

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2012-2014) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

82ND Sitting

Monday, 14TH April, 2014

The Assembly convened at 2.05 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2014

“WHEREAS the Constitution of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for any financial year should be laid before the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2014 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2014-03-24;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2014, of a total sum of **two hundred and five billion, three hundred and seventy million, five hundred and eighteen thousand dollars (\$205,370,518,000), excluding fourteen billion, and six hundred and seventy six million, one hundred and forty three thousand dollars (\$14,676,143,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance. *[Minister of Finance]*

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Good afternoon Hon. Members. On Friday evening we managed to go ahead by covering Region 5, so today we will start with the consideration of the Estimates for Region 6, East Berbice-Corentyne. We invite the Hon. Minister and his technical staff to gather.

Members, I am of the view that we may finish ahead of schedule. I anticipate a Wednesday night completion, so that requires, of course, the cooperation of all. It does seem, based on the trajectory which we are on, we could complete the Estimates on Wednesday night, not necessarily Wednesday evening. It may not be a bad thing for us to work until about 9.30 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. on Wednesday, so that Mr. Allicock could return for rodeo, early Thursday morning, to the Rupununi.

I await the Minister to indicate his readiness.

Agency: 76 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$121,659,000

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: I would like to ask the Minister to identify the buildings under this line item so that we can know to which building funds are being allocated for maintenance. Last year there was the same amount of money, \$7.5 million, so it is if the Minister can kindly give me some details as to which building needs the maintenance.

Minister within the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Whittaker]: There are six buildings slated for maintenance works. These are the Guyana House, often referred to as State House, the administrative building, the Regional Accounting Unit, the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) boardroom, the personnel building and admin buildings at Springlands.

Dr. Ramayya: I would be very grateful if the Hon. Minister can give me a copy of the number of buildings mentioned. There is a follow-up, on another question, security service. Last year there was \$8.6 million for security; in this budget of 2014 it is \$17.2 million. I want to know what the reasons are for the increase from \$8.6 million to \$17.2 million.

Mr. Whittaker: The reason for the increase is the rise in the rates - the increased rates.

Dr. Ramayya: I can understand the increase, but I just want to know from the Hon. Minister if the increase is twice as it ought to be. This is a tremendous amount of money from \$8.6 million \$17.2 million. Actually, the money for security services is doubled, if the force remains the same.

Mr. Whittaker: The rates have increased in light of the revised minimum wages from \$145 per hour to \$300 per hour.

Dr. Ramayya: Again, I would like the Minister to indicate the name of the security company, what it is paid and not what the employees are receiving from the company.

Mr. Whittaker: The name of the security service provider is Home Safe Security and Domestic Service. The answer to the second question is that the region is paying the security company at the rate I have just mentioned, \$300 per hour. What it pays its employees is a different kettle of fish.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Assembly how many different security companies bid for this position?

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that three companies tendered bids.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: From \$1.8 million to \$2 million, could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House how many vehicles there are in the Regional Administration and Finance and how many are functional at this stage?

Mr. Whittaker: There are, under Regional Administration and Finance, 12 machines/equipment/vehicles for which fuel and lubricants are required. These are two Toyota Hilux pick-ups, one Toyota/Nissan car; there are four motorcycles, Jialing; there is a Nissan single cab pick-up, Toyota Nissan pick-up, and there is also a standby generator. All these are required to be provided with fuel and lubricants which are funded under this line item.

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$121,659,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,892,000

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$12,892,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$476,252,000

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I have seen here in 2013, it was 22 employees and in 2014 it is 18, but, again, for the contracted employees, line item 6116, the amount of money went up again for this budget. I want to know the reason, seeing that there are less contracted employees, but a higher budget for this year. Could the Hon. Minister explain this increase?

Mr. Whittaker: It is true that the number of contracted employees here has reduced, but it is equally true that the emoluments paid to these employees have also increased and that accounts for the differential in the allocations.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: I saw a budget for \$193 million. Again, I will ask the Hon. Minister to explain, by providing a list for us how many vehicles, in agriculture, there are currently working and where these are vehicles being kept at this time.

Mr. Whittaker: There are quite a number of vehicles and equipment that are provided with fuel and lubricants, as per this line item. Therefore, whilst I would name a few, I am sure the Hon. Member would prefer to have a list that captures all of what is presented here.

Dr. Ramayya: Yes please.

Mr. Whittaker: Hon. Member, there are a number of tractors, pick-ups, trucks, backhoes, excavators and drainage pumps. I can make available a copy of this document. Is that okay?

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Minister, thank you. Again, I would like the Minister to indicate to this Assembly if there is any truck operating at the Whim, central.

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is no.

Dr. Ramayya: I will kindly ask the Minister, where is the truck that the ex-Minister, the Hon. Member Ganga Persaud, indicated in his last budget presentation, which was parked at Whim, and it was functional? When we look at the amount of diesel which is being bought with this budget and the amount of equipment claimed to be working, I still question myself, living in Region 6, that there was a truck.

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that the truck, to which the Hon. Member may be referring, low bed GKK 6487, is in the mechanic workshop for repairs.

Dr. Ramayya: It is very baffling to know that that truck was there for the last two years, the mechanical money was not paid and it is to come with this low bed story again. The “low bed” is at Whim Centre Ground and that is why cricket cannot be played. They used the cricket ground for the ‘low bed.’ The truck is in the workshop for the last two years. Here there is the audacity is

to tell us that the truck is in the workshop for the last two years, but the money was not paid. Yet money is being claimed for fuel, mechanical defects, and so forth.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think that prompts a response. If a Member of the House is saying that the truck really is in the workshop for two years and the “low bed”, to which you referred, is actually parked on the Whim Centre Ground, yet there are charges for fuel and lubricants,...

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, just to clarify. The truck is indeed in the workshop. The trailer is parked on the ground. Thirdly, there is no fuel or lubricants from the provision here that is being used by this truck.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, that answer is not acceptable to me and I will tell you why. How should we know which machinery, tractor, or whatever there is, is using the diesel? I just want to know...

Mr. Chairman: One point though, Hon. Member. It must be presumed that the region has more than one vehicle. That is a presumption that we must accept. In other words, a region as large as Region 6 must have several vehicles in its fleet.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, this budget is a collective budget.

Mr. Chairman: Agree.

Dr. Ramayya: Everything is included inside the budget.

Mr. Chairman: You would want for us to disaggregate, if the truck is not working, how much fuel and lubricant would not be used for that truck. To say that no fuel and lubricants should be used at all would be a bit far-fetched.

Dr. Ramayya: I can remember very candidly, Mr. Chairman, that last year the Hon. Member Ganga Persaud indicated to this Assembly that the truck was there working. Where is the truck?

Mr. Chairman: We were just told that the truck is in the workshop. We know where it is. I think you also confirmed that the truck is in the workshop.

Dr. Ramayya: It is over two years.

Mr. Chairman: I think the question is: Why is it there and is it to be rehabilitated or sold? I think we know where the truck is. That is established.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman and Hon. Members, I just want to be a bit more explicit. The line item marked "Fuel and Lubricants" caters for a number of vehicles and equipment. In fact, it is 48 in number. I am providing this to the Hon. Member.

A few of the vehicles/equipment identified here are not in working order. One of them is the same truck to which he referred. The truck is in the workshop. It therefore means that no fuel, under the particular item, could be used on this truck.

The issue of fuel being allocated for a truck, which is not working, does not arise. This is an inventory of all the equipment/vehicles we have within the Regional Democratic Council for Region 6, but 46 of these are in working order. This will be made available to you, Sir.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Assembly the increase from \$27.1 million to \$43.8 million, where these securities are being placed? If it is possible, could the Hon. Minister indicate at which of those posts 24-hour security is needed? Could he indicate to this Assembly why the amount of money went up so much and if there are any schools or public offices where there is 24 hours security?

Mr. Whittaker: The security service provider is Home Safe Security and Domestic Service. The locations are all listed here. There are 13 of them – Whim sub office, Black Bush Polder pump station, Borlam pump station, LM Regulator, MJ Regulator, JY Regulator, YS Regulator, RDC 6, Benab, Number 63, Sea Well pump station, Eversham pump station, Joppa pump station. As you know, Mr. Chairman, all of them are getting 24-hour coverage.

Dr. Ramayya: If those are the areas indicated by the Hon. Minister, I presume that last year we had the same types of security, but I just want to know the increased cost and it is if the Hon. Minister can provide me with a list so that I can check to verify and bring back to this House that some of the securities, which are there, are not 24-hour.

Mr. Whittaker: The list, which I have here, can be provided.

Mr. Chairman: Which installation is that list for, if you do not mind my asking?

Mr. Whittaker: It is for the agriculture programmes; we are talking about agriculture.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Mr. Ramjattan: It is the increase now. Why is there the increase?

Mr. Whittaker: The increase is because of the wages having gone up from \$145 per hour to \$300 per hour.

Mr. Ramjattan: I notice that in line item 6253 there is \$146 million for the maintenance of drainage and irrigation works for Region 6. Could the Minister provide a list, for me, of where the maintenance works will be taking place in which this \$146 million is allocated for? Could he just give me a list or a commitment towards a list?

Mr. Whittaker: There are over 60 such areas.

Mr. Ramjattan: Give me the list.

Mr. Whittaker: I can provide this list.

Mr. Ramjattan: Thanks very much.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$476,252,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$135,500,000

Programme: 762 – Agriculture - \$135,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$174,293,000

Dr. Ramayya: I have seen, here, for contracted workers that the region had moved from \$14.2 million to \$16.9 million. Again, I know that the Minister would give me the same answer that the

salary has increased from the minimum wage. Could the Minister explain to this Assembly why about \$3 million extra was in this same budget?

Mr. Whittaker: As was pointed out last Friday evening, in many instances, increases have been financed by the Ministry of Finances under line item 6141 and it is a similar situation here. We have specific information in respect of the payments that amounted to the \$2 million.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Member give me list of the roads or areas - as I need it so badly - which are for maintenance?

Mr. Whittaker: They are Light Town to Plegt Anker, Essendam to Germania road; then there are repairs to the Fryish branch road, Main Street, New Amsterdam, Strand, New Amsterdam and the Kortberaad to Highburg road. A total of \$42.5 million will be spent to effect maintenance works to those roads.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Hon. Minister give a list of what type of materials to be used on these roads? What I have seen is that many of those roads, which were listed last year, this year, are in deplorable conditions – very deplorable conditions, everything washed away.

We want to know who the persons are to do the work. If this work has being sub-contracted I would like to know who the contractors are to do the work in Region 6.

Mr. Whittaker: The type of structure, we are talking about, is asphaltic concrete and Double Bituminous Surface Treatment (DBST). Rehabilitations will be done to the roads in the areas that need such rehabilitation. To remind the National Assembly that, as pointed out last Friday, these works will be contracted out. The procurement procedures will be strictly followed.

2.35 p.m.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: I would like the Hon. Minister to give me a list of the bridges which need to be maintained or to have any type of work to be done. There is a problem here. When I look at the cost of fuel and vehicle spares and service, many of these contracts, in Region 6, are given to private people. I really want to know when the Minister is asking for this amount of money and the private people are being contracted to do the work,

how is it that there are all of that amount of diesel and repairs for the vehicles which we are using in Berbice?

Mr. Whittaker: I may start by correcting the Hon. Member. Contracts are not given to private people. Contracts are awarded to persons who bid and meet the eligibility requirements.

Secondly, there are five bridges identified for works at a total cost of \$25.5 million. There are repairs to Sandvoort, number two, and \$4 million has been allocated there, the dimension of that structure is 33ft by 23ft. It is concrete and the Hon. Member would know about this. There are repairs to the Moleson Creek, number 2 bridge and this includes the decking, liners, revetment of the approach and this is at a cost of \$5.5 million; the dimension is 24ft by 16ft and that is a wooden bridge, about 200 and more persons are expected to benefit; repairs to Adelphi main access bridge with an allocation of \$7 million and that is a wooden bridge with dimensions of 30ft by 16ft; there are repairs to bridge at Ma Retraite, East Bank Berbice, \$7 million is allocated, it is a 30ft by 16ft concrete structure; repairs to bridge at Lesbeholden, \$2 million is allocated, it is a 60ft by 16ft concrete structure.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Hon. Minister provide, for me, or this Assembly, process in which the bidding done, through the central Government, through the regional office, of the contractors to be awarded works to be carried out in Region 6? What mediums do they use?

Mr. Whittaker: This is open tender. Those of us who are familiar with that process would know that all of these amounts fall within the regional tender board limit, so it will be done at that level.

Programme: 763 - Public Works - \$174,293,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$122,700,000

Mr. Trotman: Project 1100700, Bridges: I know that there are a number of bridges to be done under this head. For the understanding of this honourable House, I am asking the Minister to lay

over a list of all of the bridges to be done, the sizes, types and the individual cost of those bridges.

Secondly, in relation to the rehabilitation of the bridges at Warren and Everton, I am asking him to lay over the cost of those bridges for our benefit, in writing.

Mr. Whittaker: Certainly, I would like to make this information available, not only to the Hon. Member, but for the thousands who are interested in hearing.

There is a construction of footpath bridge at Auchlyne and the dimension is 50ft by 16ft at a cost of \$1.8 million; there is a footpath bridge at Canefield, Cumberland, \$1.8 million is allocated, with the dimension 50ft by 16ft; there is a footpath bridge at Arjune, Nattai Street, with dimension being 50ft by 16ft, \$1.8 million is set aside; there is a footpath bridge at Grant 1804/1806, it is a timber bridge at Crabwood Creek, \$1.8 million, the dimension is 50ft by 16ft; there is a construction of a footpath bridge at Mibikuri North, timber bridge in the Black Bush Polder area, the dimension is 50ft x 16ft; there is a construction of access bridge at Vrymens Erven, by the entrance to the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) in New Amsterdam, \$4 million is allocated here and the dimension is 16ft by 3ft; construction of a reinforced concrete bridge at Good Banana Land, \$4 million is allocated, dimension 30ft by 16ft; rehabilitation of Warren heavy-duty timber bridge, \$4 million is the estimated cost and the dimension is 30ft by 16ft; there is the Everton access bridge at East Bank Berbice, the estimated cost is \$10.7 million and the dimension is 30ft by 20ft. Those account for the \$32.7 million allocation under Public Works programme – Bridges.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, I just want to remind the Minister that I had asked him for this information in writing. The purpose for it is to ensure that we can actually monitor what is taking place on the ground. We will need that information in writing so that we can pass it on to our people out there on the ground.

My second question to the Minister is in relation to project 1401000, Roads, the “Rehabilitation of community roads.” I note that there are a number of roads to be rehabilitated and again there is a paucity of information here because we would like to know the length of the roads that will actually be done. Will it be all of the roads and what are the individual lengths or whether it is

only part of the roads and what is that length? We also want to know what the individual cost is in every instance of rehabilitation that will take place.

I would like to have the information in writing, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Whittaker: There are seven roads to be done under this programme. These roads are situated in Lord Street, No.2 Village, East Canje, No. 43 Village, Outfall Street; No.59 Village, first cross street, east of the public road, Mandir Street, Mibikuri South, Black Bush Polder, Sawmill Street, Edinburgh, East Bank Berbice, fourth cross street, Tain, Clifton, John and Second Streets, Grant 1804B, Crabwood Creek, giving a total of \$72 million.

I do not, as I speak, have in my possession the specific details with respect to the distance that will be done, but we will make that information, along with what I have just outlined to the Hon. Member, available.

Programme: 763 – Public Works - \$122,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$2,240,564,000

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6134, National Insurance: I have seen here that in 2013 it was \$106.9 million allocated and in 2014 it is \$122.2 million. Could the Hon. Minister give the reasons for this increase, whether there are more employees or higher salaries so that there are more deductions?

Mr. Whittaker: The Hon. Member is correct. The increase in the NIS employers' contribution would have been as a result of the increase in emoluments of the workers as per the line items 6111 to 6115.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6281, Security Services: Budget 2013 reflected \$128.7 million to \$187.2 million in 2014, could the Hon. Minister, again, give us an explanation for the security service that is rendered by those companies, and which company, and if we can get a breakdown as to where the guards are being placed for us to know whether it is a 24-hour service or an 8-hour service for certain places?

