chauvinism, but it is realism also, in the context of this profile that we have been taken on, that people should get to know more about our country. Even those who know should get to know more about our country.

There are many facts, too, abroad that are entirely inaccurate and ought to be corrected. This will be one of the duties of these Press Attaches who will come under the general direction of the Chief Information Officer but will be under the on-the-spot supervision of the Head of Mission to which he or she is attached. It will be one of the responsibilities of these Attaches to ensure that proper information is disseminated about Guyana, to answer queries relating to the country and supply facts, figures and statistics on Guyanese affairs. We make no apologies for this.

Another responsibility for the Attaché will be to project a correct image of Guyana in the country of representation, using the mass media and other communication channels. The world today is seeing an increasing interdependence among the community of nations and, therefore, it is clear that in a sense this is an extension of the Ministry of Information itself. And in a world where nations are seeking to know each other more, there is a great legitimacy, great validity for the existence of these posts. These Attaches will also establish and maintain contacts with representatives of the mass media and other communication channels abroad. They will prepare regular analyses of media reports and with relevance to Guyana. They will establish and maintain, through sustained public relations programmes, a meaningful relationship with Guyanese nationals in the country of representatives.

We all know that having regard to the provisions of our Constitution we have Guyanese who enjoy the right to vote in Guyana and I think it is entirely legitimate that the proper information should be imparted to those Guyanese because if, when the time comes for them to



vote, they are not apprised of the correct facts, they are likely to cast their ballots in the wrong direction.

It is, therefore, in keeping with the fact that those citizens enjoy a rather enviable dimension of status that these Attaches have been sent, among other things, to provide information to national abroad, information to people who may want to come back to Guyana, information on development programme and the skills that we are now trying to attract to Guyana, to reduce this problem of the brain drain which is manifesting itself in many parts of the world, and Guyana is no exception.

Finally, the Attaches will execute public relations programmes to attract foreign investment and, may I add, under terms consistent with our socialist aspirations and acceptable, of course, to the parties concerned, I think those were the matters that my hon. Colleague alluded to with respect to the details on current expenditure, so far.

*Head 19, Ministry of Information and Culture - \$4,562,802 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### **DIVISION XI – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$4 2000,000 for Division XI, Ministry of Information and Culture, stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva I think you had indicated subhead 3.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, subhead 3 deals with the Film Production Unit for which we are being asked to vote \$450,800 as capital expenditure. I would like to go back to the 1975 Estimates. The legend states: “To provide for the purchase of equipment for the Films Division.” This is, of course, the usual vague, all embracing explanation particularly applicable to the

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Ministry of Information and Culture. I am pleased this year that we got a little more explanation because the legend this year states: "To provide for the completion of the film on Cuffy, etc." I am very pleased to hear that we are having a film on Cuffy. I am a Guyanese who is very proud of my heritage and Cuffy is a part of my heritage. I would like to know what "etc." covers. Could the hon. Minister tell us a little about it?

**Cde. Ramsaroop:** Cde. Chairman, I think the "etc." here relates to the procurement of filming equipment. This expenditure will not be entirely devoted to the filming of the film on Cuffy but will also take care of the procurement of cameras and filming equipment now that are necessary for the Dubbing Theatre and for the making of other feature films that will be made in Guyana during the year.

*Division XI, Ministry of Information and Culture - \$4,200,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### **HEAD 4 – PARLIAMENT OFFICE**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$213,262 for Head 4, Parliament Office, stand part of the Estimates.*

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

**Mr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, page 22, subhead 1 items (7), (9), (16) and on page 23, subhead 13. We can perhaps take items (7) and (9) together. The same principle is involved. In item (7) there is provision for five Official Reporters. The Revised Estimate for 1975 is \$17,800. The amount provided was \$21,720 and the Estimate for 1976 is \$22,680. It does appear that in 1975 we have very much underspent the money provided. It does lead one to presume that, perhaps, there are vacancies among the Official Reporters. They are very hard-working people and we certainly appreciate their services. If there are vacancies which cause them to work more

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than they should normally work, one would like to know that these vacancies are filled as early as possible. We know it is a specialised field. Perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us if there are vacancies and what plans there are in respect of filling them.

Subhead 9 deals with the total Clerical Establishment Vote. Again the Approved Estimates provided \$24,312. The Revised Estimate for this item was only \$19,514 but the 1976 Estimate goes back to Clerical Establishment because we have underspent the vote. Again we ask what is being done in respect of filling these vacancies.

Item (16) Overtime Allowance. In 1975 the Approved Estimate was \$4,200. The revised expenditure as anticipated is only \$1,722 and the Estimates for 1975 is \$4,200. It has gone back to the amount which was approved in 1975. One wonders whether it is anticipated that the activity in 1976 will be more than in 1975 which would necessitate as high a level as \$4,200 for Overtime Allowance. I would have thought that it would have been perhaps more accurate to use the revised figure for 1975.

**2.50 p.m.**

**The Chairman:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you are not catering for the request that you have been making very often that the P.P.P. should come in.

**Mr. Singh:** In view of the fact that my request has so far fallen on deaf ears, I am wonder whether I will not die of despair. Maybe you, sir, have information which I am not in possession of. If I am to take an indication from you question, perhaps I should withdraw that remark and look forward to increased activity in this Parliament next year.

On page 23, subhead 13 touches on the same subject of the activities of Parliament for next year. In the 1975 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$5,000 was provided for electricity for Parliament Office. The Revised Estimate has only \$753 as the anticipated expenditure for this year, this is, all we hope to spend for this year in respect of electricity is \$753 but for next year

we are asking for 45,000. That is a large increase from \$753 to \$5,000 so that maybe the Government does have information about increased activity planned for Parliament next year which would necessitate such late sittings as to use up over six times the amount of electricity that we are using or which we anticipate to use this year. I would certainly be very grateful for some enlightenment of this.

**Cde. Ramsaroop:** Cde. Chairman I wonder if I could deal with the last subhead first – subhead 13. It may be ironical to remark that the electricity bill that has been paid by this department has been the one that is owned by the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. It does show that during this year, the Leader has been using a lot of electricity and, I hope, doing valuable work. The high standard of his contribution to the Estimates in the general debate is certainly indicative of the fact that he had been “burning the midnight.”

