

THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 9]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER  
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

---

8th Sitting                      2 p.m. Tuesday, 1982-04-06

---

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (77)

Speaker (1)

\*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,  
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (64)

Prime Minister (1)

\*Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P., -                      **(Absent)**  
Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P.,  
Vice-President, Works and Transport

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,  
Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,  
Vice-President, Public Welfare –                      **(Absent)**

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,  
Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,  
Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,  
Minister of Regional Development –                      **(Absent)**

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,  
Minister of National Development

\*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,  
Minister of Trade and  
Consumer Protection

\*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,  
Minister of Energy and Mines

\*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,  
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

\*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

\*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,  
Minister of Agriculture

\*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.  
Minister of Home Affairs

\*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.  
Minister of Education -                      **(Absent)**

\*Non-elected Member

Ministers (8)

Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P.

Minister of Co-operatives

Cde. J. N. Maitland-Singh, M.P.

Minister, Consumer Protection, in the  
Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,

Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,

Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of  
Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. R. E. Williams, M. P.,

Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry  
of Agriculture

\*Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P., –

**(Absent)**

Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister

\*Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,

Minister, Office of the President –

**(Absent)**

\*Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M. P.,

Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare

Ministers of State (3)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,

Minister of State for Culture, in the  
Ministry of Education, Social Development  
and Culture

Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.

Minister of State for Youth and Sport,  
in the Ministry of National Development

\*Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.

Minister of State for Construction, in the –  
Ministry of Works and Transport

**(Absent)**

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary, Women's –  
Affairs and Housing.

**(Absent)**

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.

Parliamentary Secretary, Education,  
Social Development and Culture

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.

Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs.

\*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.  
Cde. M. Armogan, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.  
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.  
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.  
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., – (Absent)  
Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.  
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.  
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.  
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.  
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.  
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.  
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.  
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.  
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.  
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.  
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.  
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.  
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.  
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.  
Cde. H.B. Walcott-Nascimento, J.P., M.P.,  
Government Chief Whip

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.  
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)  
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)  
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)  
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)  
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)  
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)  
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)  
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)  
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)  
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P., - **(Absent)**  
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,  
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.  
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,  
Minority Chief Whip  
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.  
Cde. S. F. Mohamed, M.P. – **(Absent)**  
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.  
Cde. C.c. Belgrave, M.P.  
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, J.P., M.P. – (Absent)  
Mr. M. A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. F. A. Narain, A.A.  
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. M. B. Henry

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:00 hrs

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

“Financial Paper No. 1/1982 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision – Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ended 1981-12-31”. [The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance]

The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance indicated to the Assembly that by agreement the Financial Paper would be considered immediately after the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1982.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1982

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1982.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

National Assembly

14:05 hrs.

The Chairman: We will deal with the Ministry of National Development. Pages 30 and 31.

HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,353,900 for Head 14, Ministry of National Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, we note here the new format. There has been a dramatic improvement in the presentation of Estimates for this Ministry and I think we on this side of the Assembly must take credit for having kept on insisting that it must be presented in a legible form.

I would like to speak, on page 30, on all the subheads from 121 to 126. On page 31 I would like to speak on subheads 161, 303, 402, 504, 605, 701, 702, 705, 707, 708 and 802. In other words, I would like you to allow me to make a comprehensive presentation on this Ministry.

The Chairman: You will be disappointed in that. You had your opportunity. This is detail, general debate is general debate.

Cde. Collymore: I would deal with all the items as they come. Subhead 121, Administrative. I would like to ask the Minister if he could give general information or details as to who are these Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff. We would like him to break it down further. In the new format there is no specification as to what the designations of these people are. On subhead 121 also, could he say exactly what these Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff are, this is under the National Events and Ceremonies Division.

Subhead 125, Clerical and Office Support. Who are the Clerical and Office Support.

Subhead 124, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, Other Skilled Staff. Who, particularly, are these Other Technical and Craft Skilled, Other Skilled Staff? Our information is that where some of these particular subheads are concerned these subheads are used to pay ex-Ministers and former P.N.C. people who have been dumped and

who are kept on the payroll of the State. We would like to have some clarification on this. Perhaps the Minister would like to admit that this is so. That also applies for sub-head 126. We note that where other legitimate Ministers are concerned there have been substantial reductions in staff. In other words, the establishment has been cut in keeping with the general trend of the Government. But in this particular Ministry we note that it has increased by 20 whereas there was 41 up to last year. It is now going to be 61. I am speaking now about the establishment. If you add up the 1982 establishment you will get 61. The previous year it was 41 and the year before it was 42. I am saying the sums have increased whereas in other Ministries of more relevance the establishment has shown a reduction.

On page 31, subhead 161, Benefits and Allowances – Entertainment Allowance. I would like to ask this Minister if this entertainment allowance is for him.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore, we have been going along good, we have not been casting aspersions on one another. You know very well that Ministers have entertainment under a specific provision.

Cde. Collymore: I must apologise if the question was improperly put. I would like to know what the entertainment allowance is for and who is going to administer it. Is it for the Ministry?

The Chairman: You know sometimes you all ask questions only for the sake of asking. You know all Permanent Secretaries are now categorised as head of the establishment and have an entertainment allowance.

Cde. Collymore: Perhaps it is because of the new format which we are confronted with here. Subhead 303, Fuels and Lubricants. We are of the view under this particular subhead that expenses being incurred here are expenses incurred on behalf of the P.N.C. as a party because we have noted that this Ministry's vehicles and equipment are used by the P.N.C. as a rule, partly as a result of the so-called paramountcy of the party. We want the Minister to assure us that this particular fuel and lubricants would not be used on behalf of the party.

Subhead 402, Lease and Rental. Would the Minister say what is meant here? What is going to be leased and what is going to be rented?

Subhead 504, Equipment Rental and Maintenance. Would the Minister say what these equipment are going to be and where are they going to rent it from. In other words, we want some information seeing that it is the first time that this thing is being presented.

Subhead 605, Vehicle Spares and Maintenance. Could the Minister give some information with relevance to what I said under subhead 303 that Government vehicles are being used for party purposes?

Subhead 701, Contributions to International Organisations. The sum of \$30,000 is being asked for. Would the Minister itemise --

The Chairman: Subhead 701 is in the legend.

Cde. Collymore: Subhead 702, Contributions to Local Organisations. Even if I admit that 701 seems to be specific, what about 702? What are these Youth organisations. Is it the Y.S.M.? Let us have some information about these local organisations.

Subhead 705, Entertainment and Meals. Who are we entertaining, who are we feeding? Will the Minister give some information to clarify this particular subhead where \$5,000 of taxpayers' money will be used.

Subhead 707, National Development. This is the crux. This is the reason for my standing here today, National Development. What is it, what is National Development? Here we see the largest portion of the expenditure is going for this so-called National Development - \$3.1 million – and absolutely no explanation has been given for it. This is in keeping with the same trend. Formerly there was a paucity of general information, now they are giving you the bare basics and now where the bulk of expenditure is concerned absolutely no information. This comes up to 72 percent of the expenditure. This is intolerable and we on this side of the Assembly will not sit here and allow this money to go unchallenged. We challenge this and we are asking the Minister to say how this money is going to be spent. We would like it itemised. We do not want any block voting here.

Subhead 802, Other Miscellaneous Charges. What are these miscellaneous charges? Are these charges toilet paper, etc? Let us have some gist of what it is. Cde. Chairman, from the time this Ministry has been set up this Ministry has used -

---



1982-04-06

14:15 – 14:25 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:15 hrs

(Cde. Collymore continues)

If you take into consideration this year's allocations - \$77.3 million in tax payers money and they have only accounted for \$3.2 million for the tax payers' money. In other words, they have not accounted to this Honourable House for 95.9% of the tax payers' money. Not a word, and we are continuing in the same trend this year where they are not going to say anything about the \$3.1 million as put down here. We are saying, therefore, that this Ministry is a useless appendage and in keeping with our presentation, we are not in favour. We are calling for the dismantling of this Ministry and I would like to formerly move a motion to reduce the vote here to 50.

Thank you very much.

The Chairman: Cde. Corbin

(Minister of National Development- Cde. Corbin): Cde. Chairman, the answers are very simple to the questions raised by the honourable member on the other side of the House. I would have thought that having seen these details, he would have seen the justification for the Ministry especially head 121. The head of the establishment deals with the Permanent Secretary, the Permanent Assistant Secretaries to Permanent Assistant Secretary (Finance) to deal with the financial management, to ensure that the money is properly spent and that there is proper accountability and control of the funds which are entrusted in the Ministry of National Development.

In head 121, further down – national events and ceremonies. That has to do with the Secretary of the National Events and Ceremonies Committee and a Senior Officer (A.S. rank) who deals with financial matters when there are any national events and ceremonies.

I think item 125 is self explanatory. It states very clearly that there are three persons there for clerical and office support staff. There are two Typists Clerks and one Office Assistant in order to ensure that the office work continues.

Under item 124, I wish to assure the honourable member that absolutely no party workers are paid under this head to do party work. This category refers to skilled craft instructors who are engaged in training young people in craft and in skilled areas around

the country. There are eighteen of them and they are engaged in work around the country and if the honourable member wishes we can invite him to see some of the work which is done by some of the young people at some of these craft centres which is organised by the Youth Division.

Item 126. I am not sure I understand what the question is because the legend is self explanatory. We have unskilled staff, people who have to maintain for example like the National Sports Hall – cleaners. We have the National Sports Development Centre, we have to have cleaners there and when we have special activities of that nature we do have labourers etc., who perform those tasks and they are paid under that head.

On page 31 Cde. Chairman, I wish to assure the honourable member that the entertainment allowance is not due to me, but due to the Head of the establishment, which is a condition of service applying to all heads of the Public Service.

Item 303 – Fuel and Lubricants. I am sure the honourable member is aware that the People's National Congress is a very dynamic party which has mobility in and around the country and I would shudder to think that the P.N.C. would only spend \$10,000 on fuels and lubricants in a year. This has absolutely nothing to do with the work of the party. This has to do with fuel and lubricants to keep the few vehicles that are in the possession of the Youth Division moving to ensure that they can get in and around the country and I am ashamed that the Comrade would think that the P.N.C. will be able to take anything out of that small sum.

Lease and Rental. These are for the use of buildings from time to time which the Youth Division may negotiate in terms of promotion of programmes in and around the country, if they are not Governmental buildings. In some cases, we do find that programmes are being organised and we do have to pay some fee for the use of buildings for training programmes and things like that. This is the head under which that payment is made.

Cde. Chairman, I think you answered the item 701, Contributions to International Organisations. I would just like to explain to the honourable member that this has to do with a commitment which all Commonwealth countries are involved and as a member of the Commonwealth, we have agreed on the importance of youth work in the Commonwealth, and as a result of the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council meeting which was established some years ago, it was agreed that what was needed in the Commonwealth was an organised training programme to help young people to interact with their fellow youths and to prepare them so that we can mobilise and motivate young people in their various territories. Three training centres were established in the

Commonwealth. One in Africa, one in India and one in the Caribbean. The centre for the Caribbean is based in Guyana and all Commonwealth countries make pledges to maintain those centres as well as to keep the Commonwealth Youth Training programme in operation. Our contribution is \$30,000 at the moment and fortunately this is in local currency since the Commonwealth centre is based in Guyana.

702 – Contributions to Local Organisations. Cde. Chairman, again this has absolutely nothing to do with the Young Socialist Movement. This head covers grants to many youth and sports organisations in and around the country that from time to time approach the Youth Division in order to promote their programmes. Grants are given regularly, for example in the last year the Amateur Athletic Association got over \$5,000, the Long Tennis Association \$2,000, The Table Tennis Association \$5,000. In August of last year the Basketball Association got \$3,500. In September of last year the Volleyball Association got \$6,000, the Billiards Association got \$1,000, the Guyana National Rifle Association got \$9,000. Contributions to Region one to ten for the Guyana Games amounted to some \$52,000 in 1981 and youth organisation generally for support of programmes got some \$6,000. The Guyana National Association of Youth and Students got \$1,200 and the Girl Guides Association got \$3,000. Which shows that for last year alone, over \$108,000 was given out by the Department of Youth and Sport to promote the development of youth work in the country. I am sure the Comrade will see that this indeed is a small sum from the commitments which we offer.

1982-04-06

14:25 – 14:35 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:25 hrs.