Mr. Whittaker: The document before me provides information on the location, where the service is provided, at the level of nursery schools, primary schools and secondary schools throughout that region. It also points to the number of guards provided for each of the locations and the shift system that is worked, so the Member can get a clear idea as to the coverage provided, coverage which I will assure the Minister is 24-7 in all instances.

The other part of it is that as a result of increase of the revised minimum wages/salaries, as at 1/7/2013, there are these increases, from \$145 per hour to \$300 per hour. Do the maths.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Hon. Minister, once again, under line item 6284, Other, indicate to this Assembly what is meaning of “Other” and for what purpose(s) this \$45.6 million is being used for and why there is the increase from the previous year of \$39.2 million?

Mr. Whittaker: Under this line item, it captures payment for supervisors and invigilators at examinations and also included is the transportation cost for those supervisors and invigilators. It has been drawn to my attention that there has been an increase in the number of invigilators and supervisors due to, a large measure, the increase in the subject entries. Students are writing more and more subjects, no doubt as a result of the fact that more of them are accessing education all the way from nursery to secondary.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a follow-up question to a number of questions that Dr. Ramayya, the Hon. Member, had asked with regard to security services. If you would permit me, he had asked for some specific information with regard to the name of the security company. I want to ask the Hon. Minister if he would be able to give us, in a written form, the size of the security apparatus for the various heads – Public Works, Health, Education Delivery – all those areas of administrative services that would require security guards because, apart from the increase in the Ministry of Home Affairs vote, generally for more policemen, it seems as if Region 6 seems to be having the single largest number of employment taking place in the security sector, lowly paid security sector, of course.

Mr. Whittaker: The increase is only in the rates, not in the number of security personnel.

Mr. Chairman: On a previous occasion a similar question had been put to the Hon. Minister of Education about the number of security guards at various schools and the Hon. Minister was able

to say that this school has 2 and this school has 24-hr services. I do not know whether you are in a position to give a breakdown like that.

The point is well taken that the size of the firm has not grown; it is the payout that has increased. The Hon. Member is asking for a copy of that layout showing the ratio of guards to locations.

Mr. Whittaker: Certainly Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6111, Administrative: I notice that the staff complement has increased by 26 and that there has been a corresponding increase in the sums the Minister is requesting of about \$54 million. Could you explain why there is that sizeable increase?

Secondly, could the Minister indicate to us what the five senior positions are that he is now incorporating into the structure and the emoluments that go with them?

Mr. Whittaker: The increase in the voted provisions is a function, not only of increase in numbers of teachers and school administrators, but it is due also to a number of teachers being promoted. The information I have before me speaks about 67 senior appointments, senior teachers being appointed as head teachers and it cuts across secondary, nursery and primary schools. These are two contributing factors – the numbers and the fact that many of them have been promoted.

Mr. Trotman: There is a second part of the question. I would like the Minister to identify the five senior positions that fall into the category of the increased numbers that have come under administrative and the relative emoluments.

Mr. Whittaker: If I understand the Hon. Member then the five top positions would be head teacher, Deputy Head, Senior Master/Mistress, Head of Department and Senior Assistant Master/Mistress.

Mr. Trotman: What are the relative emoluments paid to them?

Mr. Whittaker: We are trying to get that information for you, Sir, but it is a function also of the grade of the school. It is not that all Headmaster/mistress gets the same salaries.

Mr. Trotman: While it is that the Minister seeks to get that information I have another question I can pose to him.

In relation to line item 6112, Senior Technical, again there is an increase of seven persons but I note that the increase in the requested provision is about \$54 million. I take into consideration what the Minister has said about promotions, but could he explain what, I believe, is a disparity between the figure for 2013 and what happens in 2014?

Mr. Whittaker: I seek your indulgence here. Could we move on, we need more time to get that information?

Mr. Chairman Is it on both questions?

Mr. Whittaker: It is on both questions.

Mr. Chairman: That is with the understanding that information as soon as possible will be provided. Do you accept that?

Mr. Trotman: Yes Mr. Chairman.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$2,240,564,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$64,929,000

Dr. Ramayya: Project 2504100, Furniture and Equipment – Education: I see that the in this budget the Hon. Minister is asking for \$19.4 million for furniture and equipment, could the Minister indicate what type of equipment is necessary and for which school? When I total the budget for the last three years it is \$50 million and if this is for desks and benches then I think every year, actually, there are new benches and desks for the schools, because this is a lot of money. I want to know what type of equipment are the primary and secondary schools... What are the equipment the school needs that this large sum of money has been allocated?

Mr. Whittaker: The description here is “furniture and equipment. There are desks and benches – type A, secondary, 320 pairs, type B, primary, 200 pairs, type C, primary, 100 pairs and type

D, 50 pairs. Under this line item, it captures also cupboards and there is a budgetary allocation for 50 such cupboards, five filing cabinets, chalkboards, climbing frames, swings, shelves, teachers' chairs, teachers' tables, library racks and stools. All of these pieces of furniture/equipment are expected to cost in the vicinity \$9.5 million.

Mr. Chairman: I believe that the budget is a bit higher than that.

Dr. Ramayya: It is \$19.4 million.

Mr. Chairman: Nineteenth point four million dollars is sought, but I heard the Minister say \$9.5 million is what he could give account for.

Mr. Whittaker: I said \$19 million; it is \$19.429 million.

Mr. Chairman: Sorry, I thought I heard \$9 million.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$64,929,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$1,043,471,000

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: We have seen here that it has moved up to seven more persons who are contracted by Region 6 and there is an increase of close to \$4.2 million. However, I would like to know how many persons from this list, their salaries and the department?

Mr. Whittaker: I have before me the list of the contracted employees and the emoluments of each of these contracted employees and I will make this available, but let me just say that it starts with the Chief Executive Officer and that is the maximum - \$482,589 per month right down to the minimum which is \$39,540. There is a list available that can be provided to the Hon. Member.

The seven additional contracted employees would be, for 2014, a Laundress - \$37,657, two Accounts Clerk - \$47,605 each, a Ward Maid - \$37,657, two Porters - \$41,083 and a vehicle Driver - \$41,083 per month.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6281, Security Services: Here again we have an increase of \$25 million allocated in the Budget 2014, could the Hon. Minister indicate to us which health centres the security guards will be placed? Secondly, is there 24-hour security at each centre?

3.05 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: The security service would be provided at a number of hospitals, health centres and health posts. These include the Skeldon Hospital, Skeldon Health Centre, Mibicuri Hospital, Land Live Man, Bush Lot, Port Mourant Hospital, Bohemia Health Centre, New Amsterdam Hospital, National Psychiatric Hospital, the doctors' quarters which is opposite the hospital, the chief executive officer's quarter, the drugs bond, the doctors' quarter in Asylum Street, Farmheld Centre, Sandvoort Health Centre, Brothers Health Clinic, Angoy's Avenue, Friends YST and the Regional Health Authority. A total of 98 guards will be provided at all of these locations. Each would be provided with 24/7 security service.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Minister, were these services provided last year? If these services were provided last year, I am asking again: why is there the increase of 25 million?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer to the first question is: yes, these locations were provided for in 2013. The answer to the second question is: the increased allocation is as a result of the increased rates.

Dr. Ramayya: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Some \$45 million is budgeted for 2014. This figure is constant for the other years under this line item. It is not only for one line item. At line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - there is an amount budgeted. What is “other infrastructure” and what is “buildings”?

Mr. Whittaker: “Buildings” is exactly what is stated. Other infrastructure, Hon. Member, would include things such as repairing of fences, land filling, repairs to water trestles, weeding and cleaning of compound and replacement of runners; they would all come under “other infrastructure”.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Committee with a list of where the work has to be done?

Mr. Whittaker: I suppose the Hon. Member is talking about information under infrastructure. If that is what he is talking about, the answer is yes; the information is available and can be provided.

Dr. Ramayya: I would like the same for line item 6242 also, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: That information is also here.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6292 – Dietary: The revised budget for 2013 was \$77,199,000. There is an increase of \$16 million in 2014. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Mr. Whittaker: The increase is as a result of the increase in the number of live-in patients at the National Psychiatric Hospital (NPH) as well as the number of admissions. It has also to do with the expansion of the services at the Skeldon and New Amsterdam Hospitals.

Dr. Ramayya: Could the Hon. Minister give us a list of the number of persons at the National Psychiatric Hospital in Fort Canje from last year and the anticipated number for this year? From the size of the budget, it seems as though that number will be doubled for this year. I know for a fact that rehabilitation is not done in the psychiatric department. My observation, just to provide a little information to this Committee, is that there is no counselling done with the patients in the psychiatric department for them to go back on the streets and lead normal lives. It is very minimal and I think more has to be done. More money is needed to get those patients out there. They are not completely mad...

Mr. Chairman: We do not use that word, Hon. Member. You can say mentally challenged.

Dr. Ramayya: I am talking about the patients.

Mr. Chairman: I know, but we are not going to say they are mad. We can say that they are mentally impaired or challenged.

Dr. Ramayya: What I will say is more money is needed. I went there several times and, in my professional opinion, those people can go back and live in their homes if they have proper counselling and enough is not being provided for those patients.

Mr. Chairman: The comment is noted.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I have noticed that for 2014, there has been an increase of some \$2.2 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for the increase, state who the beneficiaries are and the number of persons expected to be trained?

Mr. Whittaker: The increase is due in large measure to the fact that more training activities, especially in-house training, are planned for 2014. This is as a result of the large influx of new staff, especially doctors. There is the need for upgrade and the need for refresher training for staff, including pharmacy assistants, laboratory aids, psychiatric patient care assistants, *et cetera*. It should be noted also that in our pursuit of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) as it relates to healthcare, the aim is also to provide the opportunity for the upgrading of midwives in dealing with complicated deliveries and care for newborn. In short, it is intensifying and broadening of training programmes and activities available and making these available to a larger number of healthcare providers.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$1,043,471,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$89,335,000

Dr. Cummings: Project code 2402000: Could the Hon. Minister tell us where the ambulance would be located? The legend states that motorcycles and ambulances would be purchased.

Project code 2504300 – Furniture and Equipment – Health: I notice that money is budgeted for the purchase of ultrasound and cardiac monitors and pulse oximeters. Where would they be placed?

Mr. Whittaker: The ambulance would be located in Mibicuri, Black Bush Polder. With respect to the other part of the question that deals with furniture and equipment, one ultrasound machine would be placed at the Skeldon Hospital. The estimated cost is \$6 million. Two cardiac monitors will be placed at the New Amsterdam and Skeldon Hospitals. The estimated cost is \$5 million. One 500 kVA generator will be placed at the New Amsterdam Hospital. The estimated cost is \$18 million. There are 15 pulse oximeters and they will be placed in New Amsterdam, Port

Mourant, Mibicuri, Skeldon Hospitals, and Bohemia, Brothers and Crabwood Creek Health Centres.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$89,335,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: This concludes our review of the Estimates for Region 6. Again, I would like to thank the Minister and the technical support staff who assisted in providing answers. Minister, I remind you, again, that a number of documents are to be delivered to Members. Please take note so that you can ensure they are delivered.

Agency: 77 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$141,959,000

Mr. Chairman: It is my hope and expectation that we can finish all of the regions today. Even though Regions 9 and 10 are slated for tomorrow, we are going to make an effort to complete the regions today. I am told that the officials from those two regions are standing by. If they are here, I am craving your indulgence for us to proceed.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I have observed that the number of contracted employees remains the same. Is there any increase in their wages? If so, why is it not reflected under that line item? The cost remains the same.

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is no. There has been no increase and, therefore, there was no need for any changes there.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I notice that it is a new project with an estimated cost of \$10,499,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain what other infrastructure means?

Mr. Whittaker: Five projects will be implemented in keeping with programme budgeting. This item, which was previously captured under Public Works, is now being placed under the respective programmes. We are going to fence the Deputy Regional Executive Officer's

(DREO's) quarter at Bartica; we are going to fence the stores and administration building compound in Bartica; we are going to do some general repairs to the stores bonds at Bartica and Kamarang; and we are going to clear the fallen trees in the waterways of the Kamarang and Capoey Rivers. We are going to do approximately 25 miles of that.

Ms. Hastings: Could the Minister be kind enough to let me have a written copy of the project? Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: some \$18,997,000 is budgeted. I would be happy if the Minister can give me a written list of all the buildings to be maintained and state where they are located.

Mr. Whittaker: There are a number of buildings that will be rehabilitated. These include the DREO's living quarters and the regional administration building in Bartica; the youth choice building in Bartica; the day care centre and the living quarters A13 at a cost totalling just under \$19 million.

Mr. Felix: Line item 6111 – Administrative: The revised amount for last year was \$9,403,000 and the budgeted amount for this year it is \$9,477,000 when the number of employees remains the same. Could you please explain?

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that that increase is due to some adjustments in the salary of the Registry Supervisor. The eight employees under this category are listed here. They are the Deputy Regional Executive Officer, Senior Personnel Officer, Chief Accountant, Accountant, Assistant REO, Personnel Officer II, Registry Supervisor and District Development Officer. The increase to which the Hon. Member referred has to do with the adjustments in the emoluments of the Registry Supervisor.

Mr. Felix: Line items 6251 and 6252: For the North West, is there not any road to be repaired under the regional administration? I see that no money is allocated to roads and bridges.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member would see that when we get to the programme of Public Works.

Mr. Felix: Line item 6281 – Security: Could you say which security service is providing the service and how many locations are involved?

Mr. Whittaker: This will be Strategic Action Security Services and there are seven locations for which security services will be provided.

Mr. Felix: My only statement on Strategic Action Security Services is to advise that it is like putting the cat to look at the milk.

Mr. Chairman: No, Mr. Felix. Mr. Felix, if you wish to impugn a company, you may do so in a formal motion. To make a statement like that against a company, I find it highly improper. Sorry.

Mr. Felix: On your advice, Mr. Chairman, it is withdrawn.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. You may say that there are question marks and there are issues but I will not allow a statement like that.

Mr. Felix: We still note the 100% increase in the cost of providing that security. Could the Minister provide us with a written statement on the reason for the increase?

Mr. Whittaker: I will provide details which will show how the amount of \$11.5 million to be paid to the service provider was arrived at.

Mr. Felix: Has there been an increase in the seven locations?

Mr. Whittaker: What have been increased are the rates. What has increased is the consideration for the service of the contractor. The number of locations for security service remains the same.

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I want to ask a two-part question. The first part is this: how many meetings of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) have been allowed for under this head? The second part is: what amount of money has been set aside in order to facilitate the monitoring by councillors of works to be done in the region?

Mr. Whittaker: This caters for six meetings. As I pointed out on last Friday evening, Mr. Chairman, there is no specific item under Expenses Specific to the Agency which speaks to the issue of funds allocated for monitoring. Monitoring is a continuous exercise that is not dependent specifically on this. While councillors are coming to meetings, they can stop at various communities and visit projects. On the same trip while they are going back from meetings, as per agreement, they can stop and visit projects.

Also, many of them are members of committees that are involved, specifically, in monitoring. They are members of works committees, finance committees, health committees, education committees and agriculture committees, and that provides another medium by which they can do monitoring exercises.

Mr. Trotman: Bearing in mind what the Auditor General has stated in his report about the works of regional administrations, regarding the anomalies which have been addressed by the Auditor General, does the Minister really believe that the work of regional councillors can be properly carried out in the way in which he is saying it should be carried out? I am asking: if the haphazard approach the Minister has enunciated should be undertaken by councillors, would it best address the way in which moneys for the development in the regions could be looked at?

Mr. Whittaker: The Hon. Member is seeking an opinion. I thought we were dealing with the facts which are before us. The fact before us is that there is an allocation of \$17 million for RDC related works in the region. The fact, also, is that the RDC is able to do adjustments within these parameters. Those are the facts.

Mr. Trotman: The fact, Mr. Chairman, is that the Minister himself has said that monitoring of works should be undertaken by councillors on their way to and from meetings of the RDC.