On a more serious note, there was a system initiated last year and reflected in the Estimates for these departments to foot their own bill, as it were. Hence, the inclusion of the 45,000. But I understand that the system has not been refined sufficiently as yet to enable implementation. Hence, we have been using the vote to meet the electricity bill of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition only. I am hoping that in a short while this system will apply to the entire Parliament building and not only to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition.

On subheads 7 and 9 it is a question of principle here. It is true that we only have 4 Official Reporters. We hope to fill that vacancy this year hence we have budgeted for 5 in 1976.

The same principle applies to subhead 9 – Clerical Establishment. There is a vacancy for a Class III Accounts Clerk which we hope to fill this year.

With respect to subhead 16 – Overtime Allowance, the overtime here is the allowance that is paid to the Reportorial Staff, Office Assistants and to the Sergeant-at-Arms whenever they have to work beyond the normal time.

**2.12.75**

**National Assembly**

**2.50 -3. p.m.**

*Head 4, Parliament Office - \$213,262 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 36.

## **HEAD 12 – MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$21,917 for Head 12, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.*

*Head 12, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs - \$21,917 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Pages 91 – 94.

## **HEAD 32 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$2,309,503 for Head 32, Ministry of Economic Development, stand part of the Estimates.*

**3.00 p.m.**

**Mr. Singh:** On page 91, subhead 1, item (11), then general questions on item (13) to (19) under Development Secretariat, items (20) to (29) under Central Transport and Planning Unit. On page 92, items (39), (40), and (43) and one general question on items (44) to (49) under Technical Specialist Unit, items (52) and (60) and on page 93, items (71) and (74). Under Other Charges subheads 22 and 25. I have no questions on page 94.

Page 91, subhead 1, item (11), Research Assistant II. The 1975 Approved Estimates listed the sum of \$3,000, the 1975 Revised Estimate has nothing reflected, the 1976 Revised Estimate is \$3,000 again. I have my 1975 Estimates here which I spoke from last year and I have a note here to the effect – and this I must have said last year because I have it listed – that this post has been on the Estimates since 1973 December. For 1974 nothing has been spent so it appears that the post has not been filled. What is the position? That question I asked last year December. It looks as though I have to repeat it again this year because nothing has been reflected as having been spent in respect of that post during this year. I am not sure exactly how high a category this is. Presumably, it must be some scarce field. But the salary is certainly not anything spectacular. It works out at \$250 per month. There seems to have been a lot of difficulty in respect of filling this \$250 per month post. I wonder whether the Minister would tell us what are the prospects of filling the post, perhaps we should just scrap it if it remains vacant for so many years.

I have general questions both on the Development Secretariat and the Central Transport and Planning Unit. Let us deal with the Development Secretariat. There appears to be vacancies in the Development Secretariat. We do know that these are technical fields with technical posts but we would certainly like some indication as to what the vacancies are, what the staffing problems are. For example, it appears that the post of Statistician, item (18), is vacant, and several others are not filled. For example, there should be six Economists but \$36,756 is the Revised Estimate instead of \$44,580. The Development Secretariat being as important as we feel it is, we would like to know what the staffing position is with respect to the Development Secretariat.

Dealing with items 920) to (29), Central Transport and Planning Unit, this is a new Unit. At least some of the sections of this are located in the building which houses the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps the hon. Minister would take this opportunity to tell us how this programme is going. It has been put in the Estimates as Central Transport and Planning Unit. The fact that it has been put on the Estimates seems to suggest that it will be a permanent feature.

Perhaps the Minister will confirm that it will remain on the Estimates as a permanent thing for all time or at least for the foreseeable future. I had thought that it was a short-term operation. We would certainly like some information on this Central Transport and Planning Unit. Are there vacancies in this Unit?

Turning over the page, item (39) on page 92, Statistical Officers. There are supposed to be four officers and the 1975 Approved Estimate provided the sum of \$18,672 for those four Statistical Officers. However, the Revised Estimate lists \$9,336 which is half the amount provided that was asked for and in the 1976 Estimates we have gone back to \$18,672 which suggests that there are vacancies. Perhaps the hon. Minister would explain the underspending in terms of the vacancies which there may be.

Similarly item (40), Senior Statistical Clerks. The sum of \$7,872 was reflected in the 1975 Approved Estimate but again half the amount, \$3,936, is reflected in the Revised Estimate, again suggesting that there are vacancies. There are supposed to be two Senior Statistical Clerks but we have underspent the vote by approximately half. I particularly refer to this because if we look at previous years we would see that there has been the same type of underspending in the years 1973 and 1974, in both items (39) and (40). It appears as though there has been a consistent difficulty in filling these posts.

In respect of item (43), again, dealing with the entire Data Processing Unit it appears as though we have been underspending every year. In 1973 the actual expenditure was \$12,300. In 1974 it was \$13,200. In 1975 we provided \$26,376, but we have revised that to \$13,656 which is approximately half. Then in 1976 we are asking for \$26,400. The Data Processing Unit is a very important Unit. We have been underspending since 1973 thereby again suggesting that this important department is understaffed.

Items (44) to (49) fall under the Technical Specialist Unit. I do appreciate that this is a new Unit. Perhaps the Hon. Minister would tell us something more about this Technical

**2.12.75**

**National Assembly**

**3 - 3.10 p.m.**

Specialist Unit. Presumably all the work of development and planning had been done before by the Development Secretariat listed on page 91. Now that we have set up this Technical Specialist Unit I suppose it will be working in conjunction with the Development Secretariat but we will wait for the hon. Minister to give us details on that.

**3.10 p.m.**

Item (52) Driver/Mechanic on salary scale A10. The sum of \$2,436 was in the Approved Estimate for 1975. Nothing has been reflected in the Revised Estimate, and in the 1976 estimates the same amount, \$2,436 being asked for.

If there is a need for a Driver/Mechanic and if nothing has been spent in 1975 how was the work that would normally have been done by this Driver/Mechanic performed during 1975? It would be interesting to know, since there has been nothing listed, no person was in that post. Perhaps the Ministry may have been helped out by some other Ministry in respect of this Driver/Mechanic but I do not know.

Item (60) makes provision for 10 Typist/Clerks II/I. The 1975 Estimate provided \$21,120 but the Revised Estimate reflects only \$15,456. However, in 1976 we go back to the same level of expenditure, with increments I suppose, and the sum of \$23,904 is being sought. There has been no increase in the number of posts; it was ten in 1975 and it is ten in 1976 so the underspending must have been as a result of vacancies. I consider this Ministry of Economic Development a very important Ministry and that is why I am perturbed about this underspending. We did provide in 1975 for this sum of money to be spent and even though I am all for economy, if these posts are necessary – and they must have been necessary for the Ministry to ask for the money in 1975 – then the fact that the money was not spent makes it appear as though the Ministry is not operating to full efficiency with these vacancies.