(Cde. Corbin continues)

Subhead 707, National Development, the final item raised by the Comrade. I am surprised that the Comrade is asking a question, which has been asked every year at this time, about the purpose and functions of the Ministry of National Development. I did spend a great deal of time during the general debate explaining the functions of the Ministry of National Development and I would just say “ditto” to what I said in the policy debate. I think I have successfully answered all the questions.

Head 14, Ministry of National Development - \$4,353,900 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 32

DIVISION 507 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$90,000 for Division 507, Ministry of National Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Subhead 1. I should like the Minister to explain what are “Development Works”. Development works are going to go on.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore, please read the legend.

Cde. Collymore: In other words, I want to speak on subheads 1 and 2. I see here the legend “To provide for further work on the Sports Hall”. I should like the Minister to say what are these works. We have received complaints and I have been at the Sports Hall myself. The place is most uncomfortable. It is hot. I want to know if the Minister is going to take steps to see that it is cool. When people sit there in the thousands the place is unbearably hot.

I am supposed to ask questions. I am asking what is the “work”. I would ask the Minister to say what is the “work”.

Subhead 2, National Stadium. I should like to know where this is going to be and if the Minister can give further information on the National Stadium.

Cde. Corbin: I can see that the Comrade has not been at the Sports Hall for some time for, if he had been there recently, he would have seen that we have installed a number of fans to improve the accommodation of patrons. It is self-explanatory. We are trying our best to improve the facilities for the development of sport. Even this sum is inadequate to make the Sports Hall the type of venue that we would really want for the development of sport but, recognising the economic circumstances at the moment, we are going to use these funds to ensure that we improve the facilities further so that there can be better cooling, better seating, better toilet facilities etc. and I am sure that if the goodly Comrade goes again he will see that the conditions are greatly improved.

The Chairman: He wants to know where the stadium will be sited.

Cde. Corbin: At the back of Guyhoc Park. To give a more precise location – if you were to follow the Sussex Street Canal – [Interruption] I would be willing to take the Comrade to see the place. It is just behind the Guyhoc area and if you are travelling North you will reach the back of what is now known as Festival City. It is an area that used to be a cane field. It is in that area. Should the Comrade wish to visit, we would be willing to take him. There will be some self-help work to be done a little later this year. I hope he will volunteer and bring other young members of the P.P.P. to make a contribution to the national effort there.

Division 507, Ministry of National Development - \$90,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 76

#### HEAD 31 – FORESTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$150,000 for Head 31, Ministry of Forestry, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 31, Ministry of Forestry - \$150,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 77

#### DIVISION 519 – MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$150,000 for Division 519, Ministry of Forestry, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 1, Upper Demerara Forestry Road Project. One short question, Cde. Chairman. I observe from the Estimates that we spent \$250,000 last year and the amount to be voted is \$150,000. It is called “over-expenditure”. Is it that the total cost will be \$400,000 and originally the sum estimated for the project was \$250,000 and that is why there is this over expenditure”?

Cde. Corbin: Cde. Chairman, the answer is Yes. This money has been provided to ensure that the road which forms an integral part of the Upper Demerara Forestry Project is completed. As you know, at first it was intended that the road would be part of the Upper Demerara Forestry Project. However, when the feasibility study and other things were gone into, it was recognised that to put the cost of the road on the project itself would make the cost benefit of the project not really viable. Therefore the road project was taken off as an exercise by the Government. This provision is to assist in paying the remaining budgeted sum for this road.

Division 519, Ministry of Forestry - \$150,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 141 and 142

#### HEAD 58 – MINISTRY OF TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,627,000 for Head 58, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. N. Persaud: On page 141, subheads 124 and 125. Information has revealed that Allocation and Distribution Officers, Ministry of Trade, Pricing Officers and Consumer Protection Officers under these two subheads fall. From the names one can reasonably accept that these officers have to do more or less with the distribution of foodstuff. The economic crisis in which we are, according to the Government, requires the Government to restrict the importation of some items.

The Chairman: You are speaking on both subheads together.

Cde. N. Persaud: Yes.

The Chairman: I see that subhead 125 deals primarily with Clerical and Office Support.

Cde. N. Persaud: They are not spelt out. Information I received this morning revealed that they fall under this subhead.

The Chairman: If you enquired you would be in a better position. Would you tell us what these things fall under – the allocation, distribution and protection, and things of that nature? Do they fall under 124 and 125? Go ahead.

Cde. N. Persaud: As I was saying, because of the deepening economic crisis the policy of the Government has been to restrict the importation of certain items, to ban others and, in some cases, not to import some at all. Because of this new policy and the limited number of items that are now available to the Ministry of Trade, which has the job of distributing the goods for the whole country, there is need at this particular time for careful and cautious handling in order to ensure that the food is equitably distributed.

Obviously from what has been taking place in the country we have to come to certain conclusions and one of these conclusions is that these officers are perhaps not really doing their work, if they are still in the Ministry, because allocations are not adequately or evenly made. The distribution also is unfair and inequitable. The pricing, of course, is beyond the small man's reach and consumer protection officers also are apparently not doing their work because consumers are not being protected. We only have to name one instance and that is the question of flour. There have been so many reports. Cde. Ram Karran referred to the case at Enterprise as far as rice is concerned. I can take another case as far as bond paper is concerned. The Ministry has a letter from me waiting now three weeks for a reply, where I was told clearly by the G.N.T.C., the manager, that they do not make the allocation; the Ministry of Trade makes the allocation. The New Guyana Company, because it prints the Mirror, is not given any. Angal's Printery, which prints the Catholic Standard, does not get any. These two companies alone.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:35 hrs

Cde. Nabada Persaud: Is it not discrimination? Limited foreign exchange, limited importation, then obviously, if we are to see with them in this day of crisis, then we must be satisfied that whatever comes into the country is equally distributed. Cde. Chairman, I do not know, I would like this afternoon to enquire from the Minister what are really the functions of these officers that I have called, now that they are hidden under these names, whether they are particularly in charge of making the allocation, giving the distribution, and whether they really see that the consumers are protected? We have many many cases where people line up for many long hours. Some shops get, some do not get. This brings me to the point, Cde. Chairman, of the K.S.I.

The community shops were there all over the country some years ago. We were told that we must have state outlets. We agreed. The state outlets took precedence over the community shops. Now the state outlets have been fegged out and the K.S.I.s have taken over and the bulk of the goods go to the K.S.I. Personally, I am affected. We cannot get flour. You go and line up for long hours at some of the K.S.I.s because they are the people who have the flour. Cde. Chairman, I want to feel that this is high discrimination, and if we have these officers in the Ministry to make the allocation and to make the distribution to protect the consumers, I feel that these officers must be allowed to function impartially in order that all the people in the country can have an equitable and a fair amount of goods whatever the amount is.

Cde. Chairman, obviously we do now share the view that the K.S.I. should get preference and maybe the Minister will tell us this afternoon whether that is not so, that the K.S.I. which is a P.N.C. outfit gets priority. These profits from these state shops obviously go to the P.N.C. instead of the Government Treasury. The profits from the K.S.I. go to the P.N.C. who today is taking the same profits and are now investing it in the defence bonds, etc., to get extra interest and more money on that, all at the expense of the poor man in the country.

Cde. Chairman, permit me to turn to page 142 to deal with subhead 710 which deals with subsidies. We will note that from \$1½ million, \$750,000 is for the conveyance of foodstuff to the hinterland. Comrades, will recall that I spoke on this matter last year because I feel very strongly for the comrades who live in the hinterland. Now the comrades there because of the high freight charges, pay very very high prices for the little goods that they get there. Last year when we raised this question we were



1982-04-06

14:35 – 14:45 hrs

told that the amount of \$500,000, if I remember correctly, was allocated last year, particularly for the conveyance of foodstuff, and that was adequate. The Estimates, however, Cde. Chairman, shows that the sum \$2,021,400 was spent. Now we are seeing here that \$750,000 out of the \$1½ million being sought this afternoon will go for the rebate on kerosene. This does not necessarily exclude the people in the hinterland, but what amount will go towards and solely the people the conveyance of foodstuff to the hinterland? We know the scarcity of goods in Georgetown and around Georgetown. We can stretch out imagination to enquire what is going on in the hinterland as far as the availability is concerned. Now if we were to stretch our imagination a little further, apart from the information we have on hand, we can very well come to the conclusion that the people in the hinterland are really at a great disadvantage. They are the people that we want to remain in the hinterland to develop the hinterland. They are the people whom we have encouraged to go and settle in the hinterland. Those very people are at a grave disadvantage in a sense that they do not have access to certain facilities in Georgetown or around, the post etc. as we have. They have to contend. Now added to all of these, they are called upon to pay as much as 100 percent more on certain items as we pay here. We feel recognising the grave economic crisis in which the country is plunged into, recognising that the goods that we have in the country is limited, that this subsidy should be increased by 100 percent. By doing so, I would feel, it will give the people in the hinterland an opportunity to have goods. I want to emphasise again, the limited goods, at a more reasonable price. Since we recognise that service that the people who have to live in the hinterland is giving to the nation, I think the Government ought to reconsider this and I want to ask the Minister this afternoon whether he would not give some consideration of doubling this \$750,000 to \$1.5 million to assist the people in the hinterland.

The Chairman: Cde. Hope.

The Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, the member who spoke a moment ago made reference to the apparent shortages of certain commodities within the country and work which the price control and other personnel in the Ministry responsible for distribution are doing. I think, all through this debate has been coming through the one message that in the present circumstances of the country, certain importations would have to be diminished whether you diminish it from the point of view of restriction or just not importing it is immaterial. The facts are that in the present foreign exchange circumstances of the country, the importation of certain things has to be diminished.

Reference is made of course to products like flour and rice and so on and bond paper. The truth of the matter is, if these things are in short supply there will develop lines. But what I want to assure the member is that we do have in place distribution

1982-04-06

14:35 – 14:45 hrs

mechanisms which seek to make the distribution of goods by area as fair as is possible. Clearly, in the circumstances we are not going to get adequacy because adequacy in fact, means that people would be able to get all they want of a particular commodity. We cannot promise adequacy in every case, but whatever comes in we have mechanisms in place which would ensure that those goods are equitably distributed as within the population.

Reference is also made to bond paper. The question really in terms of bond paper, and the member knows that, first of all, one state corporation is the sole importer --

The Chairman: Cde. Hope as far as I am aware, at the moment there is a case engaging the attention of the Supreme Court on that matter dealing with paper.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: That is not the same thing.

The Chairman: It is all dealing with paper, isn't it?

Cde. Narbada Persaud: It is a different thing.

The Chairman: Anyway as far as I am aware there is a case engaging the attention of the Courts. Please be careful in your remarks on that matter.

Cde. Hope: I thank you for your advice, Cde. Chairman, and I would move on.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:45 hrs.

(Cde. Hope continues)

I thank you for your advice, Cde. Chairman, and I move on. Certain things are imported by the State corporations and it is up to the individual people to make their needs known to the State's corporations. If those needs are made known to the State corporations would import within the confines of the foreign exchange that is available for those things. With respect to K.S.I., I think it is common knowledge that K.S.I. establishments were put in place when in fact it was quite clear that the number of people that were responsible for distribution in the private sector were not doing a good job. There was rampant black-marketing, there was in fact a lot of discrimination and the people themselves called upon K.S.I. to establish outlets in area after area and really it was in response to that felt need by the people to have K.S.I. outlets in the various areas that these outlets have been established. But even the K.S.I. would suffer from inadequacy of certain commodities because those things were not just there. If things are not there K.S.I. will not be able to have adequate supply of things and therefore you will see lines and you will get charges of discrimination. These charges are not necessarily true. The basic and fundamental problem is inadequacy of supplies which are well-known by all of us here.

With respect to subsidies in the hinterland I think the Member should know two things. One is that it is the commitment of Government to subsidise the transportation of food into the hinterland and the rates charged by G.A.C., which is really the carrier in this particular instance, are reflective of that commitment. In addition to that there is the second point I want to raise and that is that Government has been encouraging hinterland communities, as far as possible, to be self-sufficient in the food that they consume. So you will find all over the country, the regions which cover the hinterland have been encouraging people to grow and utilise the food which they can produce in the area. I want to assure the Member that the rates governing transportation into the hinterland and the rates which are chargeable by G.A.C. have been determined by G.A.C. In the Estimates this amount of \$750,000 would be adequate as far as we can see at the moment to cover the subsidies which is necessary. Thank you.

HEAD 58 – MINISTRY OF TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,627,000 for Head 58, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 58 Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection - \$3,627,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 143

DIVISION 533 – MINISTRY OF TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$100,000 for Division 533 – Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, stand part of the Estimates.