Mr. Whittaker: I did not say that.

Mr. Chairman: Two things: Throughout the consideration of these Estimates, I have heard individual Members of Parliament (MPs) saying they would like to have access to the documents because they would like to undertake their own personal visits. That is not part of the system. I thought I heard the Minister say that they could. I do not know it is a statutory function of theirs.

Each of us, as servants of the public, has a duty and if we see a school or a road going bad, we can report it. Minister, what is your response?

Mr. Whittaker: First of all, at the level of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, we have shared in the ten regions, and we will continue to, that monitoring, though an integral and important activity of the RDC, is not limited to the RDC. We are encouraging monitoring right down to the community level. We do not want persons to feel that

if councillors, by design or due to resources, do not monitor, it would not take place. That is not so.

Secondly, I did not say or even infer that councillors' monitoring is limited to visiting projects on their way to and from RDC meetings. That is ridiculous. I am saying that they can increase the level of their monitoring by utilising all of these opportunities. Somebody seems to feel that there is an item in the budget which specifies that there is \$5 million for monitoring and this can be accepted. It is not so.

Mr. Trotman: I get the impression that you do not want it to be so.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Hon. Minister, I notice that there are four on staff. Could you say what their designations are? Could you say the same from the 24 contracted employees under line item 6116?

3.35 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the four employees are Information Officer, Assistant Accountant, Stores Keeper III and Stores Keeper II.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: what are their designations?

Mr. Whittaker: They are Captain Engineer, Assistant Field Auditor – I am giving them in the order of seniority/emoluments – Clerk II (General), Accounts Clerk II, Office Assistant, Typist Clerk, Care Taker, Stores Attendant, Cleaners (2), Handyman, Radio Operator. Those are the categories.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you. Hon. Minister, are they located in one office, that is, the head office, or do you have other branch offices?

Mr. Whittaker: Some are at the Bartica office. Some are at the Kamarang office.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you. Line item 6223 - Office Materials and Supplies: \$4 million is allocated there. Hon. Minister, can you say how many offices will benefit from this \$4 million, the locations of the offices and how much money will be allocated to each of the offices? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: It will be both administrative offices at Bartica and Kamarang.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I did ask how much money will be allocated to each office.

Mr. Whittaker: It will be \$1.5 million for the Kamarang office and \$2.5 million for the Bartica office.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you. Line item 6224 - Print and Non-print Materials - \$1.75 million: Hon. Minister, what do you intend to print? Could you explain this, please?

Mr. Whittaker: Print and Non-print includes things like tender advertisements, the cost, which is captured under this item, newspapers, photocopiers and ink for the computers.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you. Ink for the computers can fall under Office Materials and Supplies. I do not see how you can put it here too. Print and Non-Print materials mean paper, mostly.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 6272 - Electricity Charges: in 2013 and 2012, there was nothing there. We have a new project there for \$8.252 million. Could you say what it entails?

Mr. Whittaker: Earlier on, I referred to the matter of programme budgeting, so in prior years, if you check, it would have been captured under the Public Works programme.

Ms. Ally: So why did you change it?

Mr. Whittaker: It is because we want to bring it in line with our project budgeting.

Ms. Ferguson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just an observation, line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants: If one looks at line item 6264, there is no provision for moneys there. My questions to the Hon. Minister are: what would we use for fuel and lubricants? Are there any vehicles in the Region? As I said before, if you are using fuel and lubricants, obviously, you must have vehicles that you would service from time to time. But there is no provision for this at line item 6264.

Mr. Whittaker: There are two questions. The first one has to do with Fuel and Lubricants. There are a number of vehicles and machinery for which the Region is required to provide fuel and lubricants. These include, at Kamarang, two outboard engines of 40 horsepower and a 25

horsepower and also an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV); there is also a slasher there. At Bartica, there is a 75 horsepower outboard engine, motor cycle and slasher. The other question has to do with the provision of utility services and the line item under which they are captured. Vehicles Spares and Service, yes, under Regional Administration and Finance, is zero. But if you check underneath the programmes Education, Health and Public Works, you will see allocations to cover the cost of Vehicle Spares and Service. A specific answer is that the Vehicle Spares and Service that used to be captured under Regional Administration and Finance is now captured under Public Works.

Mr. T. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I refer the Hon. Minister to line item 6281 - Security Services? This question is more of a follow-up to the Hon. Mr. Winston Felix, who spoke earlier, asking the question of an increase. Last week, we noted that in some regions, while the Hon. Minister gave increase of rate as the primary cause for the general increase we notice in some regions, for example in this region, the rate is doubled. Generally, I noted last week that it was going up by 30%. I would like to ask the Minister if there is a specific additional charge for the regions; if it is going up by 30% consistently for all of the works... How can we find almost double an allocation for regions? If I go ahead quickly, under Health Services, you will find the same double...

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we are dealing with Regional Administration.

Mr. T. Williams: Yes, but I am just making the point that particular to Region 7, it has been doubled.

Mr. Whittaker: The security cost will obviously vary; as much as it rises, the rise will vary because it is a function also of the number of shifts. For some regions, for a greater part of the service, there is 24-hour service provided at most or all of the locations. In other regions, it is a little less so it has to do with the number of shifts also.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$141,959,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$4,000,000

Ms. Hastings: Project code 2601900 - Furniture and Equipment - Administration: I have noticed that the Minister has the intention to purchase public address systems, projector, fax machines and file cabinet. Could the Hon. Minister say where these equipment will be placed?

Mr. Whittaker: The public address systems are two in number. One will be used in the Lower Mazaruni and one in the Upper Mazaruni area. The projector with accessories and the two fax machines will be at the level of the regional administration and so also will the refrigerator and the three filing cabinets for storage of records.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$4,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 772 - Public Works - \$128,893,000

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I observe that there is an increase by one. Could the Hon. Minister kindly say what the designation of that one contracted employee is and his or her emolument?

Mr. Whittaker: That is Accounts Clerk II and the emolument is \$53,406.

Ms. Hastings: Thank you. For line items 6251, 6252, 6253 and 6254, I would like the Hon. Minister to give the details of the projects that would fall under those line items and if he can please submit a written document.

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6251 refers to road maintenance. Road maintenance works are primarily scarifying, grading and shaping the carriage way and placing crusher run, and, in several instances, applying Double Bituminous Surface Treatment (DBST). This will be done to the roadway at Fourth Avenue, approximately 700 feet; at Agatash, approximately 1,000 feet; at Bidrabu, approximately 1,200; at Nine Street, which is between First and Third Avenue, approximately 1,200 feet; the roadway, the Third Avenue between Seventh and Ninth Street, excavated and shaping pot holes and sealing with DBST, 900 feet; then the roadway at Fourth Avenue between Sixth and Potaro, excavated and shaping pot holes and road edges, 2,000 feet. There is a miscellaneous provision of 4,000 feet for scarifying, grading, shaping carriageway,

placing crusher run and applying DBST on other roads. It should be noted also that for the roadway to Waramadong, \$2.5 million has been allocated there for repair and clearing and cutting of bushes and trees and filling damaged sections of the road in that area.

Under Maintenance of Bridges, there are three major projects here at Jawalla; the St. John's Bridge will be done - replacing piles, beams, decking and rails; \$5.5 million has been set aside for that. Bridges at Bidrabu along the Agatash Road - \$4 million...and the bridge at Philippi, \$1.7 million has been allocated for that.

Under Maintenance of Drains, a number of drains will be maintained, including the Bidrabu - repairs to defective concrete drains, about 1,200 feet; \$9 million has been allocated for that. The drain between Third and Fourth Avenues: repairs to defective concrete alleyway drains - \$7.5 million. There is one at Bamford Point, \$5.7 million, and there is also a provision of \$2.3 million for cleaning and clearing of roadside drains in Bartica, approximately \$3 million.

Sea and River Defence: River defence in Bartica - \$3.2 million has been set aside for that. Remove defective Sand Creek bags and install new, also repairs to defective concrete toe of bag wall revetment. Then for river defences: First Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, \$9 million will be spent there filling cracks and seams and installing gabion stone alongside sections of the concrete river defence. In fact, \$12.2 million will be spent on the maintenance of sea and river defence.

Programme: 772 - Public Works - \$128,893,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 772 - Public Works - \$34,100,000

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister, in explaining line item 6251 earlier under Current Expenditure indicated that there is going to be maintenance work at Agatash. Under this project code 1401100, there is construction and rehabilitation of roads at the same Agatash. Could the Hon. Minister explain what is really happening here at Agatash?

Mr. Whittaker: For those of us who are familiar with our geography, Agatash is a long road, about three miles. We could not do all under capital so what one would find is that we are going to be doing 500 feet of strictly DBST surface and with respect to the others, we could not leave it until next year so what we are doing is maintenance work on the other part of it. For the first 500 feet, the Hon. Mr. Harmon can drive full out on 500 feet of DBST. That is the reason.

Dr. Norton: Under the same project code, is this the explanation that you are giving for the part at [inaudible]? Would you be using the same material there for that road?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is DBST.

Dr. Norton: Under Bridges, the bridge at Philippi: Could the Hon. Minister say, at \$5 million, what material will be used for the construction of that bridge?

Mr. Whittaker: That pedestrian bridge would be constructed of green heart so the answer is wooden material.

Ms. Hastings: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under project code 1402100 – Bridges - I heard the Minister say that \$5 million will be allocated to looking after the bridge at Philippi, but I also heard him say that \$1.7 million is allocated under the Current Expenditure for the same bridge. Could the Hon. Minister explain what the difference is?

Mr. Whittaker: We are talking about two different bridges. They are in the same Philippi but they are two different bridges at different locations.

Programme: 772 - Public Works - \$34,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$875,384,000

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I observe that there is an increase by 16 for 2014. Could the Hon. Minister say what the designations are with their emoluments for the 16 contracted employees?

Mr. Whittaker: They are: System Development Officer – \$107,485; four Typist Clerks – \$41,083 each; five Cooks – \$43,137 each; one Janitor – \$43,137; two Cleaners – \$39,540 each; one Head Cook - \$46,628; one Supervise of House Services – \$46,434; and one House Father – \$71,858.

Mr. Hastings: Thank you. Line item 6284 - Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain what the “Other” entails?

Mr. Whittaker: Captured here are payments of increased stipend to a number of Sweeper/Cleaners, payments to invigilators, portage fees, *et cetera*.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister explain what the other infrastructure is?

Mr. Whittaker: There are a number of projects that will be done under this line item and these include work focusing on the landscaping of the compound at Itaballi Primary School, Lower Mazaruni; \$5 million is allocated there. Repairs to the sanitary block at the Two Miles Primary School will be \$0.750 million or \$750,000. Replacing damaged chain-link mesh around the Bartica Secondary School compound, 1,000 feet of this; replacing the wooden frame and chain-link mesh around the Agatha Primary School compound... There is an allocation to replace broken fixtures and to wash and paint the sanitary block in the Waramadong Secondary School. There is an allocation also to deal with all school compounds, clearing the bushes and shrubs. There is an allocation of \$2.5 million for that. There is an allocation of \$1.5 million for the compound of the Education Department at Bartica; that is the landscaping to the compound. There is an allocation of \$3.5 million for solar lighting fixtures in schools, in fact, general maintenance of those solar panels that we have been making available to schools. There are a number of allocations for general repairs to sanitary block – Kwebenang Primary, Agatha Primary and Chinowieng Primary - a total of \$2.041 million. All in all, we have \$27.3 million available for maintenance of other infrastructure under the Education Programme and being used to treat with a number of compounds and schools and the school surroundings across Region 7.

Dr. Norton: Line item 6133 - Benefits and Allowances: There is an increase of \$13 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what it entails?

Mr. Whittaker: What are captured here are payments of remote area incentives, hard line allowances and station allowances.

Dr. Norton: Under Staffing Details of line item 6111 - Senior Technical - while you have a decrease in two, there is an increase of \$5 million in wages. Could you explain this?

4.05 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, under Senior Technical, two staff were removed; a Senior Master retired and a Regional Administrative Officer was transferred. But whilst that was happening, there was also the promotion of Assistant Masters to Senior Assistant Masters, so the numbers remained the same. There was the promotion of a DES to DEO, so persons already in the system were enjoying larger emoluments and that accounts for the increase.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, line item 6281 - Security Services: revised in 2013 is \$16.989 million; Budget 2014 has \$30 million allocated. Could we ascertain which security company has been awarded the contract, the number of locations to be guarded and the reason for this massive increase?

Mr. Whittaker: The security company is Strategic Security Services; the number of locations is thirteen; and the number of hours varies. In some locations, it is four shifts of eight hours each; in some, it is three maximum shifts. So it is three eight-hour shifts in some and two eight-hour shifts in others. Four eight-hour shifts mean two guards at one time.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, may I be allowed a follow-up? On this occasion, Sir, I am relying on your guidance. I would like you to say if this is permissible. Could I enquire if the identity of the person we know with an interest in that security company is the person who has a charge pending before the court for receiving items reported stolen? I wonder if that question would be permitted.

Mr. Chairman: If it is a matter of public record, you may make a statement, but I do not know whether you want to put it as a question.

Mr. Felix: Yes, I am. But I am seeking your guidance because I do not want to go off track.

Mr. Chairman: If it is a matter public record, I would say yes.

Mr. Felix: I therefore put this question to the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: I am not in a position to answer that, Sir.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, the follow-up question is: how do we superintend public money if we do not know that of a matter which is in the public record over or just about a year. Could the Minister explain why he does not know and cannot answer?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, there are two responses I will give. One is that in terms of supervising the work of our security personnel in the region, that is not confined within the ambit or domain of the security firm. The region has a duty or responsibility to help supervise.

Secondly, I am aware that the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board would have been the authority to ensure that whatever requirements were set out were met. Further, I say no more.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, I shall now, therefore, enquire from the Hon Minister what Government's policy is in award of contracts to security companies.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister answered that question on a previous evening when he said it is the National Tender Board and that his Ministry is not responsible for the identification of contractors. The question was posed I think by Mr. Bulkan, but I may be mistaken. But I remember the question was posed.

Mr. Felix: Therefore, Hon. Minister, there is an absence of coordination because we should not have a situation where such matters involving serious criminal issues can be allowed to escape the entire system.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Felix, what I read a few months ago was that the person has been charged. You are well aware that there is a presumption of innocence; there is no finding of guilt. But, certainly, I think the point you want to make is that it does raise suspicion.

Mr. Felix: It is not only that. If I did something like that, I would have been blacklisted until the case is finally disposed of.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. I believe Mr. Felix's comments are noted.

Ms. Ally: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up on line item 6281 – Security Services: I would like to enquire from the Minister, especially since there is a double up actually for security services, whether the persons involved or in charge of the particular security firm use laptops in their operations.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the Clerk advises me as well that there is a *sub judice* rule.

I do not see that the question arises under any particular line item, Ms. Ally, and I will not invite the Minister to answer that question.

Dr. Cummings: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6292: There is a revision in 2013 of \$198 million. I notice there is a \$3 million increase for the budgetary allocation for the same line item in 2014. Could the Minister explain that?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, from the very outset, let me say we are talking about three secondary school dormitories in the region - Bartica, Three Miles and Waramadong. Again, persons expressing a wish to be involved in this process would have applied through the normal procurement process and applications would have been considered by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board. That Board would have made the determination as to the most responsive bidder.

Dr. Cummings: Would you be able to say, Minister, how many persons we are catering for?

Mr. Whittaker: A total of 750: 120 from Bartica, 198 from Three Miles and 432 from Waramadong.

Dr. Cummings: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. My next question is under line item 6294 – Other. Could you explain the increase from \$517,000 to \$650,000.

Mr. Whittaker: Among the items of expenditure captured under line item 6294 are payments dealing with necessitous cases and also truancy campaigns. This increase is attributed to an intensifying of truancy campaigns in the Region.

Dr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, line item 6284 - Other: There is an increase of approximately \$4 million.

Mr. Whittaker: Under line item 6284 are captured payment of increased stipends to sweeper cleaners, invigilators, and portage fees, like I mentioned earlier on.