On page 93, my question is why items (71) and (74) could not have been combined. Item (71) deals with Duty Allowance. The sum of \$600 was provided in 1975 but according to the Revised Estimate, we are hoping to spend a lot more than that in 1975. Expenditure rose from \$600 to \$2,820. In 1976 we are asking for only \$600 again. Perhaps I should ask a direct question on this item (71): Who gets a Duty Allowance? Presumably, this money has been, or is going to be, paid out to several people. How is it that we are asking for a lesser sum in 1976? If this duty allowance is a continuing thing, then one would expect the same level to be provided in 1976. Why is the provision less and who gets this duty allowance?

Item (74) provides for a Duty Allowance P.A.D. Allsopp. If we have one item for Duty Allowance, why could we not just bulk all together? I do appreciate that we ask for details and it is highlighted here that Mr. Allsopp is getting \$2,400 per annum as duty allowance. We are grateful for that information but is there any special reason why we could not have put all the duty allowances together and combined item (71) with item (74) so that there would be one item dealing with duty allowance? It is a minor matter but I just raised it as it occurred to me at the time when I was looking at the Estimates.

We go down to subhead 22, Preparation of New Development Plan and we note that the 1975 Approved Estimates asked for \$10,000. The Revised Estimates reflect the same amount and for 1976 we are asking for \$10,000 again. In respect of this preparation of a New Development Plan, the legend on page 97 of the 1975 Estimates state: "To provide for the revision of the New Development Plan." There is no legend against this item this year.

I had presumed that this sum of \$10,000 to provide for the revision of the New Development Plan, since it is shown in the Revised Estimate column 1975, would have taken care of the revision of the New Development Plan. Presumably, this is not so. Will the Minister confirm that the \$10,000 has not sufficed for the revision of the New Development Plan and that we need an additional \$10,000 to continue the revision of the Plan or to complete it. I just wondered because I thought it would have been completed. I am subject to correction, but I think

the hon. Minister last year did say that the plan would have been revised and completed this year so we would like the latest information with respect to this New Development Plan, particularly in the light of the legend in last year's Estimates.

Subhead 25, Labour Force Survey. This is a new subhead and the sum of \$350,000 is listed as expenditure anticipated for 1976 for this Labour Force Survey. The legend states:

“New subhead to provide for a survey of the Labour Force in Guyana.”

If my memory serves me correctly, some time ago, we did have something run by the Ministry of Labour, a Manpower Survey or something along these lines, and we certainly would appreciate some information about this survey that is going to be undertaken. I am not saying that we have any objections to it at all. I am not registering any objection. I am asking for information in light of the fact that a previous survey had been done. That completes up to page 94, sir.

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

**The Minister of Economic Development (Cde. Hoyte):** Cde. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has raised several very important questions which require some explanation. By raising questions in relation to the post of Research Assistant, subhead 1, item (11), the posts of Statistical Officer, subhead 1, item (39) and Senior Statistical Clerks, subhead 1, item (40) and on the post under the Data Processing Unit, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has touched upon the very vexed question of adequate staffing, not only in the Ministry of Economic Development but in the Government Service as a whole.

In all of these posts to which reference has been made, there has been...

**The Chairman:** Cde. Minister, I do not wish to disturb you but probably the same thing is referable to items (52) and (60).

(Cde. Hoyte continues)

3.20 p.m.

**Cde. Hoyte:** Certainly item (60), sir, but item (52) is a little different. There has been a very rapid rate of turnover of staff. It is not a case of the post not being filled, but of the posts being filled and people leaving shortly afterwards for other posts or to go abroad to study. We are faced with a situation in which the manpower availability is not sufficient for the demands of rapid development. That is why it will be observed that under the several training votes – in the Office of the Prime Minister and in other Ministries – there have been substantial increases in the allocations for training. That is why such great emphasis is being placed upon all aspects of education and upon the diversification of education.

Let us take, for example, the post of Research Assistant. That post requires a person with “A” Levels to assist our Economists in research work. We usually are able to recruit people but within a very short time such personnel leave for full-time study at the University of Guyana or abroad. The present situation is that almost everybody with two “A” Levels is able to get a scholarship of one sort or another. We have had the same problems with even Typist/Clerks who, really, do not stay very long. The people in Data Processing Unit and people who have relevant skills keep moving very quickly from post to post. There is a great deal of competition for these very scarce skills. We find, for example, in the Statistical Bureau that as soon as we train people they move out to other agencies where the salaries are more lucrative.

As I have said, it is very worrying and it has been a matter of very careful consideration within the Ministry. We are trying to devise ways and means of solving the problem. Basically, the problem is one of under-supply. We need more and more people in these particular fields, more and more people with skills, more and more people even in the field of typing. The fact of the matter today, is that no Guyanese who has a relevant skill will find difficulty in getting employment. Our problem is really to find trained people. It is not a problem of trained not being able to find jobs.

With respect to the Data Processing Unit, I should indicate that the Public Service Ministry will be establishing a centralised system and it is hoped that within this centralised system, it will be possible to offer people better career opportunities and better emoluments. We will get rid of the little units here and there within the several Government agencies.

The Central Transport Planning Unit was formed as part of the Ministry's effort to centralise and institutionalise its planning. The transport sector is, of course, a very important sector of national life and of the national economy. As we build more roads, as we expand into the hinterland, we have to plan for on road transport, our water transport and our air transport. With the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme we were able to set up this unit and a number of Guyanese are being trained in Transport Planning so that when the United Nations Development Programme presence is withdrawn, we will have a fully trained, highly-competent group of Guyanese to carry on the planning of our transport needs on a permanent basis. At present, the Project Manager designate is Cde. Neville Singh, an engineer by profession, who has had a lot of experience in the field of transport. I should say that during the course of the year, the Central Transport Planning Unit has done significant work and, in fact, has produced the draft of a Transport Plan for Guyana, a draft which has been studied very carefully. Various ideas and suggestions have been canvassed and it is now about to be finalised. I regret the oversight which prevented one from presenting the Leader of the Opposition with a copy of this draft and I should like to correct this omission now.