Division 533, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection - \$100,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 144 and 145

HEAD 59 – MINISTRY OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$289,300 for Head 59 – Ministry of Manufacturing Industry, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 59 – Ministry of Manufacturing Industry - \$289,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 146

DIVISION 534 – MINISTRY OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,875,000 for Division 534 – Ministry of Manufacturing Industry, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, on this page, subheads 2 and 5. Subhead 2 deals with Sanata Textile Mill and we note here that the sum of \$250,000 is being sought for the Sanata Textile Mill. The legend reads to maintain building and equipment of the Cotton Textile Mill. We have been told during the discussion of the Estimates of last year that the Sanata Textile Mill has been completed. We were told that it produced

650,000 metres of cloth and that figure was going to go to 1.5 million last year. The new Budget Speech this year referred to over production taking it to 1.8 million metres of cloth. My question is that since the textile mill is now in full operation, since according to the figure the textile mill has over filled its target, since we have been hearing about Caricom market for textile and all the advertisements saying how good the cotton is that is being produced here, why the central Government has to give \$250,000 to the Sanata Textile Mill to maintain itself? Is the Sanata Textile Mill with all the glory we have been hearing about not big enough to maintain itself?

The second one deals with Subhead 5 – Guyana Glassworks for which 1.2 million dollars are now being sought. Cde. Chairman, the legend reads to provide part of the working capital for the operation of the Glass factory. Cde. Hoyte who dealt with this matter replied to the query that the Glassworks was completed in 1980 and was awaiting the reliable supply of electricity. The point is that this factory has been completed for two years and we are hearing that working capital is now being sought. Have they solved the electricity problem, first question?

Are they going to get electricity from the G.E.C.? Have they brought in a special plant here since we know for a fact that the G.E.C. is not in a position to supply reliable electricity? Another question is, did they not think of the problem of G.E.C. before they spent thirty-something million dollars? \$5 million it cost them more. You see the problem of the G.E.C. was there for a long, long time.

The Chairman: Cde. Narbada, if my recollection is correct and do not tell me I am older than you, I believe they said they bought a plant for electricity.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Another question I want to ask is whether it is true that the World Bank in a report last year advised that it will not be feasible to produce sheet glass at factory and advised them to discontinue? I understand that work has been discontinued in the plant and the reason for that is that the markets in the Caricom areas are not very good for sheet glass. Whether that is so and whether the factory is going to start now, they are asking for working capital. Whether sheet glass is in fact going to be manufactured there since they are asking for \$1.2 million working capital whether the Minister will be in a position to tell us how soon the factory will be in operation or whether it is in operation.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Chairman, with respect to Sanata Textile Mill that mill is in fact working. It is in fact producing. It is in fact selling and in the large measure a number of our clothing manufacturers, shirt factories and so on are at the moment gearing themselves to depend very heavily on the output of the Sanata Textile Mill. The amount put in here is really to provide for some additional work on the building and building site which has to be done to the factory. Some of it will be in expansion in certain areas and

1982-04-06

14:45 – 14:55 hrs

Government clearly did not intend that the Textile Mill was in a position to find this sum from its own cast generation at the present time.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:55 hrs.

(Cde. Hope continues)

The Government clearly did not intend that the Textile Mill was in a position to find this sum from its own cash generation at the present time and it was therefore proposing to give what is in effect an equity contribution to the Textile Mill at this stage. It is equity because it is money which is being further invested in the Textile Mill. It is not a loan, it is going to be invested directly in the Textile Mill and it will amount to an equity.

The second question relates to the Guyana Glass Works. As you, Cde. Chairman, correctly pointed out, the Glass Factory is now completely independent – it practically amounts to that. They have installed a stand by power plant which would guarantee that whatever the circumstances of the G.E.C., the Glass Factory would have continuous and adequate power. That is clear, there is no question about it. The amount requested here really deals with working capital and that ought to have indicated to the Member that as the Glass Factory is seeking working capital it is, in fact, gearing itself to start business. That is really where the Glass Factory is at the moment. It is ready to start business as soon as this working capital is provided.

Basically, on the other question of the sheet glass, it is not my information that the World Bank preferred any advice to the Government with respect to the sheet glass. What has happened is the Government has reviewed the whole market situation and has decided that the emphasis should now be placed on container glass. We have a lot of domestic industries, whether it is Banks Breweries, whether it is Rum Companies, whether it is soft drink companies, that are dependent on imports for their present supply of bottles. Therefore, in the present circumstances the Government has decided that it will emphasise at the present time the container glass aspect of the plant and it will so be doing.

Division 534, Ministry of Manufacturing Industry - \$1,875,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 81 to 83

HEAD 33 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINING

Question proposed that the sum of \$730,000 for Head 33, Ministry of Energy and Mining, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 33, Ministry of Energy and Mining - \$730,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 84

DIVISION 521 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINING

Question proposed that the sum of \$17,756,000 for Division 521, Ministry of Energy and Mining, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 2, 4, 11 and 12. Subhead 2, Hydro Power Division. I have read the legend and it does appear that the Government is now engaged in surveys and investigations of smaller sites from which hydro power can be generated. I recall making contributions before in the Assembly to the effect that the Government was biting more than it can chew. It is clear that after so much talk about the Upper Mazaruni Hydro Project, which project we were being persuaded to believe would answer all the energy power problem, in 1982 it is still not off the ground. But while it is not off the ground the country suffers both from an economic and social stand point in so far as power is concerned. I would hope that I can be somewhat persuasive this afternoon to tell the Cde. Minister, who has indicated by his contribution that he is always willing to listen not only in the Assembly but to talk to us even in his office, that we cannot dilly dally any longer on the question of power. We cannot live in hope any longer. This matter has to be tackled with the greatest speed. If not, our already ailing economy, which some people will argue is down there already on its knees and cannot go any further, will result in absolute stagnation of every conceivable thing that one can ponder upon in this country at the moment. The Minister had, during his contribution when he spoke --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, we are not debating the policy.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: -- indicated that now consideration is being given to Tiger Hill. He went on to the extent of saying that it is the pet area of Members of this side of the Assembly. But looking at all the reports and looking at all the investigations, this area has been surveyed. There is information about Tiger Hill. I want to read only one paragraph from the 1966-1972 Development Programme which programme was presented to this Assembly by this Government, and subsequently abandoned like so many things. It states:



“Preliminary surveys to define more accurately the potential of the two priority sites at Tiger Hill on the Demerara River and the Tiboku Falls on the Mazaruni River”.

In that they were conceding and they were saying since then that surveys were carried on. We are now in the year 1982.

If I understood him, they referred to Tumatumari which is specifically identified in the Estimates in the legend. It is clear that by now we would have been in a position to tell the nation what possibility and potentials exist in these areas. Our view is that Tiger Hill would have answered the problem. Guybau could have been solved and, indeed, we could have had an adequate supply of power for sure up to Timehri. Our contribution and the response to this particular subhead is that Tamatumari is far and not that it should not be developed, we are not against it at all, but it means that it should have been given, probably, second priority and not first priority. I simply want to refer the Minister to what the position was in 1964 --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, I am not going to allow a general debate. I am giving you a lot of time because of how rapidly we are moving.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I think we are very much in advance and I have no intention of wasting your time. I am sure you will concede that this power is an important matter. I would like the Minister to tell us today exactly what is happening. We are anxious to know.

Subhead 4, Capital Contribution to Upper Mazaruni Development Authority. The legend explains about optimization study and to conduct drilling operations on site.

1982-04-06

15:05 – 15:15 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:05 hrs.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

He has spoken about drilling and we have heard the possibility of oil and what have you in the country. I know Guyana is rich, but probably we can be told because at one stage of the country probably early last year or 1980 the nation was led to believe that oil is the answer and oil will solve all our economic problems. That kind of utterance can lull the nation into a sense of false security. I want to look very positively at the estimates. In 1981 \$6.8 million was provided and only \$1.1 million was spent. Which means that we have overspent, nothing is happening there, the thing is at a stand still. This is my information and the fact that we had the money and we were not able to spend it which was clearly seen in the estimates, supports the contention that nothing is happening and nothing can really happen.

This year, the Government is asking for \$7 million, when they could not spend last year's. I wonder if the Minister could explain to the House exactly what is taking place here. We have got under – I did not identify it, he can probably tell us what the Energy Authority is doing because I think I made the point already, Mines has gone, Energy has gone, Forestry is gone, the Ministry is still existing. I have no intention of asking the current incumbent to take another portfolio. I have nothing against him. He can probably be replaced in the programme of replacement or redeploy. I would not quarrel about the word. I would strongly suggest that he be redeployed and use his talent and his undoubted ability in the new field that he may be thrown into because all these authorities are supposed to be functioning.

I come to subhead 11. Management Assistance to G.E.C. My information is that the whole administration of the G.E.C. is in shambles. I do not want to waste time, we have all assumed, read the Luckhoo's report and the many many areas of complaint and that needed effective and speedy corrective actions. My information is that there is no speed and no serious action to make the necessary rectifications that were vital. In talking about management, while the Government earlier spoke of getting rid of the expatriate, and I do not want to hold any brief for anybody. In 1981, 1982, we have them here very clearly and very visibly and it does appear from the kind of reaction the Government is involved in, particularly with respect to the Guyana Electricity

Corporation that the Government is conveying to this nation that Guyanese have proven incapable of running one of its important corporations.

I understand that there are a lot of complaints and sometimes clashes between the foreigners and the locals but may I take credit for the P.P.P., that in our time, having acquired the Electric Company then and converting it into a corporation, we efficiently managed it and run it with Guyanese. We do not make a lot of speeches and talk too much, but that is the position. Right now, you have countless complaints. I think the Minister should be in a position to tell us, having read the legend to provide for technical assistance – technical assistance would mean, I hope I am interpreting to your approval Sir, people who have to be able to effect the necessary repairs and what have you to ensure that there is supply.

I have read in the papers a long story there today, why we cannot have power and you must loom for load shedding. I think all those actions are negative, we need positive actions. What the nation wants to be told is for what longer period they will have to suffer even on schedule blackouts. The situation has never been so bad as it is currently and during last year. I want to call on the Minister to say exactly what is the position and when the nation – bearing in mind that people have to live with a threatening crime situation and to live in such a situation without power, you could imagine what is happening. To live at a time when there is shortage of food, and when food must be stored in the refrigerating system, there is no power and food has to be spoilt, not to mention the manufacturing section. People are sent home, they are not paid and so on.

Mr. Abraham: Cde. Chairman, subhead 2, Hydro Power Division. Just a short question on the Wamukarru Hydro Project. The legend says to provide for survey works. I am under the impression that the initial survey work at that particular hydro site has been completed. Could the Honourable Minister say what sort of survey work or what is the next phase of operations to be carried out at that particular hydro site.

The Chairman: Cde. Jack.

The Minister of Energy and Mines (Cde. Jack): Cde. Chairman, I think that it would be appropriate for me to deal with subhead 2 and 4 together, since they are interlinked. With regard to the money which has been allocated here, it is for the purpose of having surveys done for transmission lines for Tumatumari and for Wamukarru as well. As I said during the debate last week, concerning the Tumatumari Hydro Electric Survey, the feasibility study is completed and has now been sent to us and this is the case also with Wamukarru. The thing for us to do is to make a decision on whether we go ahead with Tumatumari and with Wamukarru. The Wamukarru Scheme would cost

something in the region of \$7 million, since it is a very small scheme, but the Tumatumari Scheme is estimated in 1981 prices at \$125 million and with interest during construction to 1986, it should be something of the order of \$195 million. This is for an install capacity of fifty megawatts. This does not represent any deviation from our settled policy. As I explained, when we got money from the World Bank for Hydro Electric Power Studies, that money was divided into a number of parts. Some of that money was for further work on Upper Mazaruni, some of the money was also for an optimisation study of a number of optimisation of other sites which we could consider in case we found that we could not build Upper Mazaruni. The other sites are Tiboko, Kaieteur, Amaila, Tumatumari and Tiger Hill. All of these sites will be considered. The consulting company which is carrying out this optimisation study is Sweco.

1982-04-06

15:15 – 15:25 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:15 hrs

(Cde. Jack continues)

With regard to the money put aside here under subhead 4, part of that money is for the further work which has to be done for Upper Mazaruni, which work will be finished this year, and part is for the optimisation study. The reason why the money was spent last year was that negotiations were somewhat protracted and we did not sign the contract for this further work until late in the year.