Ms. Hastings: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House how many schools in the Upper Mazaruni are earmarked to benefit from this expenditure?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, it is our intention to treat all the schools. I am told 23 schools.

Ms. Baveghems: Cde. Chairman, line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Last year, it was \$3.242 million; in 2014, it is \$6 million. What does it entail, Cde. Minister? How many persons are to benefit?

Mr. Whittaker: The training, Mr. Chairman, is intended to capture persons at varying levels. There are training programmes that target parents. There are parent seminars on school health, nutrition and welfare matters, which target 30 persons. Then there is multi-grade training for teachers, which targets 70 persons. There is also literacy and numeracy workshops for nursery teachers, which target 40 teachers. And there is parenting seminar on proper parenting skills targeting 90 persons. There is also a literacy and numeracy workshop that take us to Upper Mazaruni targeting 20 persons, and one for Lower and Middle Mazaruni, targeting 25 persons. So this is not limited to the centre. Also, there is work study orientation; we are not only going to the teachers, but are embracing the students too – 120 persons. There is work study attachment of 80 students captured under this line item. There is record keeping for senior teachers and 20 persons will be targeted. There is special training for Math and English teachers at the Grades 7 and 9 levels. So it is widespread and targets a significant number of those involved in education delivery in the region.

Ms. Baveghems: Cde. Minister, Other Goods and Services Purchased: From \$40 million in 2013 to \$57 million in 2014, could you say what are the goods and services?

Mr. Whittaker: I did not quite get that line item.

Ms. Baveghems: It just has “Other Goods and Services Purchased”. There is no line item.

Mr. Whittaker: If I heard well and it is line item 6284 to which the Hon. Member alludes, then, Mr. Chairman, under that line item, we pay sweeper/cleaners, invigilators of examinations, portage for persons who help to remove supplies in and out of the Region, and temporary security for boats and vehicles.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$875,384,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$57,770,000

Ms. Hastings: Mr. Chairman, project code 2402100 entails purchase of boats and outboard engines. My questions to the Minister are: how many boats and engines do you plan to purchase? And which schools or institutions will be the beneficiaries?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, two outboard engines and two wooden boats will be acquired – dugout at 25ft. The 45 horsepower engine will go the community of Kamarang and the 25 horsepower engine to Chinowieng Primary.

Ms. Hastings: Project code 2507600: Could the Hon. Minister say which schools and how much? Could he give me a breakdown of those projects that include purchase of school furniture, equipment, cupboards, nursery sets, outdoor playing equipment, *et cetera*?

Mr. Whittaker: Under this particular line item, \$1 million will be spent; that is allocated. Four beds will be acquired and this is for the Teachers' Quarters at Issano, Isseneru, Kangaruma and Arau Primary Schools. Four dinette sets, four single wardrobes and four gas stoves for the same four will be acquired.

Ms. Hastings: Could you tell me which nursery schools will be the beneficiaries of outdoor playing equipment from the same project code?

Mr. Whittaker: The outdoor playing equipment sets, three in number, will go to Hill View Nursery, Paruima Nursery and Waramadong Nursery.

Ms. Hastings: A follow-up: I remember last year, if I am correct, that we had intentions and it was budgeted for Philippi and Jawalla Nursery Schools to obtain outdoor playing equipment for the nursery schools but, to this date, there is none. So I would like to know if there is any allocation made for this.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the four nursery schools to which the Hon. Member referred - Kamarang, Jawalla, Kako and Philippi - I am informed that the play sets have been collected and are at Ogle; arrangements are being made to have them flown in. These are fibre glass play set. Fibre glass is not handled in any manner. It has to be carefully handled.

Ms. Hastings: Thank you, Minister. Project code 1204100 entails a number of activities or projects to be undertaken. Could the Hon. Minister give me a breakdown of the cost attached to each project?

Mr. Whittaker: Under project 1204100 is an allocation of \$43.5 million. There are a number of rollover projects – Itaballi Primary, Kaburi Primary, St. John’s Primary, the storage bond at the education office and the one at Precious James Nursery. Some of the money is retention, about \$6 million.

We also have an extension of the Chinowieng Primary School, 20ft by 20ft; \$5.570 million is allocated. We all know the existing structure is inadequate. There is the primary school in Kartabu in Middle Mazaruni and some extension work will be done there too, 25 ft by 20 ft. That school has an enrolment of 78 students along with four teachers. Imbaimadai, Upper Mazaruni: there will be an extension there. The school has 90 enrolled students with four teachers. Added to that is the fact that we have been constructing a teachers’ quarters at Issano in the Middle Mazaruni area and constructing sanitary blocks to replace pit latrines at Paruima Primary in the Upper Mazaruni and Itaballi Primary in the Middle Mazaruni.

Ms. Hastings: Thank you. What is the estimated cost?

Mr. Whittaker: The total cost for all of this is \$43.5 million; that is the estimated cost.

Dr. Norton: Just a follows-up, Mr. Chairman: Could the Hon. Minister say if it is a policy on the part of the Government to continue to build latrines in the school facilities rather than flush toilets as is done on the coast, particularly because, in some villages, water is not a problem?

Mr. Chairman: And, Dr. Norton, I believe in last year's budget presentations, there was an undertaking given that we had seen the end of pit latrines. That is my belief.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, what I just spoke about, sanitary blocks in Itaballi, is replacing pit latrines with sanitary blocks - the type you are talking about.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much for that, Mr. Minister; the children would appreciate it.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$57,770,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$323,707,000

Ms. Hastings: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is an increase by five. Could the Minister give the designations and the emoluments of the five persons?

Mr. Whittaker: A number of employees left the service and a number were hired, hence there was a net outflow or inflow of five. Those who left are: a Porter, who resigned, with a salary of \$50,000; a Field Assistant and a Health Care Attendant resigned and were both receiving \$43,137 per month. Then a number of persons were hired: a Ward Maid with salary of \$45,131; two Nurse Aids with salary of \$43,137 each; one Rehab Assistant with a salary of \$63,256; one Operator/Inspector with a salary of \$57,379; one Boat Hand with a salary of \$46,628; one Dental Aid with a salary of \$41,083; and a Community Health Worker with a salary of \$57,379.

Ms. Hastings: Thank you, Cde. Minister. Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister explain what other infrastructure?

4.35 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: Under “Maintenance of Other Infrastructure”, emergency repairs to remove all defective timbers and to be replaced with new materials at the landing and wharf of the Kamarang District Hospital will be done, \$1.5 million is allocated for that; repairs to the storage bond and walkway of the Kamarang District Hospital, \$5 million is allocated; repairs to infrastructure, including the incinerator, fence and concrete strip to the Bartica District Hospital,

\$3 million dollars. There is a provision of \$4.5 million to clear all health compounds and it will be done at the Lower, Middle and Upper Mazaruni areas. There is \$3.6 million earmarked for the maintenance of solar panels and batteries, at all the health facilities within the region.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$323,707,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$54,995,000

Dr. Norton: The project 2801300, Other Equipment: Could the Hon. Minister say if the solar systems there are for lighting purposes only or for refrigeration as well?

Mr. Whittaker: It is for refrigeration. The systems, two in all, will be at Kartabo and at Wineperu.

Dr. Norton: Under project 2402100, Land and Water Transport, could the Hon. Minister say what is the cost of the ambulance earmarked to be bought there?

Mr. Whittaker: The cost of the ambulance is \$11 million.

Dr. Norton: I imagine this will not be as the one being bought for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation which is earmarked here for \$8 million dollars. What is the difference?

Mr. Whittaker: I wish to affirm that the cost of the ambulance is \$11 million and it is not of the same type as the one for \$8 million, to which the Hon. Member referred.

Dr. Norton: Because it is health, could I ask under that same project 2402100 if the boat and engine earmarked any water ambulance services or is it entirely different?

Mr. Whittaker: It is not for ambulance services. In fact, one of the engines is a 40-horsepower (hp), which is earmarked for the Kamarang District Hospital. There are two 15-hp engines, one for Batavia Health Post and the other for Jawalla Health Post. There will also be wooden boats, which is called bateau, 16 feet x 3½ feet in dimensions.

Dr. Norton: The All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), mentioned under that project, will be earmarked for which area?

Mr. Whittaker: In fact, Hon. Member, please take the “s” off since there is only one ATV and, it is for the Bartica District Hospital.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under the line item Furniture and Equipment - Health, there are 11 pieces of equipment. Could the Hon. Minister say in which area of the region will these equipment be earmarked for?

Mr. Whittaker: The Bartica District Hospital will benefit and so too will the Kamarang District Hospital, Wax Creek, Welalieng, Batavia, Jawalla and Isseneru Health Posts. For example, the examination beds, eight will be procured and distributed among Bartica and Kamarang District Hospitals, Wax Creek, Welalieng, Batavia, 72 miles, Jawalla and the Isseneru Health Posts. Four delivery beds will go to Jawalla, Isseneru, Wax Creek and Welalieng Health Posts. Six filing cabinets will be distributed to the Kamarang and Bartica District Hospitals and Waramadong Health Post; they will get two each. There will also be, for example, drip tables, bedside tables and portable infant warmers, which will be distributed between the Bartica and Kamarang District Hospitals. Blood storage, a refrigerator, haematology machines and X-ray film hoopers will be distributed to the Bartica District Hospital.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$54,995,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this concludes our review of the Estimates for Region 7. Again, it is a bit gruelling, but I thank the Minister, the Members and the staff for their patience. I propose that we commence Region 8 and work until 5 p.m. and then take a suspension for one hour. Thanks very much to those of you who assisted with Region 7. I invite the Minister’s staff, for the Region 8 review, to gather.

Agency: 78 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$70,673,000

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: Could the Minister provide a list of 20 employees, not necessarily their names, but their designations and emoluments? Outside of that, could the Minister orally advise us on what the designations are of the three top paid employees and their emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: The top three contracted employees would be the two District Development Officers (DDOs), DDO I and DDO II, and the Personnel Officer. The DDOs emoluments are \$72,823 and the Personnel Officer is \$62,249. We can provide the list.

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: Similarly, could the Minister be kind enough to provide a list of all these expenses amounting to the \$15.5 million? Could the Minister also advise us whether this line item caters for meetings of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) and, if so, how many meetings are catered for?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency, provides for payment of emoluments and stipends to 15 Toshoas, 15 Deputy Toshoas, five Senior Councillors and 13 Regional Democratic Councillors. A total of \$10,860,000 is provided to meet those expenses. RDC meetings are expected for which the amount of \$2,700,000 is provided and it works out to the cost of \$540,000 per meeting.

There is also a provision for the payment of subsistence of Chairman and Vice Chairman as the move about doing their duties in other parts of the region. That is \$989,000 to meet the cost associated with their movement around the region. Added to those, there is \$1 million provided for fuel, vehicular spares, utilities, stationeries and the lot. It is to \$15.5 million under Expenses Specific to the Agency.

It should also be noted that the RDC meetings would normally be held over a two-day period. Even though it is five, one might be tempted to say that other regions have twelve and six. It does go on for a little while.

Mr. Bulkan: Clarification please. Is the Minister saying that the sum of \$500,000 is allocated for each RDC meeting?

Mr. Whittaker: I said that \$2,700,000 is allocated for RDC meetings. When it is divided by five it works out to \$540, 000 per meeting. Some meetings could well be less. It depends on where

the meeting is being held. If we go into the far-flung areas to hold all five meetings the money will be exhausted in no time. It depends on where we hold our meetings.

Mr. Bulkan: Similarly Mr. Minister, through the Chairman, this region is divided into two subregions, Subregion 1, which is North Pakaraimas, and Subregion 2. If meetings of the RDC are going to be held in Subregion 1 I do not think \$500,000 could remotely cover the cost of holding a RDC meeting in the North Pakaraimas.

Mr. Whittaker: I am told that the next meeting of this RDC is in Paramakatoi, but I would like to draw attention to the fact that other hinterland regions face similar challenges. For example, in Region 1, we would want to hold meetings in the Mabaruma subregion, Moruka subregion, Matarkai subregions or even to go to Baramita to hold meeting, but we are limited by the resources. I am aware that there is a situation where they would hold at least one meeting in Moruka and one in Matarkai to ensure that there is widespread participation of the people.

Mr. Bulkan: If I may be permitted to make a comment, Mr. Chairman. Last year only three meetings of the RDC were held and when the Regional Chairman sought to hold a fourth meeting in December he was informed by the REO that the funds were exhausted. My question to the Minister is whether this was taken into account and whether the budgetary allocation was increased to see that, at minimum, there can be four meetings of the RDC, if not...

Mr. Chairman: Could you guide the Assembly, Hon. Member, on how much money was allocated for last year's meetings? Can you recall?

Hon. Members (Opposition): Fourteen million dollars.

Mr. Chairman: Was it \$14 million for three meetings? Are there any other questions?

Ms. Marcello: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say which buildings are earmarked to be maintained under this allocation?

Mr. Whittaker: 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: There is an allocation of \$3 million which will be spent on four projects - repairs to the staff quarters of the REOs at Mahdia, repairs to the Regional Chairman's quarters at Mahdia; repairs to the Regional Vice Chairman's quarters at Kato and repairs to the Assistant Accountant's quarters at Mahdia.

Ms. Marcello: Let me refer the Minister to line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Services. Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles are available at the admin office and how many are in working condition?

Mr. Whittaker: I have here listed eight and only one is deemed unserviceable, an ATV, which is stationed at Kato and it is reflected here as being some four-plus years old. All the others, including the 4x4, PNN 5905, which is approximately three years old, is based at Mahdia, are in working. A new ATV is also working at Mahdia and it is part of a pool. These vehicles are in a pool as distinct from being assigned to a specific person. An ATV, CG 5131, which is just about a year old, is at Kato and it is normally used by the Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO). There is an ATV in Mahdia, CG 5129, it is one-year-old, working well and is assigned to the Regional Chairman; there is another ATV, which is three-years-old, is in Kato and the Regional Vice Chairman has custody and use of that; there is another ATV, CF 5840, at Kurukabaru and the DDO would normally use that; there is another ATV at Monkey Mountain and one of the DDOs would also use that. I will also add that there is a generator, it is working, at Mahdia, and it is used by the administration.

Ms. Marcello: Could the Minister please provide me with the list? Let me refer him to line item 6281, Security Services. Could the Hon. Minister say how many security personnel are under this admin?

Mr. Whittaker: Security services are provided here, in the administrative compound of Mahdia. There are two security guards and two shifts. The security service used is Strategic Action Security.

Ms. Marcello: How many hours of security are provided?

Mr. Whittaker: It is two eight-hour shifts and the rate is \$300 per hour.

Ms. Marcello: I refer the Minister to line item 6293, Refreshments and Meals: Could the Hon. Minister say who benefits from this allocation?

Mr. Whittaker: This is normally provided during departmental meetings, so that the staff, who would normally be the participants at these meetings, will, in large measure, benefit. It is also

used to provide some refreshments for staff working beyond the normal call of duty, such as during their lunch or a bit late in the afternoon.

Ms. Marcello: I then refer the Minister to line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarship). Who benefits from this allocation? Could the Minister tell us?

Mr. Whittaker: This provision is for additional training courses provided by the Public Service Management (PSM), primarily in the area of Supervisory Management, Human Resource Management, Office Practice and even Information Technology (IT). It is for new and existing staff. Specifically, it targets the staff in the Accounts Department and Secretarial Department, such as Office Assistant, Radio Operator and Secretary — the administrative staff generally.

Ms. Marcello: Could I refer the Minister back to line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances, \$591,000? Who benefits from this allocation?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6133 is for the station allowance for a Confidential Secretary.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Hon. Minister, could you give us details for the \$4 million please?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6261 is for Local Travel and Subsistence. This caters for field visits, going out into these communities, far-flung areas, for example, Kaibarupai. It is also used to offset the expense of the administrative staff, for pay changes, meals and accommodation for the AREO and the DDO, as they move around, and for the drivers. That is the nature of the expenses.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage: There is another \$4 million here. Could the Minister please give details on this?