In addition, we are, with the help of consultants, drawing up definitive plans for the three sectors, - the air, water and land – and these plans should be finalised within another month or so. So we will have carefully drawn up plans for the development of transport sectors, plans which are capable of being financed by international agencies such as the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Secretariat, of course, also has its problems with staffing and there are several posts which are vacant, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has rightly surmised. We have been making strenuous efforts to fill these posts. We have recruited several highly qualified young Guyanese and we are awaiting their formal appointment by the Public Service

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**3.20 - 3.30 p.m.**

Commission. However, even with the strengthening of the Development Secretariat in this way, I do not believe that the Secretariat will be sufficiently strong and properly structured to do the

**3.30 p.m.**

kind of planning which I consider to be valid to our development today.

At the moment we are studying the proposals from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and the Chief Planning Officer to restructure the Development Secretariat in a way which will enhance its authority and enable it to get on with the real job of planning the development of this country.

With respect to the Driver/Mechanic, subhead 1 item (52), the position is a little different in that the post, in fact, was not filled this year. From time to time we have several consulting teams and we have to provide vehicles and drivers. Of course, the number of vehicles and the number of drivers needed at any particular time vary. Having regard to the assistance we get from other Ministries in the course of the year, it was not necessary to fill this post. If we had filled it, we would have had the position where we would have a Driver/Mechanic but no vehicle. However, next year, because of our obligation to provide transportation for several experts who will be coming to assist us, it will become necessary to fill that post.

With respect to the question on Duty Allowance, Cde. Chairman, I should indicate that the Duty Allowance at subhead 1 item (74) is personal to the officer named. It is part of the financial arrangements made when that officer was offered – and he accepted – the post of Technical Specialist. So this has to have a separate and special provision to give it legal validity. The amount is paid to that officer as of right.

The other amounts at item (71) are payable with the consent of the Public Service Ministry. A Duty Allowance is paid to an officer who is required to do some particular job beyond the call of duty – the kind of officer of sufficient seniority who does not get overtime

allowance but who has a specific task to do which requires him to work excessive hours and for which work, in the judgement of the Permanent Secretary, he ought to get special remuneration as an allowance. Subject to the sanction of the Public Service Ministry, any allowance to him is usually paid from this particular subhead and item.

The Technical Specialist Unit was created this year, but the post of Technical Specialist existed for some time before that. In fact, the first Technical Specialist was Cde. Naraine, now Minister of Works and Housing, and he was succeeded by Cde. Philip Allsopp. Originally, Cde. Allsopp performed the duties of both Technical Specialist and Chief Works and Hydraulics Officer but, obviously, those two jobs were so important and onerous that it was impossible for one person to carry both of them. So the two posts were separated.

Now, the Technical Specialist is the officer who advises the Government in relation to technical matters of an engineering nature. As the development programme gains momentum, Government is continuously involved in all kinds of projects which require engineering advice. In fact, every industrial project has a very important technical aspect upon which the Government has to be advised. It has to be advised upon the question of the soil bearing capacity of the land; where the factory is going to be put; it has to be advised on the kind of technology; it has to be advised on the kind of arrangements one makes with people who are supplying technology and so on. One person cannot do all of that work. He needs a team. Note should be taken of how the team is structured: there is an economist, there is an engineer to assist the Technical Specialist and, of course, there must be somebody to do the routine administration.

*Head 32, Ministry of Economic Development - \$2,309,503 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 95.

**DIVISION XX – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$34,000,000 for Division XX, Ministry of Economic Development, stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Singh:** Subheads 1, 8, 9 and 11. Subhead 1, Purchase of Equipment. The legend says, "To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment." Could the hon. Minister give us some idea of the type of miscellaneous equipment which we are purchasing here because we have been purchasing every year and we continue to purchase in 1976. So it is a continuing operation of purchasing equipment. One wonders what are the additional pieces of equipment to be purchased now.

In respect of subhead 2, Industrial Development, in 1975 the Approved Estimate was \$24,455,000. This was revised to \$22,600,000 which is roughly \$2,000,000 less. But for 1976 the sum to be provided is \$30,220. The legend says, "To provide for the establishment for the establishment of industrial and agro-industrial enterprises and industrial estates. Chinese, E.D.F., I.B.R.D. and C.D.B Loans anticipated."

I do not know that we have been given in the Budget Speech and by the hon. Minister, some indication of projects. I am not sure whether all the projects that we have been told about before fall under this Head. We would be grateful to the hon. Minister if he could give us some details of this industrial development; if it is what he has said before and if all the projects he has mentioned before in his contribution to the Budget Speech come under this Head. If they do then we have an indication of what they are, but I am not sure whether they all come under this Head.

**3.40 p.m.**

I know you will not allow me to speak on item (8), but I do know that the Scheme for Remigration of Guyanese has come to an end.

Subhead 9, Tourist Development. I have a note in my last year's Estimates when I spoke on the Ministry of Economic Development. I asked last year about this and the Minister's answer was and I have it here in pencil "to develop hinterland facilities for Guyanese to take their holidays in this country:- Matthews Ridge, Mabaruma, Rupununi, Lethem, Piarara, Imbaimadai, No. 63, Essequibo Lakes." All those were listed by the hon. Minister when he explained this expenditure last year. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would care to tell us how much of this has been done.

I certainly agree that it is very admirable to have places where we can go in Guyana to spend our holidays. The 1975 Approved Estimates listed \$250,000 as being earmarked to be spent in 1975. But I note that the Revised Estimates has nothing at all. I only hope that what the hon. Minister said in his contribution on the Budget Speech applies here, and that even though we see nothing having been spent something has been done by some other Ministry. Certainly no portion of this money, \$250,000, appears to have been used up by the particular Ministry. Will we next year do these things which the hon. Minister said we should have done this year?

Subhead 11, Research Institute of Applied Science and Technology. This subhead appears for the very first time, and the legend states: "To provide for the construction of Research Institute in National Science Research Council", and the sum of \$300,000 is asked for. Could the hon. Minister give us some details of this proposed Institute, and what contribution it will make to the Guyanese people?