The studies which were done on Tumatumari and Wamukaru were studies assisted by Canadian Funds as well as the World Bank Funds, while the studies being done under the umbrella “optimisation studies” are entirely World Bank Funds.

With regard to subhead 11, Management Assistance to G.E.C., the hon. Member did express himself in rather large terms. I would say that I must be in agreement with him though I would have used more modest language to describe the situation at G.E.C. The fact is that in many of the departments there is inadequacy at the managerial level and even at the technical level. We are also suffering from a lack of spare parts. We have engaged the services of G.E.I as I mentioned last week.

I do not know of any serious conflict or controversy between the expatriate staff and the local staff. The question of the loss of Guyanese personnel is something I think that this entire House should take into consideration. We do run an open economy in this country and we do have freedom of movement. For this reason, persons who are qualified Guyanese, can leave and go to more lucrative jobs. For some time in the past we had kept salaries of our top management people static. As a matter of fact, in the case of GUYMINE, the C.E.O. at GUYMINE had the same pay from 1971 up to the present date. It has not been changed. In the case of the Ministers’ salaries, which certain members on the Minority side feel happy to speak about in derisive terms, these have not moved since 1973.

However, with regard to the management personnel, whether it be in G.E.C. or other corporations, this House and all political parties will have to have a serious look as to whether they intend to keep Guyanese and if so, what to do to encourage Guyanese with skills to stay. You cannot have it both ways. It is the same people who keep year after year coming here and saying how we are paying our top people too much money,

that we should cut their pay, who then come back and tell us, when these same people leave because they have not got sufficient money, that we should try and keep the Guyanese. The fact is that we have had a second look at the whole question of the remuneration packages and I am happy to say that, as a result of certain things which we have done, there is a greater likelihood of us retaining our top-level Guyanese staff in the future.

With regard to the time when this situation will be improved, I can say that during the latter half of this year we would expect a significant improvement. We have certain spare parts on order. Those spare parts will take a certain number of weeks, in some instances months, to arrive here. When these shares arrive here, and with the assistance from the company with whom we have a management assistance contract, we expect a significant improvement in G.E.C.

Division 521, Ministry of Energy and Mining - \$17,756,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 7 and 8

#### HEAD 4 – SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,546,200 – for Head 4, Supreme Court of Judicature, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 110

The Chairman: You cannot speak on that. All of that is statutory.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am not questioning the money. I want to raise a question on 110, the question of Appeal Court Judges.

The Chairman: No, no. All of that is statutory. Those are wages and salaries. Go down to the next subhead.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 125, Clerical and Office Support. I know that with the full staff at the Supreme Court people were still complaining that the services were not the best, not because the people who were there did not want to work, but because the volume of work was too great and they needed more people to cope with what had to be done within the department.

I remember that we had advocated, from this side of the House, an increase, bearing in mind that it was a year of austerity and there was a reduction in staff, but I observe that the department will now be staffed with 33 persons less than it had earlier. From what we have here the number is reduced from 99 to 66. I am sure this will put the department at a great disadvantage. The public will suffer and I am sure nobody would wish that to happen.

Even in looking at the current financial position and the necessary constraints, I think certain areas may still have to be treated with the greatest priority, taking into account exactly what is involved. All of us would like to ensure that institutions that are responsible for the dispensation of justice have all the facilities to ensure that there are speedy trials, bearing in mind the number of complaints of the many cases that are outstanding and the fact that there are people who have been explaining for three years. They have not been tried and are incarcerated. I am sure that all the facilities that go to provide speedy trails ought to be at the disposal of the institution and, on this occasion, we would like to support the Minister of Justice. We would like him to advocate for a full complement to ensure proper services in this department.

I turn to the next page, simply to remind the Minister that he gave us certain assurances last year, during the debate on the Budget, about subheads 283 and 284, Expenses of Jurors and Expenses of Witnesses, respectively. I do not wish to go over the argument. I gave all the details then. He promised to look into the question of payment for jurors and witnesses. I take the point when one speaks about civic responsibility and civic duty. Someone who serves in the panel of jurors or goes to give evidence is doing much more than expecting payment. Nevertheless people who are called upon for these services have to incur certain expenditure and the payment must be reasonable to ensure that they are not put greatly out of pocket. Those sums were fixed several years ago and I have the exact year on the last occasion when I spoke.

1982-04-06

15:25 – 15:35 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:25 hrs

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Cde. Shahabuddeen): Cde. Chairman, I would like to record my deep appreciation to my colleague and friend, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, for the support of which he assured me in the responsibilities which I have in relation to the system of administering justice which obtains in this country. Finance is indeed an important element of the capacity of the system to function and I would like in turn to assure him that I lose no occasion myself to make the point that the necessities of the case must be met. But I do believe that my colleague will in turn appreciate that austerities, the economic austerities imposed by the situation on us this year has been rather unusual. I want to say to him that is the only reason, I do believe he will accept it as a sincere and honest reason, why we have not been able to make the kind of progress that both he and I am sure, jointly, would have wished to have in respect of matters relating to remuneration of jurors and witness. It is also the case that as he correctly pointed out – I am not sure about the exact figure, mathematics have never been my very strongest point, that has always been the forte of my friend the Foreign Minister – he may be right that the number is 33 that we have had to reduce the establishment of the Supreme Court Registry by 33. It is about that. We do regret this very much. The necessity for so doing has given us no joy whatever and we do hope that it will be possible within the earliest future to start to move back to the position which both he and I would regard as being desirable.

Head 4, Supreme Court of Judicate - \$1,546,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 9 and 10

MAGISTRATES

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,828,800 for Head 5 – Magistrates – stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: There is a nominal provision under 914, sir, Remuneration of Advisory Committee to Rent Assessors. That is the Head, but what I am concerned about, sir, is that rent assessment is an important exercise currently in the



country, bearing in mind that both land lord and tenant enjoy the right under the relevant ordinances to have their promises assessed. My information is that we need --

The Chairman: This is dealing with an advisory committee. This is not dealing with rent assessors.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I suppose I could not raise my point there? Then I move to 915. Cde. Chairman, I notice there were no previous provisions. The sum does appear to be now and I want to interpret that to mean that our advocacy on this of the Assembly from time to time to have inquests held in a number of cases involving the death of people, that this is probably the first move to have those inquests held. But \$100 is a very nominal. One assumes that the provision will be no impediment and that a magistrate will be put – I want to call on the Minister of Justice to see that a magistrate is appointed for a period, or withdrawn from some other area in which he is serving and put to deal with these outstanding inquests. Some have attracted both national and international concern. Among those are the late Dr. Walter Rodney, and a late Minister of the Government, Vincent Teekah, who served as Minister of Education. Will the Minister of Justice inform this Assembly when inquests will be held into the circumstances surrounding the death of the persons and others whom the authorities are well aware of, so that the public appeal and cry and representation can be answered by the administration, and specifically, by the Department of Justice.

I will now move to 916, Rice Assessment Tribunal. If my information is correct, I think it is, that the rice assessment committee came to an end on the 31<sup>st</sup> December and speaking in the month of April, the fourth month of the year, the committee has not been appointed. I do not think it is a good thing for me on this side of the Assembly to call on the Government to reconstitute this committee. We talk of land tenure. We talk of our concern about the farmers and the fact that the necessary institutions and instruments ought to be available to them so that they can have redresses whenever necessary. I recall, sir, complaining that the committee was not meeting. My information is that it met some what last year and so I do not want to repeat the same complaint. But having met for a few times, we end up at the time of Budget with no committee at all. I would like the Minister to tell us what is delaying the re-appointment and the re-constitution of the committee, and sir, to ask him that in re-constituting the committee, that the farmers are properly represented by people whom they have confidence in. In fact, to have the institutions is one thing but people must have confidence in all institutions of Justice. Appointment to these institutions are vital and when appointments are questioned whether at the higher level or at the lower level, the whole institution is undermined. We would want to contribute objectively to ensure that the institutions of justice generally, whether at the rent assessment level or at any level, are so constituted by way of

appointment and promotion and what have you, that the public can have confidence in them and so I call for that kind of response from the Cde. Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

The Chairman: Cde. Dalchand.

Cde. Dalchand: Cde. Speaker, I just want to speak on subhead 403, page 10, Maintenance of Buildings. I notice that the paltry sum of \$500,000 is being allocated here and I would like to draw to the attention of the appropriate authority, the conditions of some of the Magistrate Courts, at Providence, Vreed-en-Hoop, Wales and taking into account that the authorities have not yet re-opened the court at La Grange. I would like to ask the Minister how early these buildings will be rehabilitated, and how soon they are going to re-open the court at La Grange.

The Chairman: Cde. Attorney General.

Cde. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, I want to congratulate my friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud on the incisiveness with which he pointed out formerly to the seemingly modest figure of \$100 for inquests. He is quite right to challenge the adequacy of that amount and he is entitled to an explanation from me. Yes, \$100 per say would be not sufficient to defray the anticipated expenses in that area of legal activity. The explanation I would offer to him is that again this being an austerity, what we have sought to do is to limit that in effect to a token amount with the hope – we believe it is a reasonable hope – that we would be able to utilise savings from this area of the particular page of the Estimates to finance the activities which needs to be undertaken in respect of inquests. We do not think that there will be a by let up or hold up in the level of activities which should be undertaken. Now, as regards to particular cases mentioned by my colleague, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, the answer is I would offer him with great respect is that particular matters relating to particular cases in the administration of Justice are not, properly speaking, matters for the Attorney General. The question of inquests would come within the responsibilities of the Director of Public Prosecutions and indirectly, the responsibility of the Minister of Home Affairs.

Now, as far as the Rice Assessment Committees are concerned, it is true as he said that the Committees have not regrettably been appointed so far for this year. The explanation for that, I do not say that it is an entirely adequate one, but I hope he will understand, is that it has been thought desirable to manage the appointment of the members of these Committees in conjunction with action being taken to institutionalise the new local democratic system.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:35 hrs

(Cde. Shahabuddeen continues)

For that reason there has been a transitional delay in making an appointment but I am happy to say that action to finalise these matters is about to be completed and my good friend, the Minister of Agriculture, who is primarily responsible, assures me that it will not be long before this area of inactivity as proposed by Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud will be closed.

Now as regards the La Grange court this matter has been arising for a number of years now and it has been the subject of debate, all of which I concede is legitimate debate. We have reached the stage now, following I think out of the kind of discussion we have been having over past years, when it has appeared neat and proper a measure of efficiency that we should discontinue the use of that court at La Grange. There is as mentioned a court at Wales and another court at Vreed-en-Hoop. The distance between these two courts is merely eight miles. In the old times when we had court at La Grange then the distance was of course still eight miles but then the road was poor. It was a poorly surfaced road but now the road is ..... surfaced. I would leave it to the court to recognise where the credit needs to be given for the fact that that road is now a properly surfaced road. But it is a good road and there is really no substantial difficulty for a mitigant to drive from say half-way point between Vreed-en-Hoop and Wales or either to Wales and Vreed-en-Hoop. So for these reasons we had thought the national welfare would be better served by converting that old court building into a school house and I understand it is being used as a school house. I invite my friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud to see that it is by far a more efficient use to make of that building.

HEAD 9 – OMBUDSMAN

Question proposed that the sum of \$59,500, Ombudsman stand part of the Estimates.

Head 9 – Ombudsman - \$59,500 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 24 and 25

HEAD 12 – PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS - \$413,800

Question proposed that the sum of \$413,800 – Public Prosecution stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 505, it is a new item that is designated in the Estimates as Professional consultants. I am sure that the Cde. Attorney General will provide an answer for this item. I do not know if I should make my contribution before asking him what it represents. I wonder if this profession is to have the services of private practitioners to participate or to be involved like we have observed in some of the cases. I think the Minister ...

The Chairman: Let us hear if that satisfies you.