Mr. Whittaker: Well, this is an extension of what we just referred to. This deals with air travel, chartering, coming on the regular flights, transporting capital items, for example, it is if two brush cutters are purchased and they have to be taken in there; payment for staff who have to travel to Georgetown for varying reasons; and it is also used for community monitoring and outreach visits.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Could the Minister please provide us with a list, on a quarterly basis, of how this money is spent, for this line item and line item 6261?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, as to the request for a quarterly list of how the money is spent, what I would suggest is that that could come under one of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committees or you may ask questions on a quarterly basis, regarding various projects. The Committee of Supply will not be sitting again for another year, so a Member may ask questions in-between the year on any project or any item that came up during budget by oral questions or questions to be put in writing. For Ministers to put in quarterly reports, this Committee is not in existence throughout the year.

Mr. T. Williams: I wish to bring the Hon. Minister's attention back to line item 6264. My question is: Is the Chairman of Region 8 the only Chairman in this country without a vehicle assigned to him, an enclosed vehicle, a 4x4 pickup or some sort, not the ATV he drives?

Mr. Chairman: I did note that in the array of vehicles and their assignments I did not hear the Chairman's name mentioned there, whether with an ATV, a bicycle or anything, so I was wondering.

Mr. Whittaker: I did mention that the Chairman of Region 8 and the Vice Chairman are both recipients of ATV which, based on my knowledge and experience, is the most suited mode of transportation.

Mr. Chairman: There are other vehicles assigned to that region and you are saying that the best suited vehicle for the Chairman and Deputy Chairman is an ATV, but for other persons, they have other vehicles which are better suited for them.

Mr. Whittaker: I am not saying that. Mr. Chairman, I am saying that vehicles assigned to the region are placed in a pool. If the education department wants to go out on an exercise or a visit, it will approach the REO and a vehicle from the pool will be assigned.

I am saying also that there is – I am just dealing with what is – an ATV assigned to the Regional Chairman and there is an ATV assigned to the Vice Chairman. If the Regional Chairman wishes to move around and to move differently and if a pickup or another vehicle is available, it can be made available.

Mr. T. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister say if the previous Regional Chairman was given the same ATV as the present Regional Chairman? Is that the custom and trend for all Regional Chairmen in Region 8 or do some Regional Chairmen get 4x4s?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have specific information as to the type of vehicle used by the previous Chairman?

Mr. T. Williams: I am not certain. I wish to know, because there is a feeling by many that the current Chairman is being stifled.

Mr. Chairman: I was asking if any other Member is aware if whether the previous Chairman had a different type of vehicle. Then the question would be if that is so, why is this Chairman not receiving the same benefit?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I wish to point out to the National Assembly that the previous Chairman, Senor Bell, used an ATV, and an old one at that. Any information that states differently cannot be accurate.

Secondly, I want to draw attention to the fact, that as I said, because of the limited resources, whatever facilities available, are put in a pool. Only yesterday, I think it was, or Saturday, the Regional Chairman made a request and a pickup vehicle went to Mango Landing to collect and move him to Mahdia. One time I was at Kopinang and I made arrangements to pick up the Chairman at Mahdia and bring him across, but as fate would have it, the weather was so bad, the pilot ...

The point is we do not have vehicles assigned to specific officers because of the resources, nature and terrain. I move around that region and I and many other officers find that it is better and safer to use the ATV.

Mr. T. Williams: I am still following up. My question to the Hon. Minister: Is a vehicle, 4x4, assigned to the REO?

5.05 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is no.

Mr. T. Williams: My next question is: Can the Regional Chairman, in time of necessity, request the use of any of the 4x4, in the pool, to carry out his duties in Region 8?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer, again, Mr. Chairman, is yes.

Mr. Ramjattan: Who is in charge of making the final decision as to which vehicle should be used?

Mr. Whittaker: It is the REO who is the custodian of the state's assets in the region and who is the Chief Executive Officer in the region. He is also the Accounting Officer. He has to account for all of the assets in the region.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$70,673,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Members, I believe that this an appropriate time for us to take the suspension. We will resume at 6 p.m. to consider the capital expenditures for Programme 781.

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 5.06 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.06 p.m.

In Committee of Supply

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$11,000,000

Mr. Trotman: Project 1209000, Buildings – Administration: This project entails extension of administration office at Kato. I wonder if the Minister can tell us: What is the size of the present building and what is the proposed extension?

Mr. Whittaker: The size of the present building is 60ft x 20ft. The proposed extension is 20ft x 30ft.

Ms. Williams: Project 1209100, Furniture and Equipment – Staff Quarters: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what equipment he intends to purchase under this head and for where?

Mr. Whittaker: It would be for five beds for the Kato's guest house and this is to furnish the new bedrooms and also to replace the broken beds; two tables, one for Kato's guest house and one for Mahdia's guest house and those are to replace broken tables; two refrigerators, one for Mahdia administration office and the other for the Mahdia's guest house, two suites for the Kato's guest house and this is to replace exiting furniture.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$11,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 782 –Public Works - \$102,331,000

Mr. Trotman: I would like to direction attention to a number of line items that we can deal with at the same time. They are line items 6251 to 6255. This is a question I am proposing to be asking several times as we go through the Estimates. There are listed a number of things to be done under these heads and, again, the absence of information is what strikes me about this. I am asking you to make available to this honourable House a list of all of the works that are to be done under the various heads that I have listed, including all of the pertinent information in relation to these matters.

Mr. Whittaker: The Hon. Member requested some pertinent information or that I consider to be pertinent, the projects, where they are proposed to be cited, the estimated cost and the funds allocated. For example, the public works roads – Kato to Chieung, Mountain Foot to Taruka, Tuseneng to Yawong, Waipa to Kaibarupai, Yawong to Bamboo Creek and Mahdia itself where we plan to do significant road works.

It is important to note that the village will be involved in these works. In fact, what is proposed is that all of the works to which I just referred will be done by the village council. That information is here and will be provided.

With respect to the bridges, at line item 6252, repairs will be done to Monkey Mountain Bridge, that is a timber bridge; repairs to Tuseneng ATV trail bridge, the Tuseneng council will do that; rehabilitation to the Princeville Bridge; rehabilitation of Maikwak Bridge and rehabilitation of Orinduik Bridge. These are the five bridges that will be done under public works bridges.

There are significant drainage and irrigation works - the clearing of the Yawong Creek, the clearing of the Itabu Creek, the Chieung Creek, clearing of drains at Mahdia, clearing of the Salbora Creek and clearing of Kopinang Creek.

Sea and river defences: We expect to do significant work in the rehab of the Echilebar revetment, this measures 15ft. on all four sides of the bridge. It will be timber revetment, king piles and tie rods being used. Then we have the rehabilitation of the Tuseneng revetment.

Under Other Infrastructure, there will be rehabilitation to the lights in the admin compound at Mahdia, rehab to the trestle at Kato guest house, the concreting of the engineers' quarters at Mahdia and the backfilling of staff quarters' yard occupied by the overseer.

These are the major works that are planned for the RDC under the programmes of Public Works, Roads, Bridges, Drainage and Irrigation, River and Sea Defence and Other Infrastructure.

Mr. Trotman: I will expect that when this information is given that it should also have the individual cost of each aspect of those works because that is also important.

Mr. Whittaker: You cannot get the individual cost. We would not know that. What you will get is the individual provision, the estimated cost.

Mr. Trotman: If you are doing a road, Chairman, you would have determined what length of the road you are going to..., whether it is the entire length of the road and you will have a sense of...

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, we will provide the estimated cost. The determination of the final cost has to be at the completion of the project.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I would like to follow up on the question asked by my honourable friend Mr. Trotman with regard to these line items, 6251 to 6255, and I recognise that these will go over into capital as well. The concerns with which has been expressed, I want to find out whether,

specifically under this line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, if the maintenance of the inner Mahdia roads are provided for. I will ask that same question, if you will forgive me for being repetitious, in relation to capital expenditure, because, for me, last year we were told that the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment would have some type of engagement with regard to the inner roads and those remain - I have been to Mahdia - an eyesore. It is the most despicable part of what ought to have been a growing mining town.

Mr. Chairman: Which road is it, from Mango Landing into Mahdia?

Mr. Nagamootoo: It is inner. That is a different part. This is within the community itself.

Mr. Whittaker: The information I have is that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment will, indeed, through GGMC, be doing work in that area. That is from the Brian Sucre Junction all the way to Mahdia. I am told that it has already started examining the design for asphaltic roads in the Mahdia area. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is going to be doing some work, from the Brian Sucre Junction all the way to Mahdia. The RDC will also be doing its own internal work in the Mahdia area.

Mr. Nagamootoo: We heard that. I said that it was mentioned last year and we heard almost every single word the Hon. Minister said last year but we are now aware that the work has progressed.

On that head, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, my question through you, Sir, would be in, terms of other infrastructure, is there any plan to do maintenance of the Salbora water system? I know that that system provides water for Mahdia to Campbelltown. [**Mr. Benn:** That is grandstanding.] I do not know if this is grandstanding, but I think that this is our job. We are paid to interrogate the Ministers on how moneys of the people are spent. This National Assembly is in charge of the people's purse and I take exception to Minister Benn giving that "bend answer" to say that this is grandstanding. This is outrageous.

Mr. Chairman: I do not think that it merits a response, Minister.

Minister of Public Work [Mr. Benn]: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister did give that answer before.

Mr. Chairman: This Minister is quite capable of defending himself. He has been doing an excellent job for the last two days.

Mr. Benn: It is not a matter of defence; it is repetition.

Mr. Chairman: He can defend himself and the Minister has cried out for protection. He has been doing an admirable job, I must say. I know that you feel a sense that advantage may be taken but the Chairman is there to protect him.

Mr. Whittaker: Under Drainage and Irrigation, significant work is going to be done in the dredging or clearing of the Salbora Creek, the reservoir. As a result of that we ought to have a better flow of water, in fact, a greater volume of water, so that accessibility will be significantly improved.

Mr. Bulkan: My questions are follow-ups to those asked by the Hon. Members Trotman and Nagamootoo and we have already received most of the answers. What I would like to ask the Hon. Minister - I imagine that this will be subjected to your guidance – is that these very same line items, 6251 to 6255, Maintenance of Infrastructure, I am looking at the total provision of \$53.8 million. I note that this provision is actually less than last year's provision and, in fact, it is even less than the previous year's projection, so I wonder if the Hon. Minister is in the position to have an explanation as to why all of the budgetary allocations under public works for this entire region is actually less than it was in the last two years.

Mr. Whittaker: This is because some of this work that was, prior to now, being channelled under the programme Public Works is now being channelled under the programme Regional Administration and Finance. I pointed that out before. It is in keeping with the programme budgeted.

Mr. Bulkan: There is certainly no significant budgetary allocation under the programme Regional Administration and Finance for the maintenance of infrastructure. In fact, if I can direct the Minister's attention to the capital programme for Public Works, here, again, we see the same phenomenon that the budgetary provision for capital works under Public Works is less in 2014 than it was in 2013. My question to Minister is if there is a reason or an explanation for this.

Mr. Whittaker: I am guided by this document that I have here in my hand and I guess the Hon. Member is guided by this also. It shows, under the programme Public Works, maintenance of infrastructure, yes, \$53.8 million. The Hon. Member is saying that the year before it was \$55.8 million. I am saying to him that if he looks at the programme Regional Administration and Finance he will see, under “Maintenance of Other Infrastructure”, \$2 million and that accounts for the difference to which he speaks.

Mr. Bulkan: If we add the two figures what we actually get is that the figure is unchanged; it is static.

The Hon. Minister said, a short while ago, that under these allocations what is expected to be done to Salbora is maintenance work to the Salbora reservoir. What the residents of Mahdia would like to find out is if these anticipated works are going to result in the provision of adequate water supply to Mahdia on a regular and reliable basis.

Ms. Marcello: Let refer the Minister to line item 6116, Contracted Employees: The number remains the same but the allocation has reduced from 75, could we get an explanation on that?

Mr. Whittaker: In November, 2013 all the balances, under this chart of account, were exhausted due to increases in salary. Moneys were warranted to this line item from “Other” chart of account, so that the budgeted sum for this line reflects the total amount now required for 2014.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Hon. Minister, \$2 million is allocated here. I am aware that there is a public works committee within the region, will this figure cover its travelling through the region or just around Mahdia or not at all?

Mr. Whittaker: It is enough, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I am asking if it is with this figure the public works committee gets its allowance from to travel around the region.

Mr. Whittaker: The RDC works committee is covered under expenses specific to the agency, line item 6211.

Mr. Bulkan: I would like to return to the question of the maintenance and rehabilitation of roads and to the answer that the Minister gave a short while ago. The Minister said that the Ministry of

Natural Resource and Environment/GGMC will be looking after the maintenance of the road from Mango Landing into Mahdia as well as the internal roads in Mahdia. My question to the Hon. Minister is whether he is a position to advise the House on how much money has been budgeted for these two activities and whether there is a timetable for when these works are expected to commence.

Mr. Whittaker: There are three questions. First of all, I did not say Bamboo Landing...

Mr. Bulkan: I said Mango Landing; I did not say Bamboo Landing.

Mr. Whittaker: I said Sucre Junction, Brian Sucre Junction to Mahdia. Secondly, I am not in a position to say how much money and I am not in a position to give the Hon. Member a timetable.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, that is what the Minister led us to believe a short while ago, that he was in possession of these information.

Mr. Whittaker: I said so because I am not the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

Hon. Members (Government): He never said that.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister did say that the works will be undertaken by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the GGMC and therefore, in that sense, this Minister would not be in possession of those detailed sums. That is understandable.

Mr. T. Williams: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: I wish to ask the Hon. Minister what distance, if any, of the roads from Mango Landing to Mahdia is maintained by Mekdeci Mining Company (MMC)?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I cannot answer that question.

Mr. T. Williams: It is the same line item. Is MMC responsible for maintenance for any stretch of the road on either side of the Essequibo River?

Mr. Chairman: I have seen MMC from the Mabura Hill down to the landing but I am not sure.

Mr. Whittaker: I would like, again, to say to this Assembly that that road, to which the Hon. Member refers, that portion of work, does not fall under the RDC, Region 8 or the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$102,331,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$48,300,000

Mr. Nagamootoo: The roads I looked at here, the constructions of roads and drains, and I am told that those are Taruka, Maikwak and Chenapau in that area. Here I have not seen any reference at all to inner Mahdia. In fact, now that the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources and Environment is here - I know that he will come tomorrow - I just want to let him know what his honourable colleague has said. I peruse the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to see if there is any reference at all to roads being built in inner Mahdia or from the Brian Sucre Junction to Mahdia or that there is any collaboration between GGMC and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, so there is a chasm and maybe Your Honour will advise me that I need to wait until the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources and Environment...

Mr. Chairman: You are so advised.

6.31 p.m.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Nagamootoo: But I just want to point out that now is the time for the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development...

Mr. Chairman: No, the Minister is not to be questioned now.

Mr. Nagamootoo: No, I am just saying that maybe this is an opportunity for the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development to say whether the allocation here under project code 1401200 would include works to be done in Mahdia. I am being told that I am

grandstanding for trying as best as I could to represent the people of Mahdia. Of course, the Alliance For Change (AFC) has the privilege of being the Chair of that region.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I would like to give the Committee details of the road work we will be doing: Taruka to Paramakatoi – four miles, Maikwak to Paramakatoi – five miles of work – not in distance, but the work that we will be doing, and Chenapau to Paramakatoi – four miles. In relation to the drains in Mahdia, we will be spending money on the drains in the area of the Gas Station Road. We will be constructing reinforced concrete drains there. Those are the road works we will be doing.

Ms. Marcello: Project code 2402200 - Land and Water Transport: It states purchase of a vehicle. What kind of vehicle will be purchased, for where and at what cost will it be purchased?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, we will be procuring an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and this would be used in the Public Works Department for monitoring projects, inspections, *et cetera*, of the Salbora water line.

Ms. Marcello: Minister, I am seeing ATVs.

Mr. Whittaker: It is all terrain vehicle.

Ms. Marcello: It is vehicles with an “s”.