**The Chairman:** Cde. Minister.

**Mr. Singh:** Sir, on the previous page I asked about the Development Plan and the hon. Minister did not answer, presumably through an oversight. But I do see here subhead 7, Publication of Development Plan and the legend states: "To provide for the publication of the 1976-80 Development Plan." On a previous page, page 93 I think it was, we had \$10,000 for the



preparation of the new Development Plan for next year in addition to \$10,000 and this is now for the publication of the Plan. Perhaps the hon. Minister would take the opportunity to tell us whether the Plan would now be published in 1976. The Approved Estimate has \$25,000 for 1975, the Revised Estimate came down to \$5,000, but for 1976 \$50,000 is being asked for, whereas we were told \$25,000 would have been enough to be published this year. We will spend \$5,000 this year and we want \$50,000 for it to be published next year. Maybe costs have escalated and maybe the Plan is now a more detailed, more expensive Plan. I do not know but certainly the cost has gone up by 100 per cent.

**Cde. Hoyte:** Cde. Chairman, the question with respect to subhead 1, Purchase of Equipment. This item relates to miscellaneous equipment for the several Divisions of the Ministry, equipment such as filing cabinets, electronic calculators, electric typewriters and technical instruments for the Central Transport and Planning Unit.

The number of items is relatively small, but the items are high priced. For example, an electronic calculator costs \$2,000. When we buy three of them, as we propose for the Development Secretariat, we are talking about \$6,000; and an electric typewriter costs again \$2,000 and so on. It is ordinary office equipment and technical equipment required to enable particularly the technical division of the ministry to get on with its work.

The Industrial Development Programme is largely what I said in the general debate. There are several large projects which have either started or will be started next year and I referred to them – leather factories, the textile factory, the glass factory, the cheese processing plant and so on.

With respect to subhead 7, Publication of Development Plan, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quite accurate in his recollection that last year I said that we had hoped to publish the current Development Plan in an amended form. However, it was not possible to do that work because of the difficulties of staff and the tremendous pressures under which the staff of the

Development Secretariat had to work during this year. In those circumstances, it was felt that it was much better to proceed with work on the new Development Plan. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition would look at the legend he would see that we are talking here about the 1976/80 Development Plan. Therefore that really answers the question which he raised on the current side of the allocation. [Mr. Singh: "We will get it this year?"] we are hoping next year to publish the draft for public criticism and comments, and to have it finalised in time to take effect when the present Plan comes to an end.

The subject of tourist development is one which is under constant consideration by the Ministry. I did remark last year that we had proposed in the course of the year to proceed with this work of developing the hinterland facilities primarily for the Guyanese people. That work

**3.50 p.m.**

has started and, as a matter of fact, only in the course of last month we received a report from the Caribbean Development Bank which had sent a team at our request to look at what we had proposed to do with a view to providing the finances. That report has been favourable and we are now preparing the necessary project document to be able to tap the resources of the Caribbean Development Bank for the actual work of construction next year. In addition, we have retained the services of architects and people knowledgeable in the construction and administration of this kind of facility and we have several plans on the drawing-board.

But this project, like all other projects, has had its difficulties in that even our architects are all fully committed and it is very difficult to get architects in this country today to give you any work quickly because, as I have said, they are completely committed with all kinds of on-going projects. But the work is proceeding. Next year we hope to see actual construction of many of these facilities. We hope not only to put down new facilities, but to upgrade many of the facilities we already have such as Government Guest Houses and Rest Houses and so on. We hope to improve them and provide a higher quality of accommodation and service.

**2.12.75**  
**(Cde. Hoyte continues)**

**National Assembly**

**3.50 – 4 p.m.**

The Research Institute of Applied Science and Technology is, of course, closely linked with the National Science Research Council. In that Institute we hope to do research of practical benefit to this country, research in aid of development. Already, significant research work is being done by many comrades at the University of Guyana, into, for example, the medicinal qualities of Guyanese herbs and trees, into the possible use of gums and resins from Guyanese trees for paints and other things like that. There is work being done on the possibility of extracting oil from many of the palms which grow wild in this country. This is the financial feasibility not the technical possibility, because that has already been established. There is work being done on the habits of the Kaboura fly and, of course, one project which excited some amount of attention, is the work on the manatee as an agent for keeping trenches free of weed. In several other areas work is going on very quietly. What we need to do now is to put up a proper building with the proper facilities to enable our scientists to get on with the job.

*Division XX, Ministry of Economic Development - \$34,400,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 96.

### **HEAD 33, MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$833,741 for Head 33, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.*

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

**Mr. Singh:** Page 96, subhead 3 and 6. The legend against subhead 3, Miscellaneous, states:

“Part provision transferred to Personal Emoluments and subhead 12.”

I was going to say that it is very, very commendable that for the very first time we are seeing a reduction in the Miscellaneous vote but it is not really a reduction as part has been transferred to another subhead. I will therefore have to refrain from paying my compliments.

The legend against subhead 6, Library and Publications, states:

“To meet increase in the cost of publications.”

Let us examine the figures from the beginning. In 1974, the actual expenditure was \$1,000. In 1975, the approved expenditure was \$10,000 and the 1975 revised expenditure is \$10,000. In 1976 the estimated expenditure is \$12,000. If we take an expenditure of \$1,000 in 1974 and compare it with an expenditure of \$12,000 in 1976, there must be a lot more involved than merely an increase in the cost of publications. Will the hon. Minister tell us what kind of publications or Library material or facilities are met from this vote Library and Publications?

**The Chairman:** Cde. Minister.

**Cde. Hoyte:** Cde. Chairman, there are two explanations for the increase under this subhead. The first is that the Ministry has increased, as a matter of policy, the range of books which it purchases, because we feel that officers should be encouraged to read as widely as possible on matters of current importance. Secondly, the Ministry of Regional Development purchases centrally for the six-regional districts in the country and many of these books are sent out to the districts for use in those particular districts.

*Head 33, Ministry of Regional Development - \$833,741 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Pages 97 and 98.

2.12.75

National Assembly

3.50 – 4 p.m.

**HEAD 34, MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT – INTERIOR  
DEVELOPMENT**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$900,561 for Head 34, Ministry of Regional Development, Interior Development, stand part of the Estimates.*

*Head 34, Ministry of Regional Development, Interior Development - \$900,561 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 99.

4 p.m.

**DIVISION XXI, MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$1,575,000 for Division XXI, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Singh:** Sir, I was wondering whether you would have wanted to take the adjournment. We do have a few things to ask on this Head.