Cde. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, I am glad to be able to assure my good friend, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that this item is intended to enable the chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions to continue to retain the services of legal practitioner. It will also be utilised by him in connection with retaining the services of other legal consultants where the services are needed.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I have responses from members of the legal profession with respect to the retention of private practitioner in case of prosecution. I feel that the Director of Public Prosecution's office once it has its full staff, and I think it does, not dealing with drafting part of it, I think there are enough legal practitioners available that can be recruited or employed to that department. I think it is a bad policy when Government chooses specific cases to employ certain people. The trend has been along one line – to retain certain lawyers to prosecute. When those things happen the general opinion because we all subscribe to one concept, is that justice must not only be done but appear to be done. People feel that instead of having a case presented, instead of someone prosecuting, dealing with this particular head you end up having persecution instead or prosecution. I think we all know today that it is the duty of a prosecutor to simply present the case, the facts and leave it to the judge or jury or both as the case maybe. If that is solely the function of a prosecuting counsel I would hate to believe that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution is without people with that kind of capacity, capability and skills. Let us only just for argument say that a sophisticated legal point may arise and sometimes a junior prosecutor finds himself in difficulty to answer, speaking from practical experience, surely the Department is not without people who can come and supplement that junior counsel in dealing with that particular legal question that may arise. I would be grateful, Cde. Chairman, if the Attorney General can on this

occasion tell us because I said it is not a good policy and we want to call on him to discontinue that policy of retaining people outside to come and prosecute. I noticed there is provision in another head. Even if you allow it where there is no question of prosecuting someone it is only a question of consultation as he said earlier. There is a provision which appears twice, I think. I do not think you have a more capable man and I think no one in this House will deny the capacity of the Attorney General himself to unravel the most difficult legal point. In the Estimates, I make the point very strongly and boldly, they are making provision in 1982 a year when we should be saving money, a year when we are retrenching people, a year when many infants will go without milk and when people will suffer we are making this provision. I see it as an insult to the capacity and obvious proficiency of the Attorney General of this country. We do not need those consultants outside of the framework we have within our own legal contingency.

Cde. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, I am glad to assure my friend, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that the focus of development do mean what it has been for a number of years now and that is we should seek progressively to institutionalise the prosecuting skills of the state and to retain them as far as possible in the chamber of the Director of Public Prosecutions in the same sense as I believe we have succeeded in developing civil mitigation skills within the staff of the chamber of the Attorney General.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:45 hrs.

(Cde. Shahabuddeen continues)

But my friend will concede that the work of the Director of Public Prosecutions is somewhat different. There is almost a seasonal aspect to it, certainly in respect of the .... of issues which may arise on the share volume of prosecuting work which may have to be undertaken. It is precisely for that reason that as of time immemorial it was the practice of the Attorney General, who was then the Chief Prosecuting Officer of the State, to retain the services of lawyers in private practise to undertake prosecution in particular cases. You, Cde. Speaker, would know that traditionally the whole institution of Kings Counsel in England was built up around this idea that the crown had a right to have recourse to the services of senior private practitioners for the purpose of presenting cases for the Crown at the bar of the court. It is a system which we inherited and which we still have and I think, if I may so submit to the honourable Assembly for its consideration, it is a valuable institution, a valuable arrangement and we would be short-sighted in dispensing with that institution at this stage.

It is valuable for the reason that it imports a very useful system of cross fertilisation of practise and experience between the private practising bar and, if I may put it that way, the State prosecuting bar. As I said, I think we should be very slow to come to the conclusion that the system which has operated with such great advantage to the public welfare for as long as anyone of us here will remember should be put an end to. I would submit that we ought to continue the system subject to the very wise observation by my friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that that system ought not to be allowed to develop to the disadvantage of the institutionalisation of the legal skills of Counsel engaged on the public side. I do not think, I am glad to assure the Assembly, that there is any such danger in the offing.

What we want to do, if I may say so, is to proceed with a programme of development which is balanced, which maintains a right sort of balance between the involvement of the private legal practising bar and the Attorneys-at-Law who are on the State side.

Head 12, Public Prosecutions - \$413,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 43 and 44.

HEAD 18 – ATTORNEY GENERAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,885,600 for Head 18, Attorney General stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Demand Persaud: There is a short question and I think it will suffice under subhead 124, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, bearing in mind that the legend is not as clear as we know it to be. I would like to know what is the current status of the drafting section of the Attorney General's Office. I had raised it last year, that we need to attract and keep men with experience to draft our legislation and that kind of thing. My information is that we are now without the kind of experience and skill. We might have some but definitely far from what will be required or is desirable. What is the current position in the Chamber specifically with respect to drafting?

Cde. Shahabuddeen: Cde. Chairman, it is public knowledge that we have suffered rather tragic outgoings of personnel from the legal drafting division. But I do remember that when the tide was at lowest ebb some years ago I did give come to this Assembly and assured the Assembly that the legal business of the Assembly would continue to be undertaken and to be discharged by whatever personnel remained in the Attorney General's Chambers. I would like approbation of the Assembly today to the effect that that pledge has been given. At the worst of times we have managed to continue supporting the legal business of this Assembly. Bills have been drafted, Orders have been drafted, Regulations have been drafted and criticised.

But what has been happening within more recent times is that we have had to recruit three legal draftsmen from abroad on a temporary basis and they are occupied in a dual capacity. They draft and they also teach, they instruct and train. We have been successful within the last six or eight months in recruiting, I think, six new lawyers to the Chambers. They are bright, nice, young people. They are fresh from law school and colleagues will know that they will need to be encouraged and to be assisted by more senior personnel. We have at this time on-going in the Attorney General's Chambers an informal training programme under which they serve under the tutorage of more experienced hands. You, Cde. Chairman, and my friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud will remember earlier times when really there was no question of anyone coming out straight from law school and joining the Attorney General's Chambers. You had to practise and practise with reasonable success for some period of time before you were thought eligible for even being appointed to act. Things have changed and I hope they have changed for the better.

We have got a new legal educational system functioning in the West Indies and it has started, after a little hesitation, to produce recruits and graduates for us and they are coming into the Attorney General's Chambers. We hope that within two or three years time – I regret to say that we cannot wave a magic wand and achieve it – we will be able to develop, within our own system, substantial drafting skills.

At the moment I would like to acknowledge that apart from these newcomers we have more senior indigenous hands at work with rather larger skills than the newcomers. As I said, the legal business of the Assembly is in good hands.

Head 18, Attorney General - \$1,885,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 45 and 46.

#### HEAD 19 – OFFICIAL RECEIVER

Question proposed that the sum of \$254,400 for Head 19, Official Receiver, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 19, Official Receiver - \$254,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 47 and 48.

#### HEAD 20 – DEEDS REGISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$510,400 for Head 20, Deeds Registry, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 20, Deeds Registry - \$510,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 49.

#### DIVISION 511 – ATTORNEY GENERAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$100,000 for Division 511, Attorney General, stand part of the Estimates.



Division 511, Attorney General - \$100,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 40 and 41.

HEAD 17 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$16,500,000 for Head 17, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:55 hrs.

Cde. J. Jagan: I wanted to refer not to the specific sub head, but to the sub total.

The Chairman: You will have to deal with the specific head.

Cde. J. Jagan: On the question of 141 – Direct Labour Cost. I notice that the number of employees in this Ministry has been increased from 220 last year to 353 this year, which seems odd in view of the fact that there seems to be a general cut down in the number of employees. In fact, the total estimates shows that there are some 10,000 persons, the number of employees being reduced by 10,000 instead of the 6,000 that the Minister told us about on the day the budget was given. I also want to refer to page 42, that it seems inconsistent with the total reduction of 10,000 employees by the Government.

The Chairman: Cde. Jackson

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Cde. Jackson): Cde. Chairman, the questions as I understand it is one for explanations as to why the totals in terms of establishment was 220 in 1981 and in 1982 is shown as 353, in spite of the fact that the total amount of money budgeted in less than what last year. The explanation is really quite simple in that there has been a whole ..... classification and a new categorisation in terms of the production of the budget. Therefore last year we had block votes, for instance showing non representational staff, which did not detail the number of staff. On this occasion we have done so, so that really there is no contradiction. I do not know if the honourable member is really interested in an answer to her question. If she were, I would expect that there would be some attention paid to the answers. I would like to suggest that if you look at the amount of money provided you will see that in fact there is a saving, more particularly when you take account of the changes of the exchange rates; so that in fact it is a classification problem and not a question of increased provisions.

HEAD 17 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$16,500,000 for Head 17, Ministry of Foreign Affairs stand part of the Estimates.

Head 17 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs - \$16,500,000 – agreed to and order to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 42.

DIVISION 510 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$900,000 for Division 510, Ministry of Foreign Affairs stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. J. Jagan: Cde. Chairman, I want to refer to items 2, 3, 4 and 5. I notice that there is a huge expenditure here of money on what we will call furnishings and improvement, no doubt of residence overseas. The amount in view of the so called austere budget is --

The Chairman: Cde. Jagan, they are all inter-related, do you wish to speak on the entire thing?

Cde. J. Jagan: They do not seem to fit in with the general tone of what we presume is the austere budget. We find for example, that the Heads of Mission residences for redecoration has moved up from last year by an expenditure of \$20,000 up to \$600,000 and Overseas Offices Furnishing etc, has moved up from an actual amount of \$11,600 to \$100,000 and again an amount of \$100,000 for Staff Residences Furnishings.

If we leave aside number one, Purchase of Equipment which means \$100,000, this is a fantastic sum when we consider the general conditions of the country and the fact that there is such a huge deficit. It seems to me that there is no question of austerity here, but the other side of the coin – extravagance. I do not know if the Government feels that this is the time to put on a big show and display. I believe this is the time when the overseas missions must cut down and stop spending so much. Here we are having all this redecoration and expenditure on furnishings. I think it is utter nonsense and totally inconsistent with the so-called line of the Government in cutting down unnecessary expenditure. I think there should be a deletion of all these expenses and what is there in the missions, let it remain and let people live within their means. Further, I do not think that the P.N.C. Government puts on a very convincing display in its overseas missions, when the fact is that Guyana is a small country and a poor country that cannot even balance its budget and yet puts on a show. All of that would not be appreciated if that is the intention of flaunting wealth that does not exist. I feel that we must live within our means and there must be austerity and there must be an indication that this Government is serious about cutting down excessive expenditure.

The Chairman: Cde. Jackson.

Cde. Jackson: Thank you Cde. Chairman. Cde. Chairman, I would like to invite the attention of Cde. Jagan to the rest of that page. If she would look with some care at the figures that have been shown for the 1981, approved estimates and to compare that with the 1981 revised estimates. She will see a story which I do not need to tell because one assumes that the fact that \$1.2 million was voted in 1981 and only \$207,000 spent, indicates an attitude on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to save. As she would recognise, in terms of equipment, like for instance clothing, one can postpone repairs. But there comes a point in time when you have to undertake them. One can patch a dress, one can patch a shirt, one can patch a pair of pants. But at a particular point in time, there comes a need to replace them; and I think that this Government has been extraordinarily prudent in its expenditure in relation to the equipment, offices and furnishings of offices overseas. I would like to commend the officers who have served this country with great courage and have served the country with distinction. They are not putting on a show, they are serving the interest of all the Guyanese of this country and I think we need a word of praise for them rather than a word of criticism.

Cde. Chairman, the considerations that informed our attitudes in 1981 will again inform our attitudes in 1982. I would like to give this House the assurance that wherever we see a good bargain to purchase and we have the means we will proceed to purchase because over the years, it is shown that in doing this we have progressively undertaken a programme of saving. The tightest control will be exercised in the way in which we do at home and in a way in which I hope that all of us do in our own individual capacity to ensure that money that is voted is properly spent.

1982-04-06

16:05 – 16:08 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:05 hrs.

(Cde. Jackson continues)

I should like to suggest that perhaps, taking a lead from the observation of the hon. Member, we can see a manifestation on the part of the Minority Party that even in terms of their travels overseas they will have regard for the concerns of the Guyanese at home. Therefore, I would say this: The Estimates provide for the barest minimum of \$900,000. We will spend this money with prudence, but we will be in constant touch with the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, to ensure that our diplomats overseas are enabled, in a manner that is fitting to them, to perform the excellent work which they have been doing so far.

Division 510, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - \$900,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting of the Assembly suspended at 16:08 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:35 hrs

On resumption --

The Chairman: Pages 62 and 63.

HEAD 27 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,306,000 for Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: On page 63, subhead 709. This item deals with the subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. We are not generally against the principle of subsidies. In fact, we feel that wherever subsidies can be given so that consumers benefit, we on this side of the House will give absolute support. We are of the very firm conviction, however, that the G.M.C. has been mismanaged, that there are grave inefficiencies.