Mr. Whittaker: It is singular. It states purchase of “vehicle”. I am saying we are purchasing an all terrain vehicle.

Ms. Marcello: Right here in Volume 3, it has “vehicles” – ATVs.

Mr. Chairman: It does state “vehicle”.

Ms. Marcello: The Volume 3 states ATVs, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. Is it project code 2402200?

Ms. Marcello: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: It states: purchase of vehicle - \$2.3 million.

Ms. Marcello: Volume 3 has ATVs.

Mr. Chairman: I know, but we are dealing with what is on page 469.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 1401200 – Roads: Could the Hon. Prime Minister say how much money will be allocated to the various roads – the four miles, five miles and four miles – and how much money will be allocated to the Mahdia stretch of road at the gas station and the drains?

Mr. Whittaker: The total allocation is \$26 million. The Taruka/Paramakatoi leg is \$9 million; Maikwak to Paramakatoi is \$8 million and Chenapau to Paramakatoi is \$8 million.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: The last time I visited Mahdia, I had a very good meeting with the Regional Chairman and he let me know that the Mahdia roads, all from the airstrip and right around the internal Mahdia, would be taken care of and budgeted for in this Budget. I am not seeing that.

Mr. Chairman: The question is: Is there a reason why this is not catered for?

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Yes, is there a reason why?

An Hon. Member: *[Inaudible]*.

Mr. Chairman: Pardon? Well, I see the Minister conferring so obviously he discerned the very question I did. You are in a position to say anything, sir, if you can.

Mr. Whittaker: Some \$2 million will be spent by the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) for infrastructural works in Mahdia; \$1 million, which I alluded to earlier on, will be spent for dealing with the drains to have improved drainage. That is under this capital programme. Under the current programme, using the region's machinery, a further million dollars will be spent on the internal roads in the Mahdia area.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: A follow-up question on that: Will it be pitch roads? What materials will be used?

Mr. Whittaker: It will be compacted *laterite* surface, I am told.

Mr. Chairman: It will be compacted *laterite* surface, Mrs. Garrido-Lowe.

Programme: 782 - Public Works - \$48,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 783 - Education Delivery - \$454,621,000

Ms. Marcello: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: I realise that there is an increase of five. Could the Hon. Minister say what the positions are and what the emoluments are?

Mr. Whittaker: Five Assistant Masters (AMs) were upgraded from Temporary Qualified Masters (TQMs).

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Some \$15 million is allocated. Could the Hon. Minister give us details on this? I would like the Minister to put it in writing. I would appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Mr. Whittaker: This amount of \$15.992 million would be used to: effect repairs to the Mahdia teachers' quarters fence and \$2.5 million is allocated; rehabilitate the Monkey Mountain School fence - \$7 million; rehabilitate the septic tank at the teachers' quarters in Mahdia - \$1 million; rehabilitate the water system at the teachers' quarters at Mahdia - \$500,000; rehabilitate the fence at Kanapang - \$3 million; rehabilitate the Mahdia Primary School toilet - \$1 million; and concrete the dormitory - \$992,000.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Mr. Chairman, I just want to repeat that I would like to have it in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the request is for that information to be provided in written form.

Mr. Whittaker: Will do.

Mr. Chairman: Noted. Thank you.

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6116: I notice that there is a reduction in the number of contracted employees by three but there is an increase in the appropriated sum of \$11 million. Could the Minister please explain this?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, primarily, there are two factors that occasioned the significant change to which the Member referred. One has to do with the appointment of three staff – two cooks at the salary of \$39,450 each and a supervisor of household service at a salary of \$39,450 more.

The other factor is that in November, 2013, all banisters at this chart of account were used to supplement line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances - and this was as a result of a 50% increase in hard lying and station allowances. So, money was used. All balances, including the ones that we are looking at, were used to augment line item 6133. A warrant was received from the Ministry of Finance, from line item 6141, to offset at December, 2013; the warranted amount is now reflected in the Ministry of Finance under line item 6141. So, the current amount on this chart of account reflects those moneys.

Ms. Ferguson: Allow me to direct the Minister to line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants. I notice in 2013 there was a revised amount. However, in 2014, a large amount is budgeted here. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for this increase, please?

Mr. Whittaker: This additional sum has to cater for power generation for an additional 12 hours. The Hon. Member may recall that whereas Mahdia Power and Light used to provide 24-hour electricity, that is no longer the case and so the RDC is required to provide for the additional 12 hours of generation. This is not only at Mahdia. We have also the scenario at Paramakatoi, so, this provision caters for additional hours of generation for the Paramakatoi School and that is to support the Information Technology (IT) programme, four drums of dieseline, one drum of gas for the District Education Officer to do more monitoring, \$300,000 to pay for firewood for the dormitory kitchen and also to provide fuel for a pickup and an ATV. So, there are a number of factors, primary ones being to provide for 12 hours of electricity, because Mahdia Power and Light is no longer providing 24 hours of electricity, and to cater for additional hours of generation at Paramakatoi School to support the IT programme.

Ms. Ferguson: What is the current fleet of vehicles at the moment, apart from all the other explanations he would have given?

Mr. Chairman: Is it for Region 8?

Ms. Ferguson: I am asking about the fleet of vehicles under this particular programme of Education Delivery.

Mr. Whittaker: Under Education Delivery, fuel has to be provided for a 4x4 - PRR 7149, an ATV - CG 7430 and for the generator at the Paramakatoi Secondary School.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6284 – Other: There is \$13.5 million earmarked here. Hon. Minister, could you kindly give us details on this?

Mr. Whittaker: The amount of \$13.5 million under line item 6284 – Other - is to cater for stipend to be paid to 28 volunteer teachers at \$35,000 each per month and six of them at \$49,000 each. It is under this line item we also pay for invigilators and supervisors for the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examinations and, also, we pay three cleaners.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6292: There was an increase of \$1 million for dietary. Could you kindly detail this?

Mr. Whittaker: It is under this allocation that the cost of providing meals, which is dietary, for students in the dormitory in Paramakatoi and Mahdia is met. In Paramakatoi, 236 students are catered for and, in Mahdia, 103 students are catered for.

Ms. Marcello: I am looking at line item 6281 – Security Services. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee how many security personnel there are, where they are located and if they provide 24-hour security?

Mr. Whittaker: The sum provided is to cater for security at the Mahdia dormitories for two shifts at Mahdia Secondary and Primary, Paramakatoi Secondary and the dormitories. The security service provider is Strategic Action Security Service.

Ms. Marcello: What is the number of security personnel? How many security guards are there?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is six – four at Mahdia and two at Paramakatoi.

Programme: 783 - Education Delivery - \$454,621,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 783 - Education Delivery - \$64,322,000

Mr. Trotman: Project code 1204400: I know that this is an ongoing project and, according to the figures here, it is slated for completion this year. In relation to the teachers' quarters at Mahdia, which will be completed this year, I wonder if the Minister could tell us what percentage of the works was completed at the end of December last year, what the cost associated with it was and what the cost of the portion that is to be done is.

Mr. Whittaker: The information I have is that this is a rollover project from 2013. Secondly, the project is 25% complete and, thirdly, we require approval of \$4.460 million to complete the project.

Mr. Trotman: My second question is in relation to the construction of the nursery school at Chieung. Could the Minister give us the cost of this construction and can he also tell us what materials will be used in the construction of the building?

Mr. Whittaker: The estimated cost is \$10.134 million and it is going to be a 36x24 concrete structure.

Mr. Trotman: Minister, in relation to the other two items, could you give us, in writing, what will be the individual costs and the dimensions of all of those buildings?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, for all the others, we have the information here. For the sanitary block at Tuseneng, there is a provision of \$2 million; it is going to be a 5x15 concrete structure; it will house 88 water closets, complete with fresh water supply and septic tanks.

For the construction of a sanitary block at the Paramakatoi Nursery, there is a provision of \$7 million for that and it is a 5x15 concrete structure which will house eight water closets complete.

A 5x15 sanitary block will be constructed at the Kato Primary School.

For the construction of a sanitary block at Monkey Mountain Primary School, \$2 million has been provided for the 5x15 concrete structures.

There will be the construction of a sanitary block at Bamboo Creek Primary School. It will be a 5x15 concrete structure which will house eight closets complete with fresh water supply and septic tanks, inclusive of sinks and urinals.

Mr. Trotman: Thank you, Minister, but I hope that you remember that I asked for those figures in writing.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 2504500 - Furniture and Equipment – Education: Could the Hon. Minister say where all these school furniture – desks and such – will be allocated?

Mr. Whittaker: It will be going to the 27 primary schools and buildings across the Region. It will be going to the Mahdia Nursery, Primary and Secondary, Princeville Primary, Maikobi Primary, El Paso, Chenapau, Bamboo Creek, Chieung, Itabac, Kaibarupai, Kamana, Kanapang, Karisparu, Kato, Kopinang, Kurukabaru, Kurukabaru Annexe, Maikwak, Monkey Mountain, Paramakatoi Primary, Paramakatoi Annexe, Taruka, Tuseneng, Waipa, Sand Hill Annexe, Paramakatoi Secondary, Mora and Paramakatoi Nursery.

Mr. Chairman: Is the list available, Hon. Minister?

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I would like the list to be made available.

Mr. Chairman: That is arranged.

Programme: 783 - Education Delivery - \$64,322,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 784 - Health Services - \$151,203,000

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6116: There is no change. The same number of workers who were present in 2013 – 18 – remains in 2014. The revised allotment for 2013 was \$13.6 million, but there is an increase to \$15 million for 2014. There is no change, yet there is an increase. Could you explain, Hon. Minister?

Mr. Whittaker: Whilst there would have been no change in terms of numbers, several things happened: \$180,000 duty allowance was paid to one of the drivers and there was the payment of vacation allowance and gratuity for four field assistants, so those contributed to the increase.

Ms. Marcello: I am looking at line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - as well as line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of which buildings will be maintained, which “other infrastructure” will be maintained and the allocation attached to it?

7.01 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: The RDC is going to do the rehabilitation of the Waipa Health Post – changing columns, gutters, the plumbing and painting; the rehabilitation of the Paramakatoi Medics Quarters... A question was raised by one of our Members with respect to the Awasawa Health Post and I did commit in the response that we will do it this year and here it is: \$7 million for the rehabilitation of the Awasawa Health Post and there is the balance of \$900,000 to do some rehabilitation works, mostly to enlarge working areas, install sinks, storage units and additional lights at the Mahdia District Hospital. That is \$13.4 million in all.

Ms. Marcello: Thank you. I realised, when I went home for my Christmas vacation, that the Doctors’ Quarters at Paramakatoi need urgent repairs.

Mr. Whittaker: The information I provided is specific. At Paramakatoi, we are going to rehabilitate the Medics’ Quarters.

Ms. Marcello: Is there any provision in this for Doctors’ Quarters?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is no.

Ms. Marcello: I move on to line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. The reason I want to focus on this line item is because, in 2013, we were told that they were supposed to be doing the rehabilitation to Dentists’ Quarters that house the Pharmacy Assistant and the Dental Quarters and also underneath is the Drugs Bond. This building is actually about to fall. Last weekend, the rain fell and the rain actually seeped from the upstairs apartment into the bond and

it was flooded. When the hard winds blow, it actually shakes. This was built some 30 years ago when Mr. Holder was a Medic at Mahdia District Hospital.

Mr. Whittaker: At any given time, if we were to do a needs assessment of what needs to be done, we will come up with so many items which we cannot all do at the same time. This year, under Other Infrastructure, we will repair the Chenapau Health Centre fence and we will also do similar works at the Karisparu Health Centre. That is a total of \$8.3 million.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have exceeded our time for the consideration of Region 8's Estimates. We still have to go to Capital Expenditure.

Programme: 784 - Health Services - \$151,203,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$64,322,000

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 2504800 – Furniture and Equipment – Health - \$14.807 million: The question I would like to put to the Hon. Minister, and I believe that it would be subject to your ruling, is if the Minister is in a position to offer this House any assurance that the equipment to be purchased under this allocation will not suffer the same fate as the ambulance that was purchased from last year's allocation which was sent into Mahdia last week and which we have learned from today's newspaper is a piece of scrap iron or scrap metal. If this equipment will suffer the same fate as... I am referring to today's *Stabroek News*, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Whittaker: All equipment that we are going to purchase is via the procurement process.

Mr. Chairman: So you take what is sent to you.

Mr. Whittaker: Hence, we do not have control over the time.

Mr. Chairman: Are you saying that if you had control, you would have chosen better?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, certainly, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: I see.

Mr. Bulkan: A follow-up, please: The concern, which I think I expressed in my budget presentation, is that as a result of the exclusion of the RDC from the monitoring of the award of these contracts, these undesirable things happen.

Mr. Chairman: Noted.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1204600: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the size and cost of each project and the number of expected beneficiaries?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, will do. We have the construction of the health post at Itabac - \$9 million allocated. It is a concrete structure, 30x30. This will benefit over 400 residents. They will have a consultation room, a malaria room, storage for drugs and a waiting area. It will benefit over 400 residents. Then there is the construction of the health post at Kaibarupai - \$12 million. It is a similar 30x30 structure, but this will benefit over 600 residents.

Dr. Cummings: Project code 1209100 - Furniture and Equipment - Staff Quarters: I notice here that the project description includes a purchase of solar systems. Am I correct? I will like to know if the solar system is for refrigeration or if it is to generate electricity and the number? It states "systems" so I guess it is more than one.

Mr. Whittaker: The solar system is for the purpose of providing electricity to health centres located at Chieung, Itabac, Kaibarupai and Waipa. Over 1,000 residents or more in those four communities will benefit.

Mr. Chairman: This would be our final question on this.

Ms. Marcello: Project code 1209100 - Furniture and Equipment - Staff Quarters: I realise that there is intent to purchase numerous stuff under this heading such as radio sets and others, but I realise too that they have included dental chairs, electrocardiography (ECG) machines, ultrasound machine and so on; that was outlined in last year's budget so I want to know if this is additional to what they purchased last year or if they ever purchased any at all.

Mr. Whittaker: This is additional equipment that will be procured - two radio sets... We plan to send one to Waipa and the other at Kanapang. There is a dental chair which will go to Kurukabaru. I am happy to have met the dentex when I visited there recently.

Ms. Marcello: The ECG machine, where is it? Do we have any or do you intend to purchase one now? The same on the ultrasound machine as well...

Mr. Whittaker: The ECG machine will be for the Mahdia District Hospital.

Ms. Marcello: In 2013, we had these similar tales. Did we purchase any then or is this additional to what was already purchased last year?

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that one was procured, that is one ECG machine, in December, 2013 and we are awaiting the delivery.

Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$64,322,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this concludes our review of Region 8. We have, in fact, come to the end of our business for today but, as I indicated, I would like us to press on to Regions 9 and 10 and to complete the regions. Should we take a break now?

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Chairman: Proceed? Very well. Mr. B. Williams, at some time, you will take over the responsibilities of presiding. Hon. Members, I believe that I am duty bound to report that earlier in the evening, there was an exchange which pertained to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Strategic Action Security Services. As a result, a news item was already generated, I am told, by one media house but I since received information from that person's legal representative to inform you that all charges have been dismissed against that person so, in fairness, if it is that I could have allowed a question to be asked about pending charges, it is my duty to report that there are no charges pending against the person. Thank you.

Hon. Members, we are to proceed with...

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, we still have the charges that were levelled by the Ministry of Labour. The Minister is sitting here in this House and did say that that company is before the court for failing to adhere to the...

Mr. Chairman: Okay, that may be so but I believe that the context in which the discussion came up this evening was about criminal charges; those charges have been dismissed and, like I said, if I could have permitted a question to be asked about it, it is also my duty to report to the contrary.

Members, we will gather to review Region 9. Members are reminded that there are refreshments available in the MPs' Lounge and Members may wish to avail themselves of those refreshments, but we will press on. Minister, I know that we have been going for several hours. Whenever you are ready, we will start. The Minister has indicated his readiness and, therefore, we will proceed.