**The Chairman:** I am prepared to go through. It is not up to me, it is up to you.

**Mr. Singh:** Subhead 1, Land Transport. The sum of \$30,000 was provided in the Approved Estimates for 1975. The Revised Estimate has reduced that to \$27,500. But for 1976 the sum being requested is \$203,000. This is very, very much higher than the revised amount for 1975. The legend states: “To provide for purchase of motor vehicles and other types of land transport.” We have been spending money on the Ministry of Regional Development. I was under the impression that all the areas had been provided with vehicles, equipment and the rest of it, so now that we are being asked to provide so much money for Land Transport for motor

vehicles, etc., one wonders whether the existing vehicles are so very inadequate at the present time. We have been told that the system was working well, that there were these six regions and that everything was running smoothly, more or less. Now it appears as if there is a need in respect of motor vehicles. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us what motor vehicles and other land transport equipment is intended to be bought and where these vehicles will be deployed.

A similar question would apply to subhead 2, Water Transport, where in 1975 the approved sum was \$50,000, the revised sum was \$50,000 but in 1976 the sum being asked for is \$136,000. This is again a very, very steep increase. It is for capital and it is for adding to your existing set of boats and engines. The legend states: "To provide for the purchase of boats and engines, and for the construction of boathouses." I would like the hon. Minister to give us some details of where the boathouses will be built and what boats and engine will be bought.

Subhead 5, Establishment of Regional Councils. The 1975 Approved Estimate is \$300,000, the revised figure is \$300,000. It makes me very happy to see a reduction here. From \$300,000 the sum has been reduced to \$50,000. This is one in which I can say: "Very well done, Ministry of Regional Development." You have reduced your expenditure at least in one area. You are asking for more in respect of vehicles, both for land and river and sea, but you have reduced your request for the establishment of Regional Councils." I presume the Regional Councils have been established but the hon. Minister might enlighten us as to his reasons for this very welcome reduction.

Subhead 6, Minor Development Works. The sum being requested for 1976 is the same as the approved and revised figures for 1975 - \$300,000. Having spent \$300,000 for this year, we want another \$300,000 for next year. The legend states: "To provide for minor development works in the regions." This is another area in which development works. I think we passed one just now where there was a large amount of money - \$36 million for Industrial Development.

This is minor development work and regional development. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would give us some details of these minor development works in the various regions.

Then, there is subhead 7, Interior Development. Not only do we have minor development works, we also have Interior Development. I wonder whether the minor development works are not in the interior areas or whether there are minor development works in interior areas in addition to Interior Development. I thought that these votes could have been combined. They have not been combined, they are set out separately. So the presumption is that the minor development works are not done in the interior and the Interior Development is different. I certainly welcome the level of expenditure - \$650,000 – reflected for 1976. There is far too little being done in the interior areas, to my mind, and I am very happy to see the level of \$650,000 being provided. I would like to know what Interior Development works would be met from this \$650,000 listed here.

**The Chairman:** Cde. Minister.

**Cde. Hoyte:** Cde. Chairman, I will deal with the question on Land Transport, subhead 1. The amount sought here is merely to buy twelve land rovers for the six Administrative regions. I am certain that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, having got that explanation, would not argue that the number of land rovers is excessive. There are land rovers in the regions but we do not have a sufficient number of them. We are dealing with very extensive territory. For example, the Cde. Regional Minister for Bartica, Pataro and Cuyuni, as we describe his region has an area of over thirty thousand square miles, and in the Rupununi the Cde. Regional Minister there has over forty-five thousand square miles to cover.

The personnel in the regions are expected to be mobile. We are not encouraging desk officers there. The Regional Administrative Officer, the Assistant Regional Administrative Officer and all the various people in the Regional Ministry are expected to work among the people. They have got to be in the farms, in the back dams, wherever people are working; and, as

I have said, in all the regions there is extensive territory; there is difficult territory which requires people to be mobile; which requires them, particularly, to have land rovers.

Last year, we did not make the request for large sums of money because the structure of the regions was not finalised but that was done in the course of this year and the various officers appointed. The same reason must be given for the increase in the allocation sought for Water Transport. Under that, we hope to buy 11 boats and engines because again in all of the regions there are extensive waterways to be traversed. There are some areas that you cannot reach other than by boat, for example, in the Mazaruni region, the North West and so on.

In the course of this year the various regional development Councils were established as I have already explained in this honourable House. The sum of \$300,000 which is allocated this year was used to set up these Councils and to buy equipment which was necessary to enable Councillors to function. This amount of \$30,000 sought for next year is merely to pay stipends which we pay to the Chairman of some regional development Councils and to members of those Councils who have to travel far distances and who are out-of-pocket by reason of their travel.

Some time ago, I think it was in the course of the debate on the Budget last year, I

#### **4.10 p.m.**

explained subhead 6, Minor Development Works. I explained that this provision was by way of experiment, that we were making available to the Regional Ministers certain sums of money which they could spend at their discretion on little things that needed to be done urgently in their regions. For example, a Regional Minister in the course of his visit to a farm might observe that there is some bridge which had fallen down but which needed to be put up immediately if the farmer was to get his rice out or his ground provisions out. The Minister therefore had something in the nature of Privy Purse, albeit very small, upon which he could draw to have that work done immediately without having recourse to the sometimes long draw-out procedures inherent in the normal system.



The amount under subhead 6 is different from the amount listed under subhead 7, Interior Development. In fact, this money is used to strengthen the economic base of people who live in the hinterland, particularly our Amerindian comrades. It helps particularly in training given to people from the hinterland who win scholarships and who have to come to Georgetown or go to other centres such as New Amsterdam and Bartica. It is this vote which is used to promote handicraft among our Amerindian comrades. It is used to help in the marketing of that handicraft and in setting up all the machinery and logistics to enable the handicraft to be sold so that they could get the money from the work which they produce.

In fact, for 1976, there is a very wide-ranging programme of work to be done with moneys from this vote in hinterland regions, such as the completion of a Health Centre in the Moruka area; the completion of a bridge at Santa Rosa, the fencing of farm lands in the Nappi Parishara area; water supply at Kato; improvement of roads at Morawhanna; construction of a storage bond at Ekereku and things like that. For example, next year, from this vote we will be paying the cost of training for 67 Amerindian students at the Guyana school of Agriculture, the government Technical Institute and the Carnegie School of Home Economics. Also, we will be paying the cost of training people at the Police Quarter Master Store in tailoring; the cost of training three nurses, and the cost of training one student in the art of shoemaking.

This is a vote which has a very wide ambit and which is used to help people in the hinterland to develop themselves and to develop the areas in which they live.