One must of necessity, on these occasions, look very concisely at the functions of the G.M.C. One would expect that the G.M.C., when produce are plentiful, would buy at prices that would remunerate the farmer decently and reasonably so that they get what they are entitle to, and that, at the same time, the G.M.C. would take the necessary precautions to ensure that it has the facilities to preserve the produce, whatever it is – and so many products can be referred to – so that whenever there is a shortage, out of season or out of crop or what have you, the consumers can still continue to have the same produce flowing at, probably, a fixed price. In my own experience – I think I have been sitting in this Parliament for 17 years – the G.M.C. has not succeeded in doing that. Instead, I think the whole managerial system at the G.M.C. is collapsing. One area needs to be alluded to on this occasion and that is the question of attracting the farmers to sell their produce to the G.M.C. It was with that kind of perspective that the G.M.C. was established so that they could have buying centres all over the country and so that farmers who produce in the rural areas can go at the given point, sell their produce without being subjected to the higher cost of transportation. But they failed to attract the farmers in terms of prices and in terms of other facilities. We have a clear situation today where the farmers sell their produce to what is well known in Guyana as “the middlemen”.

There have been complaints, and quite justifiably, about the escalation in prices even for our own local produce. We advocate that the farmers should get what they are entitled to. I have no doubt in my mind that the farmers are not the ones who are

benefiting at this time in this country because of the fact that they do not have the transport facilities.

The position is very clear that we are called upon to increase the subsidy this year from half a million to one million dollars. I simply want to remind the Minister that his predecessors – we have had so many Ministers of Agriculture from time to time – have said that even the G.M.C. will have to so function and operate that ultimately and finally the subsidies will be removed. I am not saying that they must be removed if the farmers and consumers will benefit, but I am firm in my view that the subsidy is going to help mismanagement, inefficiency and all the other ills that go with those things.

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Tyndall): Cde. Chairman, I do agree with the hon. Member that there is considerable room for improvement in the operations and management of the G.M.C. and in fact I wish to assure him that this is a matter which is being given very urgent attention.

I also note his comments in respect of subsidies and his acceptance of the fact that some level of subsidy is important in our efforts to encourage agricultural production. All we need to do is to ensure that subsidies serve the function of developing a very efficient agricultural sector and just do not lead to a waste of public funds.

With respect to the improvement of the operations of the corporation, I wish to refer to a project, the Food Crop Production/Marketing Programme, which will benefit the G.M.C. in that there is a component in this project which provides for the improvement of the marketing systems and management of the corporation. Already recommendations have been produced; some have been recommended and some have been implemented. We see some signs that the operations are improving, but still we are far from the target to which we aim.

In so far as buying centres are concerned, under this very programme there is provision for the establishment of a number of marketing centres. In fact, there will be six marketing centres under this programme. There will be a marketing centre at Black Bush Polder, one at Kuru Kururu, one at Charity, one at Supenaam, one at Kumaka and one at Hosororo. I have mentioned six of them. He can see that efforts are being made to improve the operations of the G.M.C. in so far as procurement is concerned. Most of these centres will be completed by the end of this year.

The project itself provides for some transport facilities to farmers. This, of course, will be far from adequate but we in the Ministry are putting up proposals for improving transportation facilities to producers and, in fact, under the Food Crop Production/Marketing Programme there is a loan component which will enable the

farmers, on the basis of group action and, in some cases, individual action where their operations permit it, to improve their capability to transport their commodities to buying centres and to the G.M.C.

With respect to the policy of the centres, I wish to say that this is a subject of a special review. Proposals are being put up. We have been reviewing the operations of G.M.C. seeing its weakness, seeing what should be its role and seeing how it could perform efficiently and on the basis of the recommendations we hope to take action to improve the operations.

Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture - \$2,306,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 64 and 65.

#### HEAD 28 – AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,776,400 for Head 28, Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 262 and 263. I can take those two together. Subheads 264, 267 and 272 at the bottom of the page.

Cde. Ram Karran: Can I say a word on 262?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 262, Purchase of Seeds. Purchasing the seeds is one thing, but I am sure that the Minister will concede that storage facilities, when seeds are purchased, are very poor or do not exist at all. Farmers have complained time and again about the poor quality of seeds they have been receiving. They have been saying also that the seeds are not germinating. I wish to draw attention to that fact.

It is not only a question of purchasing seeds and finding effective storage to ensure that they are properly kept, but there is no distribution system. Without going into all the specifics, almost in every part of this country people have been complaining that they have not been receiving seeds and even when they receive, they are not receiving adequate supplies.



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:45 hrs

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Talking about plants, we know that in order for us to have the plants whether it is at Timehri or Mon Repos, these places are not really what they should be. I know what they were like several years ago. I have made visits in the past and it does appear, Cde. Chairman, that they have allowed these plants to run down. You need greater attention, you need greater vote, and if you speak to the people who are working there, they will tell you that they are willing to do more but they cannot do it because the money and the facilities are not there.

Agricultural Extension Services, I think the votes explain the position. Let me take 1981. The provision was \$395,000 and only \$85 was spent. There is no question of conserving money here. Why? Because you need agricultural extension services if diversification is to succeed, if inter-cropping is to succeed, and if the farmers are to be benefited from all the kind of technical know how. But when you have the money and you are not spending the money, then we have to ask the question, why? Why? You do not have the personnel or the machinery was not geared so that this service which is so vital for agricultural development could have been offered to the farming community of this country. I think the poor spending is a reflection of no action in this particular field of agricultural extension services, to put it in a crisp manner. As I said, you cannot succeed at all in agricultural development and that is why production has fallen to the level it has fallen in this country. That is another factor, another contributing factor to the terrible state of our agricultural production.

Development of Bee Keeping, 267. I think we have got the potentials. There is no doubt about it. I have read all the available report on this matter and we allow bee keeping, we allow the honey industry to develop in a hap hazard way, if it is being developed at all, with a few private individuals here and there functioning, producing a few bottles of honey and offering it for sale to consumers. I think the price for a large bottle of honey is about \$20 currently, and it is diluted. You do not get pure honey on the market, and in fact, you have some worse than some. There is no doubt that if the Agricultural Ministry is functioning we would be able to produce honey adequately for our own consumption. They talk about foreign exchange, we can be an exporter of honey. Nearly every part of this country has this kind of facility, and the Minister can tell us in this Assembly why nothing is happening. Of course, let me say that I am in sympathy with him still with the vote for this particular area of \$20,000. I observe that it was \$2,000 last year and what is clear, is he spent every cent there. Obviously, that was not enough to scratch and I do not think the \$20,000 can scratch if you want to move in a

dynamic way to develop the apiary sector of the honey section in this country, both for local consumption and for export.

My last question comes under subhead 702, Contribution to Local organisations. I was looking at the legend – see note below – and if I read it well all these organisations that have been listed appear to me to be not local organisations.

The Speaker: Nothing is indicated at 702. That is 701. You see the amount, \$300,000 and \$300,000 in the legend is 701.

Cde. Reepu Deman Persaud: In my book, sir, 792 in my book has – I hope I am reading it right – see note below. Well the Minister will probably make things easy by telling us or by identifying the local organisations that will benefit from this vote in the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: Before the Hon. Minister does so, I would like to draw his attention to number 266 and to ask him what is the use of this when after having made repeated representation to him on the plight of the people with animals in the country, no assistance can be given to them. What is the purpose of extending this service? Indeed the extension of the service over the years seemed to have produced no results. We have a situation here, sir – in fact, this head was tackled here many year ago even when the Hon. Prime Minister was Minister of Agriculture – where no benefits or no results at all can be seen, unless it is used for state purposes. But then if it is, it is reflected in the wrong Estimates.

I would like to draw the Hon Minister's attention, publicly your honour if you will give me the opportunity – well, I have drawn this to his attention privately in his office and he told me that investigations were being made, but nothing can be heard about it. - Some years ago the Hon. Vice President, Cde. Green was the then Minister for Co-operatives and he scrapped a living Co-operative which was showing profit. The cattle, the rice and everything has gone down the drain and the land is now growing bezi bezi. The cows, sir cannot be sold because the Hon. Prime Minister has made an order that cows cannot be sold. You can only sell bull. In order to sell the cows the people have to break two feet at least so that the butchers will pass them. They cannot sell the cows, they have no where for them to graze, so why are you going to introduce artificial insemination unless you want to put the Industry more in the family's way that it is already?

The Chairman: Cde. Basir.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Chairman, I want to ask a question here on page 64, head 28, subhead 26. Its designation is Agricultural Extension Officer. I would like the Hon. Minister to say when it would be possible for him to have an agricultural officer reinstated in the Kumaka-Quebana area and I would also like to find out how it is possible for the Minister to work out a system whereby mature and seasoned agriculture, extension officers can be placed in these areas where they can create that image of responsibility.

Cde. Speaker: Cde. Dalchand.

Cde. Dalchand: Cde. Speaker, page 64, head 122, Veterinary Officers. Cde. Speaker, here in this section we have very able officers, but those officers are now scarce in this field. In terms of West Demerara, I would like to find out why farmers are not being benefited from this Service, only to be told that Government cannot afford travelling expenses. They have the officers, they are being paid, they are very efficient, but they cannot offer their services to the farmers because of lack of transportation.

Page 65, subhead 301, Drugs and Medical Supplies. Cde. Speaker, up to yesterday, I went to the G.P.C. outlet in Ruimveldt enquiring, I have been doing this for the past three months, for certain drugs for animals, and I was told –

The Speaker: This Minister has nothing to do with that. You cannot get supplies-

-

Cde. Dalchand: The point I am making is that this Head should be given more money so that there can be sufficient supply of drugs. That is what I am asking for. I went to ask the Minister to see that an adequate supply of drugs (veterinary drugs), is made available for the farmers.

The Chairman: Cde. Tyndall.

1982-04-06

16:55 – 17:05 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:55 hrs.

(Cde. Tyndall continues)

Cde. Chairman, I do agree that it is not only necessary to purchase seeds but also to provide adequate storage distribution facilities. This is a matter which is of major concern to the Government and Ministry. In fact included in the programme which I have just mentioned and which will be completed by the end of this year or early next year is provision for the establishment of a number of Extension Centres. These Extension Centres will stock for delivery to farmers' inputs such as seeds, agro-chemicals and so forth. There will be six such centres under the programme and also there are other incentives. One such incentive is the establishment of a seed unit at Black Bush Polder. The seed unit will provide adequate facilities for storage, processing and handling of seeds produced in the area. This is a matter which is of great concern and indeed it is being given great emphasis at a time when we are promoting rapid increase in agricultural production.

In so far as the agricultural extension services are concerned I think the figures which appear against the provision are somewhat misleading. During the year we began to regionalise the extension services and so the expenditure was transferred to the regions. The provision in the Estimates, although it appears to be small, is merely to provide for the extension officers who come to the centre for briefing sessions and seminars and other consultations. They must keep in touch with development in the field. The extension services are effectively utilised. The Extension Officers will be among the people. We have in fact agricultural officers, professionals as well as sub-professional, and field assistants. In this way we are endeavouring to improve the effectiveness of the services.

In so far as the development of bee-keeping is concerned, well I think Members of this House are all aware of the great menace of the Africanised bees. As a result this invasion has led to the destruction of most of our hives. We have been endeavouring to rehabilitate the industry primarily by re-queening. We are re-queening by the importation of mated bees. We import bees from Cuba and Miami. Unfortunately, one set which came from Miami did not survive the conditions but the menace is still on. It is a great battle but we are doing our very best to improve the industry. This allocation of \$28,000 does not cover every contingency. It does not cover staff which appears under personal emoluments. So this is merely for services such as importation and so on.

I wish to refer to artificial insemination services. I do not know whether I am mistaken but I am told that persons all over the country are requesting the service and not getting the response. I wish, in case correction is needed, to say this is a service to the live stock industry. It is a veterinary service and not a medical service. Cde. Chairman, we are concentrating our efforts on the dairy section and in fact we are trying as a result of our efforts to develop systems which would be more effective in terms of deliveries. It is not only an economic and logistical problem. It is a sociological problem. It is a question relating to the way dairy farms are organised and the way the animals are kept. It is no use for the artificial insemination people to go after the animals have mated. In many farms the cows are kept out in the open and very often the time for artificial insemination is not recognised until the time has passed. We are trying to develop great experience for a very effective system. We have been doing a lot between the two rivers in Berbice and Demerara and also on the East Bank. In the areas which are not served by artificial insemination bulls are being provided on request from the Government farms.

Cde. Chairman, I now wish to move to the vote relating to the supply of drugs. This is a vote really to buy drugs. I am afraid I cannot answer for the distribution of drugs but we have budgeted carefully as we have done in the whole budgetary process. We have done so in relation to our needs, having regard to the system which we are introducing in order to make these services most effective and to minimise expenditure to be most efficient. We consider that \$250,000 that we have allocated adequate for the projected needs. Cde. Chairman, with respect to 702 the provision of \$800,000 has been made for two local organisations, C.A.R.D.I., which is an organization functioning locally and doing a lot of valuable work and also the Guyana School of Agriculture, \$400,000 each.