Agency: 79 Region 9 – Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$107,863,000

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6111 – Administrative: I notice here that there is a reduction of staff from three to two. Could the Hon. Minister say what the cause of this reduction was?

Mr. Whittaker: The resignation of one Systems Administrator.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116: In this item, there is an increase of six. Could the Hon. Minister inform this honourable House what the positions are and their emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: These are two Typist Clerks with emoluments of \$43,137 each, a labourer - \$39,540, and a cleaner - \$39,540.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6284: Could the Hon. Minister say what this entails?

Mr. Whittaker: It is under this provision that the RDC pays bank charges, pays temporary relief cleaners, pays expeditor, satellite phone minutes and labour for repairs to chairs and suites, *et cetera*.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6302: What is the nature of the training under this line item?

Mr. Whittaker: The training is conducted by the public Service Management Training Division. There is provision for training in Government accounting procedures – two staff members will be able to access this training – procurement and stores management, English Language for the office and information technology, personnel practice policy and programme budgeting and monitoring and evaluation.

Dr. Cummings: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6281: There is an increase from \$5.585 million to \$10.516 million in terms of security service. Could the Hon. Minister tell us which security firm is contracted and what changes took place to arrive at this sum? Was there an increase in rates or an increase of the size of the staff?

Mr. Whittaker: The service provider is Strategic Action Security Service. The locations for which the service is provided are eight. These are the RDC Regional Guest House, the RDC Stores at Lethem, the RDC Office at Lethem, the Sub Treasury at Lethem, the Annai Sub District Office, the Aishalton Sub District Office, the Sand Creek Sub District Office and the Karasabai Sub District Office. The increased rates at each of the eight sights are what occasioned the increase in the budgetary allocations.

Dr. Cummings: Hon. Minister, which firm is it?

Mr. Whittaker: Strategic Action Security Service.

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$107,863,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$9,967,000

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Project code 2402400: Could the Hon. Minister say how many boats and engines would be bought with this amount?

Mr. Whittaker: It is one boat, 25 feet, for the Sand Creek area and one outboard engine of 15 horsepower to be used at the Rupununi River crossing to access the Sand Creek Village. It is going to be used to transport school children, food items, furniture, learning materials, drugs, *et cetera*.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project Code 1204900: Could the Hon. Minister say how much money will be spent on the construction - estimated of course - of the conference room and sanitary block at the Amerindian hostel and the size of the sanitary block?

Mr. Whittaker: Actually, this project aims at improving the lighting system in the conference room - running wires, provision of lights, *et cetera*. It is 30x50 feet and \$1 million is allocated there and then there is the construction of the sanitary block at the Amerindian Hostel in Lethem, 16x26x9 feet. There will be three units - female, male - and the whole focus is to improve the present sanitary conditions that exist. Four million dollars is allocated here.

Programme: 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$9,967,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 792 - Agriculture - \$24,003,000

Programme: 792 - Agriculture - \$24,003,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 792 - Agriculture - \$18,454,000

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This is project code 1701400. Could the Hon. Minister explain exactly what is to be done under this project code?

Mr. Whittaker: There will be several projects. There is, for example, the upgrading of the Lethem Abattoir, including a pregnancy diagnostic shoot; \$6 million is set aside for that. There is

the construction of a nursery shed at Sand Creek, South Central Rupununi; \$3.5 million is for that. There is the construction of a nursery shed and fencing of that shed at Aishalton, Deep South Rupununi; there is \$3.5 million for that. There is rehabilitation of the veterinary laboratory at St. Ignatius, which is Central Rupununi - \$3 million. Then there are a number of accessories and fittings – two electric microscopes, two Olympus stereoscopes, two centrifuges, purchase of two Pelton Crane electric sterilisers, 12 measuring cylinders, two electrical balance and weight sets, and one refrigerator. And then there is a purchase of three swing fog machines for North Rupununi, for South Pakaraimas and for Central Rupununi, which are for acoushi ants control and the purchase of one computer, and this is for Central Rupununi.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the Karasabai and Annai areas would be properly equipped with the necessary items for agricultural development within those areas?

Mr. Whittaker: May I ask that the question be repeated, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: Karasabai and Annai areas: will they be given the necessary agricultural implements to improve their agricultural drive?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is yes.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister provide this information in writing please? Thank you very much.

Mr. Whittaker: Will do.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$18,454,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$108,947,000

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116: Could the Hon. Minister explain to this honourable House what the two positions are and their emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: One is a driver, emolument - \$46,628, and the other one is a labourer – \$39,540.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6281: Could the Hon. Minister say what the name of the company is?

Mr. Whittaker: Strategic Action Security Services is the name of the company.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, line item 6251: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the Farm to Market Road in Kumu has been identified for maintenance under this line item?

Mr. Whittaker: As I go through this list, I am looking to see if Kumu... We have maintenance works to be done, Double Bituminous Surface Treatment (DBST), that is, two miles in the Lethem/Central Rupununi Area, \$6 million there. We have rehabilitation to culvert approach in the section of the road leading to the school; that is in Rupanau, South Central Rupununi. This project entails raising the levels of the road, grading, compacting, shaping, *et cetera*.

7.31 p.m.

[Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Ms. Wade: I asked about Kumu.

Mr. Whittaker: I am looking for Kumu. Rehabilitation to culvert approach and section of internal roads at Shulinab, South Central Rupununi... There is going to be raising, grading, compacting, rehab to the culvert approach and section of the internal road at St. Ignatius, Central Rupununi - another \$6 million. Then there is rehab to the internal roads at Tiger Pond, South Pakaraimas - \$28 million. There is no Kumu.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, what criteria are used to identify these roads, because the people of Kumu complained that they are suffering to bring out their produce, and they are still complaining - the same line item?

Mr. Whittaker: The regional councillors would have considered, decided on, and made submissions. So whilst there would be recommendations coming from various corners - from the

ordinary citizens, from the sub-committees, from the REO, from all sectors - to the RDC, they would have prioritised, shortlisted, approved and made their submission.

Ms. Wade: I hope that by 2015 they will consider.

Mr. Whittaker: I too would be happy to see that happen, Madam.

Mr. Bulkan: A follow-up to the question asked by the Hon. Member Wade. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if he could provide, in writing, a list of all of the activities under line items 6251, 6252 and 6255.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, there are four bridges to be done at an estimated cost of \$19 million in South Central Rupununi: rehab to Sarab, No. 2; rehab to Parabara Bridge, Deep South Rupununi...

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, my request is if it can be provided in writing, please.

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, I am considerate of the requests of all the others. Rehab to Kurupukari Bridge, No. 3, Central Rupununi; rehab to Kassuwau Bridge, Sand Creek with a total of \$19 million. Under Other Infrastructure, we are going to rehab the shed and gates at the Lethem Port Complex and rehab the fence at the Aishalton admin, a total of \$6 million. We would make these details available to you, sir.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$108,947,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$162,600,000

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, project code 1401300: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of how much moneys will be spent on each of the roads identified and the length of each in writing?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, Hon. Member, will do. What you can expect are works done in Lethem, Central Rupununi, where we are going to spend \$49 million to do asphalted roads in Lethem, sections of Windmill Road, Boston Street, Cenotaph Boulevard, Mohan Area to Cashew Park,

Third Street, Crescent Area, with three culverts to be raised with laterite. Then there is the upgrading of the access road to Potarinau, two miles, which is about 700 metres (South Central Rupununi).

There will also be the upgrading of the access road from Katunarib to Sawariwau, which is another two miles or 700 metres in South Central Rupununi - \$4 million; upgrading the road from Aishalton to Awaruwaunau, two miles - \$4 million; upgrading to access the road from Awaruwaunau and Maranau villages. What is happening, based on the funds available, is that we are doing as much as we can do. As a result of that, there are five different areas that will benefit from a total close to 3,000 metres of roads. That is about two miles of good road.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up: What kind of roads?

Mr. Whittaker: Now, the first one I mentioned is the continuation of asphalted roads and the others are from sand track to laterite.

Mr. Allicock: Mr. Chairman, project code 1100900: Could the Hon. Minister give the cost for the extension to be done, the cost for each of the three bridges to be constructed and their dimensions, in writing?

Mr. Whittaker: We have information here on the cost and dimension. For the Sand Creek Bridge, the amount you see there of \$1.995 million is retention fees; the bridge at Paipang Creek, 50ft. by 16ft. is \$8.5 million; the construction of the bridge at Turner Creek, 60ft. by 16ft. is \$8.5 million; the bridge at Chiliwau, 75ft. by 16ft., is \$8.5 million. A copy of this will be made available to you, Hon. Member.

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up: What type of materials will be used here? Would it be wooden or concrete and steel?

Mr. Whittaker: Wooden and concrete.

Mr. Bulkan: Project code 2402300, "Purchase of tractor and trailer": Would the Hon. Minister kindly identify by whom or which agency this equipment would be used?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, this item, purchase of trailer and tractor, which comes under the Public Works programme, will be used by the Ministry of Public Works to assist in transporting materials from Central Rupununi to outlying villages.

Mr. Allicock: Project code 2602200 – Power Extension: Could the Hon. Minister say what would be the cost of each of these items at the various locations and could I have them in writing, please?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, Mr. Chairman, this will be provided, and just to say that the areas that have been targeted here are Annai, Aishalton, Sand Creek and Lethem Port Complex. We are talking about an expenditure of \$6 million. In fact, at Annai specifically, it is the Nurses' Quarters; at Aishalton, it is the Nurses' Hostel; at Sand Creek, it is the Doctors' Quarters; and at the Lethem Port Complex, the aim is to improve the lighting and, by extension, the security.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, project code 2800400 – Water Supply: Could the Hon. Minister kindly provide us, in writing, the cost for each of the activities listed under profile 393?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, Mr. Chairman, will do.

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$162,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$687,997,000

Mr. Allicock: Mr. Chairman, line item 6112: Could the Hon. Minister tell us the cost for the increase by three and what are these positions and the emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, may I correct the Hon. Member? The increase is 13 and not three. The movement is from 125 to 138. This is the upgrading of 13 Temporary Qualified Mistress/Masters, called TQMs, to Assistant Masters/Mistress. Their new emoluments would be \$79,871.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$687,997,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$77,212,000

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$77,212,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$225,246,000

Mr. Allicock: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116: Could the Hon. Minister say what positions are these four added under this line item and what are their emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: Same one, contracted employees went up by four. There was the appointment of one Medic with emolument of \$88,793; two Ward Maids with salary of \$37,657 each; and one Microscopist at \$55,251.

Mr. Allicock: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the equipment that were not in operation are now in operation?

Mr. Whittaker: I am unclear as to what equipment the Hon. Member is speaking about because I thought he was looking at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Can you be a little specific?

Mr. Allicock: Sorry about that, Mr. Chairman; disregard the question.

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$225,246,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$39,125,000

Mr. Allicock Project code 2402300: Could the Hon. Minister say how many of these motor cycles would be purchased and where they would be stationed?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, Hon. Member. Mr. Chairman, six motor cycles with 125cc will be procured for the use of Community Health Workers in the following villages: Yupukari, Rukumuta, Maruranau, Achiwuib, Potarinau, and Massara.

Mr. Allcock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a follow-up: Is there any effort to rectify the situation we have in the Annai area with regards to the ambulance that is not functional?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I am informed that the ambulance is operational and is at Annai.

Mr. Trotman: It is not working the man said.

Mr. Whittaker: I am told that it is working.

Mr. Trotman: They might be misleading you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the information I have - and the Head of the Regional Health Programme is with us - is that it is working. It was even used extensively when there was the surgery outreach about two weeks ago.

Mr. Trotman: This MP says it is not working.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Members, the Minister has answered.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, project code 1204800: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of how much moneys will be spent on each project as identified in project profile 396?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, will do. There is the completion of the incinerator for the Lethem Hospital. In fact, this has been recently completed, the 30th March this year. There is the construction of a maternity waiting home at Lethem for high-risk mothers. There is the construction of sanitary blocks at Annai, at Nappi and at Karaudarnau. These are the projects.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, I am aware of what the projects are. I asked for the cost attached to each.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I am giving her in an orderly manner - the items and now the cost.

Ms. Selman: No, I can read it for you.

Mr. Whittaker: The incinerator is \$6,381,160; the maternity waiting home is \$9 million; the sanitary block at Annai is \$2,618,840; the sanitary block at Nappi is \$2.5 million; and the sanitary block at Karaudarnau is \$3 million.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Mr. Chairman, project code 2402300, a follow-up on the purchasing of the motor cycles: Hon. Minister, I notice there is no provision here for Baitun. In your needs assessment, which I think you would do, would you be providing transportation for them? I can give you a little hint, a little story. There was a very sick baby in Baitun and they had to come out at night on motor cycle and there was an accident and the baby's - just a month or so in age - legs were broken and they had to go to Boa Vista. So I am asking if provisions can be made for suitable transportation for somewhere like Baitun so residents can come out with their sick persons.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member's concern has been noted.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$39,125,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: That completes the items for Region 9. I would like to thank the Minister and the support staff for their role in completing this exercise for Region 9.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Members. I also wish to thank Mr. Basil Williams for presiding and doing a good job.

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$140,644,000

Mr. Morian: Mr. Chairman, I want to have a different approach as it relates to looking at the Estimates. I had a serious discourse with the Hon. Minister and it is my feeling what I need is more information and clarity concerning matters relating to Region 10. Hence my approach is to

lay my questions over to the Hon. Minister. As we go through the various heads, I would raise a few of these questions, but basically myself and the Minister have agreed that I will lay this over to him and he will supply the necessary information. Could I start now, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: So, Hon. Member, would you be asking the questions but not expecting an answer?

Mr. Morian: For some of the questions, yes, we agreed to that, Sir. The ones he can answer now, he would answer. Basically, that is what he said. The ones that require detailed information, he will provide the information.

Mr. Chairman: Very well, go ahead.

Mr. Whittaker: Just one point here: I think there is not a meeting of minds on some of the things. My understanding is the way you deal with the written questions and responses. I thought that is what we were talking about - the way we submit written questions for responses.

Mr. Morian: Alright, I will ask the questions.

Mr. Whittaker: I think what we should do is probably go through the questions.

8.01 p.m.

Mr. Morian: Thank you very much, Sir. Line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: Please explain the increase. If you notice, as it relates to Staffing Details, there is the move to 70. It was 71 in 2013 and it moves to 70. I notice that there is an increase at line item 6133. Could the Hon. Minister explain “Benefits and Allowances” for me, please? The staff number has reduced and I notice that there is an increase of \$1.4 million.

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that the increase is captured in terms of salary increases along with a motor car allowance paid to the Principal Assistant Secretary (PAS),(Finance), at a rate of \$19,551 per month; \$19,000 x 12 months goes over \$200,000. There are also salary increases.

Mr. Morian: Sir, could you state how much the salary increases are? I noticed that you were computing just now, so we will keep computing.

Mr. Whittaker: Besides the allowance paid to the PAS (Finance) which amounts annually to \$234,612, there is vacation allowance of \$1,121,234 paid to a number of employees named here on this document, which I have in my possession. These include vacation allowance paid to the AREO - \$112,602, four Clerks II getting \$58,610 each, a Boat Hand who received \$55,251, a Receptionist, Vehicle Driver and Checker - \$50,003 each. Then there are a number of other employees - three of them at \$49,985, namely, Accounts Clerk II and a Clerk II (General). There is also \$45,132 paid to an Office Assistant; a number of Vehicle Drivers identified by names, \$43,137 each; two Typist Clerks - \$43,137, a Driver \$39, 540, Stores Attendant, two Office Assistants and a Labourer at \$39,540 each. The total is \$1, 121, 234.

Mr. Morian: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister just describe for me where these infrastructures are located and how much money was expended on each structure?

Mr. Whittaker: The description of works here - external works to the Vice Chairman's quarters, location staff quarters, Retrieve. The estimated cost is \$300,000. Then there is the Development Officer's quarters at Retrieve, again the estimated cost is \$300,000 for the works. Thirdly, works in the Government compound, the clearing of overhanging trees, branches and vines, which are estimated at \$400,000.