*Division XXI, Ministry of Regional Development - \$1,575,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 191.

**HEAD 79, MINISTRY OF TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

*Question proposed that the sum of \$13,597,879 for Head 79 Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Singh:** Sir, my colleagues may have some questions supplementary to what I have here. I would like to speak on subhead 1, items (3), (4), (16) and (20), and subheads 5 and 12.

**4.20 p.m.**

Subhead 1, item (3), Senior Economists. This is perhaps asking the hon. Minister to reiterate what he has already said. I am not sure whether I should pursue it. However, this is slightly different. Perhaps I had better deal with it in detail. Subhead 1, item (3) deals with the post of two senior economists. The Approved Estimates for 1975 was \$17,160; the Revised Estimate shows \$24,442, but the 1976 Estimate reflects \$20,976. For these two economists we will spend in 1975, \$24,500 approximately, but for 1976 we are requesting only \$21,000. Obviously there are bodies acting in the posts but there seems to be a lesser amount being asked for in 1976 than 1975. This is a slight reversal of the usual order.

We see the reverse in respect of item (4), Economists where three economists are involved. The 1975 Approved Estimate was \$21,702, but the revised amount is only \$13,232. There will be an underspending there, but for 1976 the sum being asked for is \$19,902. There seems to be some intermixing going on here, because one vote is more and one is less. Perhaps the hon. Minister would give us the explanation for this.

Subhead 1, item (16) provides for twelve Price Control Inspectors. In the 1975 Approved Estimate the sum asked for was \$30,300. The Revised Estimate is \$11,950 but in the 1976 Estimate the sum asked for is \$30,000. It must be quite apparent that there has been underspending not only in 1975 but from the time we made provision in these Estimates. For

example, in 1974 the actual amount spent was only \$12,900; in 1975 it is \$11,950. So that there appear to be vacancies. This is very a important field and for this vote to be so badly underspent for two years in successions suggests a need for a very close examination. If we do have posts for twelve Price Control Inspectors we should have twelve and we should spend this money, because it is a field which is very much related to keeping the cost of living down in Guyana. We know the Government's views and we share the Government's views in respect of strict monitoring of prices and strict adherence to the Price Control laws. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us how many vacancies there are in this field, why it is that this vote has been so much underspent for the last two years and what is being done to step up activity in this field.

Subhead 20, Duty Allowance. I think that in this case the hon. Minister's explanation may apply also. In the Approved Estimate we had nothing at all provided, in the Revised Estimate the sum of \$2,701 was stuck in, and for 1976 the sum being asked for is \$1,000. My question is: Who receives duty allowance and why are we asking for less than will be spending in 1975? I understand that if an officer is called upon to do duties out of the ordinary then with the permission of the Public Service Ministry he can be paid a duty allowance. Who are the allowance payable to if the same principle applied would be something for the decision of the Permanent Secretary and the P.S.C. Why then are we anticipating for a lesser amount in 1976? If we are spending \$2,700 in 1975 why not the same level for 1976? I am always very happy to see a reduction in expenditure which is realistic and which would not attract supplementary estimates during the year of expenditure.

Similarly in subhead 5, Telephones. The 1975 Approved Estimates was \$9,000, the Revised Estimate \$15,912, but the estimate for 1976 is \$10,000. Fair enough. That is a reduction of nearly \$6,000 on the telephone bill from 1975 to 1976 for supplementary provision to pay the telephone bills?

**2.12.75**

**National Assembly**

**4.20 – 4.30 p.m.**

I have spoken at length in this honourable House about paying our bills to the Government Corporations for them to keep their liquidity position and since I see so much in the legend about increased activity if there is increased activity in the Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, and I have no doubt there should be increased activity in the Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, I would have thought that in 1976 the telephone bill would have been at the level of 1975 and not below 1975 unless, of course that \$15,000 incorporates some element of arrears of telephone bills.

In respect of subhead 12, Subsidy – Flour, I am sorry the substantive Minister of Trade is not here because it is my information that he recently received a letter from the Mahatma Gandhi Organisation in which it was pointed out that the addition of cassava to wheat flour interferes with the preparation of roti which is a staple diet for Guyanese of Indian descent. The letter, I understand, said that at the moment a little cassava is added and even this amount prevents roti from coming out perfectly. The Mahatma Gandhi Organisation is therefore very disturbed by a statement made recently by the Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech to the effect that the content of cassava in the wheat flour would be increased. This, they are claiming, might completely ruin the roti as it breaks up in the process of preparation. The Organisation is suggesting that two types of flour be made available on the market, one made of pure wheat for the preparation of roti and the other, which could be mixed with cassava, for other uses like bread and cakes. I thought I should use this opportunity since this was brought to my attention, to mention this in this honourable House here. This is a section of the community that eats roti predominantly. I am no expert in cooking but this is their claim, their allegation and I would sincerely ask the hon. Minister to give some consideration to this justifiable request which has

**4.30 p.m.**

been made by the Mahatma Gandhi Youth Organisation.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak on subhead 1, items (18) and (19). On subhead 12 which relates to the subsidy on flour, I should like to make a point different from the one made by my Leader. I also wish to speak on subhead 16. They are all very short points.

Dealing first with item (18) Temporary Clerical Assistance and (19), Acting Allowances, under subhead 1, again I wish to refer to what my Leader, the Leader of the Opposition, said about realistic estimates and coming back next year with unnecessary requests for additional sums to be voted. We appreciate quite fully that these are, by their very nature, temporary, and it is not possible to fix a salary and to know exactly how much one will need. But surely it is unreasonable to ask, in the case of the Temporary Clerical Assistance, item (18), for only \$10. In the Approved Estimates for 1975, we asked for \$10; the revised estimate shows that we used \$5,352. If we go back to 1974, the Estimates show that we actually used \$2,000. Surely, somewhere along the line a mean can be struck where a more realistic figure than \$10 could be requested. Our Estimates could be a little more accurate and Members will be less likely to hear us call them *Guesstimates*.

Item (19), Acting Allowances. As I said, we appreciate the uncertainty of these position but again in 1975 the provision was \$100. The Revised Estimate is \$2,614. The actual amount spent in 1974 was \$1,100, so to ask for \$100 is really being quite unrealistic. Could not a mean be struck?