The Chairman You are not finished. Page 64 – Veterinary Officers. Cde. Dalchand wants to know although you have officers they are not going to the fields because of lack of transportation.

Cde. Tyndall: We do acknowledge that we do not have all the veterinary officers.

The Chairman: He is saying that you have them but they cannot go into the field because there are no transportation facilities or allocation for transportation.

Cde. Tyndall: The Veterinary services has provided special officers as well as live-stock assistants, the people who are trained at REPAHA. They are very competent people. They are generous and could respond to most of the needs of the farmers in the live-stock industry and they will be located in the regions. Hence the provision is not reflected here. We hope that by locating them in the regions under the control of the

regional system and the people they will be able to respond more readily and effectively to the needs of the regions. On Subhead 126, I wish to assure the Honourable Member that we have identified an Officer who will be posted in the region so it is just a matter of time and I can assure him again that it will be soon.

Head 28, Agriculture - \$6,776,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

#### HEAD 29 – LANDS AND SURVEYS

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,534,000 for Head 29, Lands and Surveys stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 66 and 67 – Lands and Surveys.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question on this subhead 121. I think if I have been following what has been taking place in Parliament correctly this department is expected to be merged with the Ministry of Works. If that is so I wonder why this sub-head still appears. If not, what is really contemplated and what has happened.

Cde. Tyndall: Indeed, Cde. Chairman, that is correct that a merger was planned and has already taken place. That merger is with Lands and Surveys. The surveyors of the Ministry of Works have gone over to Lands and Surveys. In fact not all the surveyors because surveyors have been deployed in the regions to be able to serve the regions.

Head 29 – Lands and Surveys - \$3,534,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:05 hrs

The Chairman: Pages 68 and 69.

HEAD 30 – HYDRAULICS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,706,500 for Head 30, Hydraulics, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 408 Maintenance of Other Infrastructures. I want, without going into all the specifics, to say that a number of areas are suffering and are affected from complete absence of infrastructure work. I think drainage and irrigation is the prerequisite for the successful agricultural production. Tapacuma and M.M.A. are specifically provided for in these Estimates but there are other areas that work ought to be done on also.

The Chairman: I wonder if you are taking into consideration that all the Ministers have been saying that since they have regionalised there is provision made for a lot of infrastructure?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I concede, sir, but I am sure you appreciated my difficulty last night when, despite the subhead was there, just one little area, I could not speak, according to your ruling. Not that I query your ruling --

The Chairman: That is an improvement.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What I want to do is to simply use this subhead to draw attention to the fact that this problem is greater than what is provided for in the regions and that the whole question of drainage and irrigation has not been properly tackled though there is some provision for specific work in the various regions. Many areas have been neglected. Many areas are not being surfaced. I refer to Boerasiri and Haigue Backdam as examples. I want to ask the Minister to recognise that it will not be enough to tell the nation year after year that “we had contemplated a tremendous crop this year. Production should have been ‘X’ amount but unfortunately by an act of God we could not”. The fact that you have got the development of science and technology is

to cater for all these things, so that when there is drought you have proper provision to cater for farmers --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, you are really joking there. Even the great technological countries like the Soviet Union and America cannot defeat the forces of nature when it comes to that.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am not for one single second attempting to tell persuade the Minister in or this Assembly to defeat the forces of nature. I am glad that you drew it to my attention early so that I can clear myself before you. I am saying that you will have these things occurring time after time and the while concept – the technically qualified men have argued and have projected time immemorial that you can cater at least to appease the situation and not to suffer completely by these acts of god and forces of nature. I hope my point is now much clearer.

My contribution and my indictment against the Government is that it has been guilty over the years, as far as this particular area is concerned and that is why today we cannot improve in our production.

Cde. Dalchand: Page 69, items 273, 274, 917 and 918. I have just one general question. I have observed that there is a drastic reduction in the payment of these rates from \$416,000 in the Revised Estimates for 1981 to \$160,000 in 1982. These are all agricultural areas and I would like the Minister to explain the reason why there has been this drastic reduction in the payment of rates for these areas. I tried to check on these Estimates because two of these areas fall within Region 3 and I have not seen any provision in the Estimates for contributions to Region 3.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, I wish to answer in respect of subhead 408 in relation to matters within my area of responsibility. In so far as this is concerned, I wish to inform this Assembly that the vote is for maintenance of pumps. The maintenance and operations of the drainage and irrigation system have been transferred to the regions. The Ministry of Agriculture has no equipment except for pumps. All the equipment have been transferred to the regions and the responsibility has been transferred to them. I would not like to venture into the territory of the Minister of Regional Development. I wish to assure this Assembly that if the Minister of Regional Development was asked this question last night he would have said that the importance of maintenance is recognised and every effort is being applied to ensure the highest possible level of maintenance, having regard to the resources made available to the Government.



In so far as subheads 273, 274 are concerned, 273 refer to payment of rates on unalienated State Lands. As a result of procedures being implemented, actually being taken by Government, it is hoped that a lot of this land which is not occupied now will be distributed to persons in need of land and that responsibility for paying rates to this land will be to individuals and not to the Government which at present pays these rates to the Drainage and Irrigation Authority.

With respect to 274, this item has also been regionalised. It now falls within the responsibility of the region. I am sorry, the opportunity seems to have passed for the substantive questions under this Head.

Head 30, Hydraulics - \$1,706,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 70.

#### DIVISION 513 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$51,830,000 for Division 513, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 1, 13, 19, 23, 29 and 35. Subhead 1, Black Bush. I am aware that some work is going on in the front lands of Black Bush. I recall very clearly advocating to the farmers of that area for several years the need to activate there. The Minister probably will tell us exactly if this vote is to cater for the front lands of Black Bush because the legend states: “To develop facilities for improving the irrigation system of the Black Bush Polder and for draining the front lands of that scheme”. So he will tell us what stage it has reached. I am in possession of a statement that up to last year it was at a surveying stage. The provision is there and I do not want to sit in the Assembly and not make the point clear that the project is far from completion.

I move to one of the items which the Minister briefly referred to just now, and that is 13, Purchase and Installation of Pumps. I was speaking for Agriculture when the Government made the decision to buy pumps. We said that pumps are not the answer and pumps have not succeeded in serving the purpose I am sure the Government itself contemplated. Our information is that in many areas, even though you have the pumps, they are not functioning. Sometimes a pump is broken down and you have to wait a long period of time before the particular part or parts of the pump can be replaced. There are many areas. Cane Grove is one that was stalled up for a long time. There is the Tapacuma Scheme ... Only two pumps are working. I am reliably informed by the farmers of Essequibo that in fact on one occasion they were told that there was no fuel.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:15 hrs.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

If the pumps were functioning, the farmers would not have had to wait until the heavy rainfall. They would have been able to reap their crops before and we would have been in a better position. It is these areas of inefficiency and inadequacy that contribute to what is clear, a serious fall and drop in production of all commodities and specifically if I may say rice.

I want the Minister to tell us if all the pumps are working, if not, how many are not working, what are the reasons? If these pumps wherever they exist are given all the necessities like fuel and so on, so that the kind of complaints that we have received from time to time will not recur. I want on this occasion, with the greatest respect to choose to believe the farmers and to ask the Minister that ultimately and finally we will have to move away from this whole question of pumps because the vote is for reconditioning the pumps. I must not omit to draw attention to that which is more or less fortifying, the argument that I am putting forward in the House this afternoon.

Cde. Chairman, subhead 19, which speaks of Food Crop Production and Marketing. The Minister cannot and I am sure he will not, he is not accustomed doing that kind of thing, tell this House that he has a planned programme, a concrete programme for both production and marketing. Our charge is that the whole agricultural process is going on in a hap hazard way and that is the foremost cause for the agricultural dilemma. If that plan is there, I am sure the Government would have presented a white paper in this House so that we can examine it, contribute to it, to ensure that an important sector receives the greatest consensus so that there can be an acceleration of development, because the agricultural process must be seen as no less than dynamic.

We have had reports from other Ministries. Let me compliment the Ministry of Home Affairs, coming from the Commissioner of Police, regularly I see reports from those who are spokesmen for the Ministry of Home Affairs and who deal with the Police. At least they tell you, the reports might be a few years back, but you get reports. From 1969 to now, we have not had a single report from the Ministry of Agriculture so that we can evaluate the work of the Ministry and look at it objectively and make a contribution. I am sure you will concede if we have that kind of information as we used to get in the past probably there will be less questions. We would be in a better position not only to draw attention to the areas of failures and weaknesses and mismanagement, but we will

be able to subscribe positively to those areas where the Government have been taking action to improve agricultural development in the country.

We have got a vote of \$14 million, let me give you an example so that I do not sound too generalised. Black Bush – the farmers found that it was un-renumerative to grow rice and they were undoubtedly indulging in what I can describe as inter-cropping to ensure that at a certain period they can grow other crops and the Minister is not unaware that they have started growing cabbage. Then you move suddenly and sometimes openly to threaten the farmers that if you did not grow rice your lease or leases are going to be cancelled. The fact that the farmers took their own initiatives to look for other crops in my view is commendable. The fact that the Government did not succeed in getting the farmers to grow the kind of crops they wanted is clear evidence of failure in an enactment and inefficiency in so far as the Agricultural Ministry is concerned. The estimates provide for Agricultural Field Officers. These Agricultural Field Officers should have been in the field assessing, analysing and observing what really is taking place, so that they will be on the spot.

Agriculture cannot be developed sitting in an ivory tower, it cannot be developed on paper. It is one of the sectors that need planning and it also needs positive action. In fact, it was the P.P.P. which established the Guyana School of Agriculture some years ago. I think it was in September 1963 if I am right, so that people can be trained and I remember criticising here keeping those young men in the school and only feeding them with academic subjects. I said send them out in the field because even they can learn from the practical farmers who have produced over the years. This country Sir, and I speak very sincerely, this country has produced men and women in the farming community who can teach the technically qualified academic men a thing or two and I do not think they will deny that. I hope that my point is taken in so far as food production is concerned. The Minister probably will be disposed to tell us what new marketing facilities he has been able to establish since we last met in the Parliament and to be specific and tell us the kind of produce that have been added to that list, that is new produce, so that we can earn foreign exchange. Further, what kind of encouragement or motivation were given to the farmers so that they can produce the kind of commodities that we can export, and as I said, this is an area where I can speak but I am prepared to be as concise as I can. I hope that I have been very clear.

The Chairman: If that is your concise, I would not like to see you in your verbose.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, we have on this side of the House worked with the greatest speed in so far as these estimates are concerned. It is not that anybody wants to be speaking long without recognising the area in which the contribution is made, but it is because we all concede in the Government ---

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, I told you you have been talking all the time on policy, these things are now going into the details of the story. I have not been stopping you really because I know we have been moving very rapidly and there have been great co-operation all around.

Cde. Reepu Deman Persaud: I have directed my specific questions to the Minister and I hope that he will answer. Let me say simply and I hope you will interpret this as concise to let the Minister tell us – agricultural sectoral planning – let him tell us what kind of planning he has done and where is the plan. I cannot be more concise than that.

I move on to subhead 29 – Grain Legume Programme. To introduce simple technology in the fields of planting and harvesting, Cde. Chairman, when the Government has literally banned, so that you can know the name mattar dhol or split peas because with-holding in my view is banning, something which I have argued and feel very strongly in conviction is a staple item and it is wrong to with-hold the importation and I would urge that the Government reconsider its position and agree to import split peas.

1982-04-06

17:25 – 17:35 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:25 hrs.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

I say so boldly here and I will say it anywhere. I shall tell you why. Speaking for farmers, if you are talking about import substitution, any thinking person would want --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, let us move on to subhead 35.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 29 I want to deal with.