Mr. Morian: Line item 6264, which speaks to Vehicle Spares and Services, I would like to know the number of vehicles which are under this head. It is if the Hon. Minister could list the number of vehicles, the vehicles that are working and those that are not working and to which vehicles will utilise these sum for service.

Mr. Whittaker: There are four vehicles/equipment listed here. There is a Nissan pickup, PNN 6736, new, it was bought in 2011; there is the black Hilux, PNN 7756, again, new, it was bought in 2011 and there are two boats and engines in which the total allocation for maintenance is \$1,125,000.

Ms. Kissoon: Follow-up on that, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6264: Could the Hon. Minister say which of these vehicles is assigned to the Regional Chairman?

Mr. Whittaker: It is the black Hilux, PNN 7756.

Ms. Kisson: Could the Hon. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, inform us if the vehicle is in use at the moment or whether a new vehicle will be brought for the Regional Chairman? Based on my knowledge, he is not using that vehicle.

Mr. Whittaker: The vehicle is presently being repaired.

Ms. Kisson: Could the Hon. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, say what vehicle the Regional Chairman is using at the moment? If it is being rented, how much to date has been spent on the rental? If it is feasible, it is if a new vehicle should be purchased for the Regional Chairman, as was advised by the RDC.

Mr. Whittaker: The information I have is that the vehicle assigned to the Regional Chairman is under repairs. He is presently hiring. Obviously the situation, which we would want to have, is one where we get that vehicle fixed and it is out and working. Hiring of vehicles can be a very costly exercise.

Ms. Kisson: Through you, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say to date, how much money was spent on repairs to the Regional Chairman's vehicle and how long has it been down?

Mr. Whittaker: The information, with respect to costs and when the vehicle will be out, is information I do not have at this point in time. What I do know is PNN 7756 could not be an old vehicle. It brings into question... I am saying to the REO that we have to examine how these vehicles are used, because PNN 6736 is in working order. I was enquiring how that vehicle is in working order but then PNN 7756 is not. The information as to cost is a function of what the mechanic determines as the problem and cost.

Mr. Morian: It is just to get some clarity. I think the Hon. Minister should investigate how the vehicle was purchased, if it was new, reconditioned or second-hand. I could help him get some information.

Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): I noticed here there is \$1 million budgeted for 2014 and \$768,000 for 2013. Could the Hon. Minister list for me the training programmes that were held in 2013 and those that are slated for 2014 and, if any scholarships are in this?

Mr. Whittaker: One of the training programmes, which will run over four days, is expected to focus on internal auditing. The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and the Guyana Chapter are expected to help in facilitating this. The Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED) is expected to come on board and assist with a training programme that focuses on budget and finances, also project management. The University of Guyana, through the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE), Linden, is expected to help facilitate a training programme that focuses on communications and effective speaking and that should run over a six-week period.

Mr. Morian: Thank you very much Minister, but the question was not fully answered. I asked for the training programmes that were held for 2013.

Mr. Whittaker: I would not have that information on the training programmes held for 2013, but we can provide it.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we had scheduled one hour to cover this agency. We have already spent 20 minutes on the first programme and it does not seem as if we are anywhere near completing it, so I just put to you a notice.

Ms. Kissoon: I am not sure, it is under line item 6264, but I would need some clarifications. I do not think I heard correctly. Could the Hon. Minister say when exactly will the Regional Chairman be expected to be in possession of the vehicle, PNN 7756? Under line item 6281, Security Services, could you say which security service, the cost per hour and how many hours the security guards works?

Mr. Whittaker: In the first instance, I am not in the position to say; it is until we have extensive consultations with the mechanic on how soon the vehicle will be made available. Secondly, under “Security”, the security service provider is Home Safe Security and Domestic Service. It is providing services at five locations, under this programme, that is, Regional Administration and Finance, and the rate is \$300 per hour.

Programme: 801- Regional Administration and Finance - \$140,644,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 801- Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,500,000

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$140, 622,000

Mr. Morian: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: I would like if the Hon. Minister could list the names of the buildings, locations and the sums to be expended on each building.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, will do. There are a significant number of structures here that are being maintained.

Mr. Morian: As you promised, Sir, once it is cumbersome, you will lay it over.

Mr. Whittaker: It will be made available.

Mr. Morian: I will accept the list, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Do you wish to mention some of the names?

Mr. Morian: It is not necessary.

Mr. Whittaker: There is the concrete and wooden building, number 34; there is a concrete and wooden building at the sub office in Kwakwani; there is the building, number 73, at Wismar Street; the concrete and wooden building, number 15, at the Amerindian Hostel, there is a wooden structure, described as building number 20 at Hippani Oval, Retrieve; there is a wooden and concrete building, number 40 at Fairs Rust; there is a wooden and concrete building, described as building number 33, situated in South Amelias Ward...

Ms. Kissoon: Minister, I think the Chairman said “some.”

Mr. Whittaker: ... a wooden and concrete building, number 26, in the Industrial Area; there is another wooden building, number 22; building number 134 Hippani Oval, Retrieve, wooden structure building, number 50; staff quarters at Kwakwani, another wooden structure at Kwakwani, described as the Welfare Officers’ quarters; a wooden structure occupied by the

Senior Probation Officer at Retrieve, Linden, a building described as building number 37, situated at Crabwood Creek...

Mr. Chairman: You can stop at any time, when you are ready, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: Yes Sir. The total estimated cost \$15 million.

Mr. Morian: I thank the Hon. Minister and request if he could just give me a copy of that list. We move to Maintenance of Roads, line item 6251. I would like if the Hon. Minister could identify each road, the location, the works to be done and the costs. Again, if it is a long list, I would appreciate if the Minister could lay over that information for me.

Mr. Whittaker: This information will be provided. Suffice it to say, roads in the Fairs Rust, Richmond Hill access area, the Noitgedacht internal roads in Mackenzie, Yuriballi Street, Retrieve, the Glasgow Drive, Amelias Ward, Dageraad Avenue in McKenzie, the Wisroc internal roads, Industrial Area in Wismar, first access road, Linden Foundation Secondary School, the Yap Valley in Burnham Drive, Hippani Oval in Retrieve and Upper Independence Avenue. Road works to the value of \$41 million will be done in the areas which I just identified.

Mr. Morian: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: It is along the same lines, describe the infrastructure, locations and sums to be expended. I would really like if the Hon. Minister could state how soon these lists will be given over to us so that we could have a look at them. Will it be a week, two weeks or three weeks?

Mr. Whittaker: The information I just provided and the details that accompanied what I presented will be made available before Friday.

Mr. Chairman: I rather suspect that we would not go into Thursday and Friday is Good Friday. It is by the close of business on Wednesday that this information is required.

Mr. Whittaker: I am reminded that Friday is Good Friday and Monday is Easter Monday, so it will be next Tuesday.

Mr. Chairman: I would expect that information by Wednesday.

Ms. Kissoon: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: I would just like to know if any works are earmarked for the Katapuli Bridge and how much moneys will be spent.

Mr. Whittaker: Some amount of rehabilitation works, in respect of the revetment structure, will be done to the Katapuli River Bridge. Five hundred thousand dollars is earmarked.

Mr. Morian: Finally under this head for me, from the Ministry of Public Work, I notice at line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Services, there is a sum of \$6 million. Could the Hon. Minister list the number of vehicles under this head, those working, those not working and works to be done on the vehicles?

Mr. Whittaker: There is a bobcat, a Hilux pickup, PHH 6350; there is another Hilux pickup, PLL 8060; there is a dredge. These are the vehicles.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to move to close this programme.

Programme: 802 - Public Works - \$140,622,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$140,116,000

Ms. Kissoon: Project 1401400, Roads: South Amelias Ward, could the Hon. Minister say where it will be in South Amelias Ward, which road and what will be done?

Mr. Whittaker: The upgrading of fair weather road with asphaltic concrete hot mix, South Amelias Ward main access road. This will be phase number one. In fact, I am told that it is a continuation of a Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) project that was being done.

Mr. Morian: It is just a follow-up to that. I am aware that under this item a number of other pieces of roads will be done. I would like if the Hon. Minister could just give me a list of all the road works to be done under this head and the cost for each part of the road.

Mr. Whittaker: There will be made available. Beside the South Amelias Ward main access road, there is the Cedar Street, in Mackenzie, some 1,171 square metres of road works will be done there. Over 3,000 residents are expected to benefit.

There is the upgrading of fair weather surface to asphalt in the Blueberry Hill main access road area, 1,431 square metres of work to be done here. Essentially, it will be fair weather to asphaltic concrete in structure. About 6,000 persons are expected to benefit there.

Next, there is the continued construction of the internal access roads to Kwakwani, where there will be about 2,250 square metres of internal road works. In the Kwakwani area there are roads to be upgraded include, what is called Central Kwakwani Park, Independence Road and Middle Road.

Mr. Morian: I am asking the Hon. Minister if he could lay over that information. The same information is needed for bridges under project 1101000, Bridges. Could the Hon. Minister give me a list of the bridges to be done, cost and location?

Ms. Kissoon: Project 1901700, Infrastructural Development: I would just like the Minister to say under “Construction and upgrading of drainage structures South Amelias...” where exactly in South Amelias Ward it is? The “Construction of revetment and land filling at Bamia...” Where is it at Bamia and how much? Those are under infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman: You had a question coming firstly on bridges, which the Hon. Member asked to be supplied in written form. The second questions are about drainage at Amelias Ward and revetment at Bamia.

Ms. Kissoon: Yes.

8.31 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I guess coming down to the end hour we have these difficulties, but I crave your indulgence that we put these information together.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. Could we proceed and the information be provided?

Ms. Kissoon: Project 1902200, Agricultural Development: Could the Hon. Minister just give a bit more information about what is to happen at the Hymara Creek, the Ice Water Creek, Block 22 area. I would like to know if these are not budgeted for under the National Drainage & Irrigation Authority (NDIA) because I know last year \$2 million was spent and works were done. It is if the Minister could just enlighten us on these projects.

Mr. Whittaker: Under agriculture development, there are two projects identified here. The first is the construction of revetment and erosion control structure at Hymara. The sum provided is \$5 million. The areas to be covered are 2,000 square metres and it is expected that this will help in the revitalisation of farm lands for agricultural purposes.

There is also construction of revetment for the purpose of erosion control in Block 22, Ice Water Creek. Again, some 2,000 square metres of work is expected to be done at a cost of \$5 million, bringing the total to \$10 million under agricultural development, Upper Demerara Berbice.

Programme: 802 – Public Works - \$140,116,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,413,996,000

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$1,413,996,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$ 67,552,000

Ms. Kissoon: Project 2602500, Power Supply, “Provision for solar system”: Could the Hon. Minister enlighten us on these solar systems and could he also inform this Assembly about what happened to the solar systems that were purchased last year and where exactly these systems will be...?

Mr. Whittaker: These solar energy systems, with pumps, are being provided for a number of villages/communities, including Malali, Muritaro, De Velde, Wiruni, St. Lust, Detaru, Hururu, Mabura, Kalkuni and Maria Henrietta. Unit cost is estimated to be \$336,000; the quantity is 10; total cost estimated at \$3.60 million.

Ms. Kissoon: Mr. Minister, you did not answer the question about the ones that were purchased last year. What is the status of those?

Mr. Whittaker: It is being distributed.

Ms. Kissoon: Could you say when the distribution process started and to whom are they being distributed?

Mr. Whittaker: My understanding is that these systems are not just merely to be handed over but they are to be installed. They have started at No. 47 Miles, Muritaro and Malali. This work has started and we have just asked the contractors to ensure that they speed up the installation.

Ms. Kissoon: When did this process start - one month ago, January, February?

Mr. Whittaker: It was in February of 2014.

Ms. Kissoon: Project 1205200, Buildings – Education: Could the Hon. Minister say, the extension for New Silver City Secondary School, where exactly will that be? The construction of the sanitary block at Mackenzie High School annexe, will it be at Lichas building or the main building?

Mr. Whittaker: The extension would be the New Silver City Secondary School, the main block.

Ms. Kissoon: Could the Minister go that again please?

Mr. Whittaker: The extension of this school will facilitate the four classes presently housed in the main auditorium with approximately 40 students per class. Nine million is allocated for that extension project.

Ms. Kissoon: Through you, Comrade Chairman, Mr. Minister, I am asking you exactly where in the compound that extension would be done. Based on what I understand, and I know the space availability,...

Mr. Whittaker: It will be attached to the main block. That is the understanding I have.

Ms. Kissoon: And the sanitary block for Mackenzie High School.

Mr. Whittaker: The construction of the sanitary block, inclusive of tanks and trestles, is at Lichas, Mackenzie High School.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery - \$ 67,552,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$284,365,000

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$284,365,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$61,000,000

Ms. Kissoon: Project 1205300, Buildings – Health, “Construction and extension of health facilities and quarters”: Could the Hon. Minister say why there is the need to construct a health centre at Christianburg? I know that there is an existing structure there. Why is there the constructing of a new building and what will happen to the existing one? Is this really necessary?

Mr. Whittaker: The understanding is that there is really no room for expansion within the existing structure, hence there is the need for the construction of the health centre at Christianburg, Wismar.

Secondly, it is important to note that this is a proposal coming from the Regional Democratic Council of Region 10.

Ms. Kissoon: Project 2403500, Land and Water Transport - Health, “Purchase of ambulance and engine.” I want to say that the region welcomes this ambulance, but may I enquire about what has become of the money from the United States of America Embassy? I have the article here, if I am allowed to read just a short piece. According to June 3rd, 2013 *Guyana Chronicle*’s report:

“The US Ambassador Mr. Hardt handed over a cheque for G\$8, 967,387,000 to Finance Minister for emergency services which will be used specifically to purchase an ambulance for Region 10 Upper Demerara Berbice.”

The article further states that:

“The Finance Minister will finalise arrangements for its purchase and handing over to the region administration.”

I am just enquiring on what has happened to that money coming from the US Embassy.

Mr. Chairman: Minister of Finance, there is a report that you received a cheque for eight point something million of dollars to purchase an item.

Minister of Finance [Dr. Singh]: If I am not mistaken, there was budgeted, I believe... That article is dated some time in 2013.

Ms. Kissoon: Yes. It was the 3rd of June, 2013.

Dr. Singh: There was purchased in 2013 of an ambulance with local resources and the US Embassy agreed... I think there was a residual amount from an old US Agency for International Development (USAID) supported project. The US Government was desirous of reimbursing us for that project in the social sector and so it elected to do a partial reimbursement of an ambulance that was going to be purchased out of the local budget. There was an ambulance budgeted, I believe, in 2013, which was purchased. I can ascertain exactly where it is. I have my staff at the back here who I am sure could give me that information if I will get a minute. That was a partial reimbursement of an ambulance that was budgeted for in 2013 and bought using local resources. As I said, I can find out when it was purchased and when it was deployed.

Ms. Kissoon: The Minister will give that information to us.

Dr. Singh: I will.

Ms. Kissoon: The engine, could the Minister say for where it is for?

Mr. Whittaker: It is a 200-horsepower engine and it is to be used in the Berbice River area.

Ms. Kissoon: Project 2602500, Power Supply: Which health centres are earmarked for these solar systems?

Mr. Whittaker: The eight solar power systems are intended for use in Kimbia, De Velde, Coomacka, Wiruni, 47 Miles, 58 Miles, Ebini and Rockstone.

Ms. Kissoon: Hon. Minister of Finance, how soon, by Wednesday, we will get that information?

Dr. Singh: I am hoping to be able to tell the Hon. Member by tonight even if not during the course of the sitting, then it is when we are finished.

Programme: 804 – Health Services - \$61,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have concluded our business for today. We have completed all ten regions. I would like to really compliment the Minister, it was a gruelling exercise. Minister, you maintained your calm and you stayed the course. I would like to compliment your officers, as well, from all ten regions and, of course, the Ministry for standing with you.

The Hon Attorney General has an outstanding promise to provide some extra volumes of the laws of Guyana which he had given an undertaking to provide to the Clerk. We remind him of those.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hinds: I now move that the House be adjourned to tomorrow the 15th April at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 8.48 p.m.