The next item is subhead 12 which deals with the subsidy on flour. I merely want to ask what is the correct figure so that we can have the facts straight. We are being asked to vote \$10 million for the subsidy on flour but in his Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance said the subsidy was going to be \$14 million. What really happened? Similarly, we come to subhead 16, Subsidy – Evaporated Milk. Here the position is different; the amount has gone up. We are being asked here to provide \$2,954,880, whereas the Minister tells us in his Budget Speech that we

want \$1.8 million. I merely ask, sir, for clarification on those two subsidies.

**Cde. Hoyte:** Cde. Chairman, it would be convenient if I dealt with the questions asked by the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva first. With respect to the amount under subhead 1, item (18), I should explain that this figure is always a nominal one because nobody could forecast the circumstances in which it might become necessary to employ temporary additional staff. It is from this vote that temporary staff is paid and, of course, before such staff is recruited, permission has to be obtained both from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service Ministry. So, it would be quite wrong, from an accounting point of view, to put down large sums of money without knowing whether that money is going to be utilised or not. It is true that in the course of this year a fairly substantial amount was spent under this item. This is because the Ministry of Trade recruited a large number of temporary people to bring the whole licensing system up to date in accordance with pledges which the Cde. Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection had given to the business community in this country and to the business community in the Caricom area.

The same thing applies to item (19), Acting Allowances. One is never sure, and any figure one puts, even if one puts \$10,000, is as much a *guesstimate* as if one puts \$1. Traditionally, it has been the practice, and certainly the practice endorsed by the Ministry of Finance, to put a nominal sum and allow the actual expenses to reveal themselves in the course of the year.

With respect to subhead 12, Subsidy on flour and subhead 16, Subsidy on Evaporated Milk, the Cde. Minister of Finance cannot be said to be inaccurate in the figures that he has given. [**Mr. Singh:** “It is the printer’s devil.”] It is not the printer’s devil either. In both cases, one has to make the best estimate that is possible in the circumstance. The quantum of the subsidy depends really upon the price of wheat and the price of wheat keeps varying throughout the year. Sometimes, with every shipment, the price goes up or the price comes down so one can only go on historical data. If one reads the forecasts, one gets all kinds of conflicting opinions

**2.12.75**

**National Assembly**

**4.30 – 4.40 p.m.**

from the people who are supposed to be experts in the fluctuation of prices in the grain market. I remember distinctly that in 1972, when we had the first movement in the price of wheat coming

**4.40 p.m.**

from the United States, I was involved in the negotiations with the representatives of the National Milling Company. They forecast quite confidently that that upward movement in the price of grain was a temporary phenomenon brought about by the massive purchase by the U.S.S.R. of grain on the U.S. market and that within a year prices were going to fall again. But, of course, that forecast has not really been justified. The wheat market has continued in a state of uncertainty and certainly we have not gone back to the low prices which prevailed prior to 1972. The same thing holds good for evaporated milk.

Now, for the questions asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The difference in the amount sought for in 1976 and the amount actually expended in 1975 with respect to subhead 1, item (3), Senior Economists, is explained by the fact that in the course of the year the post of Senior Economist was re-classified. Actually, it had been reclassified earlier but the actual payment of the back-pay is reflected in 1975. With respect to item (4), Economists, there is one vacancy which the Ministry hopes to fill in the course of next year.

The other question relates to item (16), Price Control Inspectors. I am advised that there are about six vacancies for Price Control Inspectors. The Ministry is advertising currently for applications and hopes to fill those vacancies shortly.

Under item (20), Duty Allowances, again this is a troublesome item in that the level of allowances to be paid can vary sharply. These allowances, as I said, are paid to people who are called upon to do unusually exacting work. For example, if the Ministry of Trade has a regional meeting or if there is a regional meeting for which the Minister of Trade is responsible, then the typists and some other personnel sometimes have to work throughout the night, to get the necessary arrangement made. They have to work, as I said, beyond the call of duty and in those

circumstances, subject to the agreement of the Public Service Ministry, some remuneration is given to them in appreciation of the services they have rendered.

Subhead 5, Telephones. The hon. Leader of the Opposition quite shrewdly divined the reason for the difference which was that, in the course of this year, the Ministry had to obtain a supplementary provision to pay arrears which had been claimed by the Telecommunication Corporation.

The letter alleged to be written by the Mahatma Ghandi Organisation is certainly an alarming document if it states what the hon. Leader of the Opposition says it does. I, myself, have not seen the letter but, as I understand it, the writer of that letter is claiming that the flour which is being sold, with a small quantity of cassava flour, is not suitable for the making of roti. I wish to say categorically, that no wheaten flour containing mixture of cassava flour has yet been put on the market for sale. Therefore, such an allegation is, to my mind, not only ridiculous but mischievous and mendacious.

The Government intends to produce a composite flour, a mix of wheaten flour and cassava flour, but very careful experiments are being made in order to determine the appropriate mix. It is quite wrong for anybody to allege that the Government has, without proper investigation, put flour on the market which is not suitable for making the traditional commodities that the people of this country make from flour. In fact, the experiments have shown that the mix which is likely to be recommended can be used for bread, pastry and roti and all the other things like those without anybody realising that there is a difference between that mix and the pure wheaten flour. But I wish to deny categorically that there is any composite flour on the market being sold by the Government. The writer of that letter is most certainly in error.

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



**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission may I ask a short supplementary question on the flour subsidy. First of all I wish to apologise for the error I made when I was giving those figures on the flour subsidy and to thank the Minister for not picking me up on it. I am a little confused so I want to ask the Minister to tell me whether the legend for subhead 11 should really relate to subhead 12. And if it is 12, will there really be a reduction in the flour subsidy? There is no reduction in the conveyance of foodstuffs in the hinterland.

**Cde. Hoyte:** All we can say is that, judging from market trends and the predictions of those who are knowledgeable in the grain markets, we believe that the price of wheat will soften. Additionally too, if, as we hope, we are able to get the proper blend of cassava flour and wheaten flour, the quantum of wheat imported into the country would be reduced and to that extent the subsidy will be reduced.

*Head 79, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection - \$13,597,879 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Comrades and hon. Members, tomorrow we will be doing the following Heads: Office of the Prime Minister, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of National Development, Ministry of Works and Housing, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Cde. Leader of the House I hope your Minister will be available.

*Assembly resumed.*

## ADJOURNMENT

**RESOLVED**, “That this Assembly do now adjourned to Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1975, at the hour of 2 p.m. [**Cde. Ramsaroop**]

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