The Chairman: You are talking about split peas and dhal.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I just want to make this point when talking about legumes. We had an expert from India here, who examined the project and made certain recommendations. There were publications. For instance, there was a report which appeared on the 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1978 in the Guyana Chronicle. Another report dealing with mung dhal specifically appeared on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1979. This expert, Dr. Chandra ..... left the country about two years ago. There was a report in the New Nation that attempted to convey to the people of this country that he was there talking to the reporter. That reporter should be fired from the New Nation if he is still there. He was deceiving the public. What steps have been taken to produce mung if you want to encourage the populace to move towards it? Where is the mung in commercial quantities? It is useless to say you have the capacity. We have the capacity and potential. We on this side are going to be the last to say No. But for the Government to say that it is going to remove this and remove that – Where are the substitutes? What work have you done to encourage the production of that particular substitute? The Government has failed here. We are not saying that what we can produce and wherever we can produce we can provide. I am not saying the same thing so that let me be clear. I am not saying that we must not move to encourage the farmers to produce the nearest substitute or a near substitute. I am saying that the Government has not done that. Therefore, the Government cannot deprive the people of an item that is a staple when it has not done its own work to encourage what the Government is promoting as substitute. We are not arguing against the scientist about nutrition value and all that. No. I know mung dhal; I know mattar; I know all. They are all there. We know them. I recall as a little boy on the East Bank planting mung.

Subhead 36, Coconut rehabilitation. The word “coconut” is of great significance. Coconut rehabilitation after 17 years in Government! It is an important word. Everyone of us knows that the coconut is the third most important crop in this country. This particular area in our agriculture sector has been neglected and the Minister cannot deny this. The trees are there. You allow the coconuts to fall and in some of the estates that are well known to everyone in this House, they fall into the drains, they float to a point where the owner collects them and pays a few people to remove the husk and so produces copra, undoubtedly in a disorganised way.

I have said in this House, Cde. Chairman, probably during your term as Speaker, that long ago we should have been self-sufficient in oil. We are not opposed to a programme which clearly shows to us, in absolutely objective terms, that here we can produce; this is our own oil. We are not saying, don't drink it or don't produce it. The Government took several years before it offered a kind of infinitesimal incentive in so far as to copra price was concerned. I stood up on this side and in those days I probably showed a greater interest in the debate, doing all the research and alluding to all the surveys and examinations, with the sole objective of moving the members of the Government. I have failed to move them. I could not move them. Reality has caught up with them and now we see a vote for rehabilitation of the coconut industry.

I must make a point about the Government setting up its own mill. I recall I hinted it to Vice President, Cde. Hoyte, when he talked about the capacity of the two mills. He spoke of a long-term programme in the Government setting up a mill. I am saying that we have the coconuts. It is the third largest crop. We can convert and have an adequate supply of copra. Not only that, in this case, unlike milk, where there is no condensary, we have the capacity of converting into oil without talking about cotton seed when there is no cotton.

We know about abay seed too. We are not without information or knowledge in the field, from a practical standpoint. I say that the Government has neglected the coconut industry. As a result, we find ourselves with a substantial bill for the importation of oil and probably – I do not know for sure – the continuation of the Oils and Fats Agreement, if it is still continuing. I remember that long ago I advocated the discontinuation of that Agreement. In dealing with this subhead, I want to say that I hope in the future there will be a more objective, serious approach to the process of dynamic agricultural development in Guyana.

Cde. Dalchand: Page 70, subhead 36, Agriculture Sector Programmes. This is a new subhead and it is seeking a provision of \$9 million. The legend says, “To provide for increased production of the sector – IDB loan.” I should like to ask the Minister if he can tell us what are some of the programmes?

The Chairman: Cde. Tyndall.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Chairman, all these subheads deal with capital expenditure and I believe that there is a bit of confusion in relation to the allocation and the total Government programme. I wish to say that these allocations are for specific projects.

With respect to Black Bush Polder, indeed the allocation is in respect of the improvement of the drainage system which will benefit both the front lands and the original Black Bush Polder Scheme. The objective of the project is to increase the water availability in the Canje River and to improve the pumping facilities for both the Black Bush area and for the front lands. The allocation here contemplates that component of the project and the term “Specific Finance” refers to overseas finance. “Other Finance” refers to the counterpart contribution.

The Chairman: I think Cde. Persaud also wanted to know how far the project in respect of the front lands has gone.

Cde. Tyndall: The action is very far advanced in relation to the implementation of the irrigation aspects, that is one separate component, but with respect to the civil works in the front lands to provide improved drainage and irrigation structure, the design work is proceeding. It is not just surveys. Surveys are preliminary to design. Surveys have been completed and the design work is now being carried out. These huge capital drainage and irrigation projects do take some amount of time because they have to be done very, very carefully and there is a lot of work to be done.

With respect to subhead 13, Purchase and Installation of Pumps, this really refers to the purchase of a hydro flow pump, a mobile hydro flow pump, which was sent up to the Corentyne when there was a shortage of water. I think it provides very valuable service, particularly in the Black Bush area. It also provides for spare parts for reconditioning other pumps which are under the control of the Ministry. We do agree that it is much better, much cheaper, particularly at this time and when we want to utilise less conventional energy resources for us to use gravity drainage and irrigation in preference. In fact, all the major schemes being implemented will rely mostly on gravity drainage – Tapakuma, M.M.A., Black Bush Polder. Pumps and pumping will be minimal. We have cut them out wherever they are not necessary.

Subhead 19, Food Crop Production/Marketing programme. This subhead refers to a special project. I mention elements of that project: It is to upgrade the marketing system. It is to establish extension and marketing centres. It provides for loans to GUYBANK for farmers. I wish to say at present that there is a facility of around \$8

1982-04-06

17:25 – 17:35 hrs.

million available to farmers this year and we have a programme in order to ensure the full utilisation of these funds.



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:35 hrs.

Cde. Tyndall: It also provides for the provision of inputs to farmers and some equipment. The allocation here, represents under the specific columns, the foreign inputs and under the other finance, the local inputs. In so far as the General Agricultural programme is concerned, I did indicate in this Assembly when I made my presentation, that the Ministry of Agriculture has been, and we are now in the final stages of putting together an agricultural commodities programme. The programme as of now comprises 14 commodities and we are going to concentrate on these commodities, and will provide the necessary system, the inputs and whatever is necessary in order to promote these commodities. They include a wide range of things. Legumes come under it, edible oil comes under this programme, corn comes under this programme, surgum and a number of other commodities. Now, this programme as I stated, refers to certain specific crops. It is not that we are confining our efforts or our thrust to those 14 crops, we are promoting development of all agricultural commodities, but we are selecting those commodities with tremendous possibilities. Corn for instance. We are going to make measured efforts in terms of acreage targets in terms of identifying farmer groups and in terms of the regions which will be involved, the most suitable areas in the promotion of these commodities.

A draft programme which was done some weeks ago is all ready, as they have the usual system and the Ministry have discussions with the regional system since they will be largely, the implementers with the agricultural officers and the other officials that they have at their disposal for production of these crops in their region. I am quite sure that the regions have taken initiatives towards the increased production of the commodities listed in that programme.

So far as rice production in Black Bush Polder is concerned, the efforts this year has been very encouraging. In fact, of the 18,500 acres of rice land 17,000 acres of rice which have been put on the plough have been sold. I think it is a highly commendable achievement and the people of Black Bush Polder must be complimented for their great response. I am quite sure that in this regard, the prices which have been granted this year have been a great stimulant to production. Pricing policy is a very important aspect of agricultural policy to this Government and to this Ministry. Rice is not the only commodity which is being dealt with in our agricultural programmes so far.

In so far as the marketing facilities are concerned, I did mention the establishment of the marketing centres facilities and apart from that I did mention other initiatives with

the Guyana Marketing Corporation in order to improve this service to farmers. Now, one does not introduce new agricultural commodities in six months. One can introduce a new industrial produce in six months provide technology, for example, tooth paste. You can bring a factory and you buy the skill if you do not have it, but agriculture calls for patience. This great patience and this great interest and this drive, have been rewarded by the production of a new variety of legumes unique to Guyana, called the Minica '1' which is produced after five years. The minica '1', '2', '3' and '4', four varieties, have certain qualities that are not present in the traditional varieties such as cow-pea, black-eye pea and others. They will be more weather resistant and they will reduce losses through inclement weather. We are building up stocks of seeds for the production of these legumes which can be a substitute for any other. They can be used for the production of dhal and any other commodity. So far as dhal is concerned, perhaps members opposite are aware that this is the most popular dhal in India, the har hal dhal. I am sure they are in terms of the quantity produced, that har hal dhal is made from pigeon peas. But there are those who recommend split peas which is not grown in India. They split the pea in a small version of a pea – it is a pink pea which they make yellow by soaking it in a suspension of tumeric which is not really necessary, but that is about the fifth in how they are important in India. It is first channa, then har hal, then mung, then urid and then this pea which we are talking about, not split pea which is a Mediterranean pea and not an American pea. Let us go back to our origins and eat pigeon peas, dhal, mung and urid [Applause] rather than submit ourselves to this economic imperialism, the imposition of a foreign item.

[Applause]

Indeed I have touched upon the legume programme and in this particular aspect of the project we are referring in item 29 to a project with the assistance of an IIC aid to develop appropriate systems and cultivation practices for the growth of legumes. There are two projects which will be conducted in two areas, Pomeroon and somewhere else. Apart from that, we have really gone a far way in technology with the production of our legumes, and we are now bulking seeds – mung, urid and minica. We have a supply of seeds available for the next planting season. Minica '1', '2', '3' and '4' will be available in larger quantities for the next planting season later this year but for mung and urid and the others, I am going to ask my Ministry to invite the members of the Minority Party and offer them some seeds so that they can participate in this drive. You must not only talk, you must do.

Coconut Rehabilitation. This head refers to a project. The Coconut Rehabilitation Project, financed with the assistance of UNCTAD. There is an UNCTAD consultant who is just about to leave. He has left a report in which he has made a lot of recommendations. We accept the fact that the coconut industry is being produced under

1982-04-06

17:35 – 17:45 hrs.

capacity for many reasons. One reason which one cannot ignore, is a fact that interpenetration in the industry has not been very able. There are some people who are willing to exploit the resources on the coconut estates. There are other people who are willing simply to collect the nuts because maybe they have enough income. The drive is to aid, encouraged by various measures, coconut plantation owners to have all their nuts. Let me return to the rehabilitation drive. One of the concerns will be the disease problem. Now, we have been using chemical control but there are problems because the interest of farmers will carry out the measures of chemical eradication, farmers next door would not and colonies of insect will develop only to re-infest.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:45 hrs.

(Cde. Tyndall continues)

We have now embarked on a project for biological control. Already we have biological pest control experts and we are going to use ..... insects in order to contain at acceptable levels or eliminate the coconut disease particularly the insect diseases. Cde. Chairman, I now wish to refer to Article 26. I missed subhead 23 – Agricultural Sector Planning. Here again it refers to an aid project for the development on the basis of agriculture plan and the project is nearly started. This is not the only initiative in this area. The Ministry is working with the State Planning Secretariat towards the establishment of the Agricultural Sector Planning. Of course that does not mean that we are not working within certain definite planned framework, targets and policies. I should mention here that the Ministry has started early this year an exercise in developing agricultural plans for the hinterland regions. We have completed two such plans and we are moving on, if we have not already moved on to a plan in the third region. We do not want a global plan in the centre, we want people’s plan at the level of the region reflecting the needs of the people as perceived by them. Cde. Chairman, we are taking a number of initiatives in the area of agricultural planning. In so far as agricultural sector is concerned this is an I.D.B. loan which provides for US\$20 million and it will cover development for the provision of infrastructure in the lower Essequibo Coast area. In this area the present contracting firm is executing mainly primary works and the second plan will execute secondary works. It will also provide for rehabilitation at Cane Grove. Flagstaff sluice, for instance will be rehabilitated. A new sluice will be built and drainage will be rehabilitated in the Leguan region. Leguan is also included in this project. All steps have been taken for the commencement of this programme this year and implementation, I can assure you, will be very speedy.

DIVISION 513 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$51,830,000 for Division 513 – Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Division 513 – Ministry of Agriculture - \$51,830,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 71

DIVISION 514 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE – IDB PROJECT

ABARY RIVER WATER CONTROL PROJECT – (MMA)

Question proposed that the sum of \$47,272,000 for Division 514 – Ministry of Agriculture – IDB Project – Abary River Water Control Project (MMA), stand part of the Estimates.

Division 514 – Ministry of Agriculture – IDB Project – Abary River Water Control Project (MMA) - \$47,272,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 73

DIVISION 516 – SECOND SEA DEFENCE PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$100,000 for Division 517 – Second Sea Defence Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Would the consultants be local or foreign?

Cde. Tyndall: The consultants are local.

Division 516 – Second Sea Defence Project - \$100,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 74

DIVISION 517 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE – IDB PROJECTS

TAPAKUMA IRRIGATION PROJECT – CONTRACT 1

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,430,000 for Division 517 – Ministry of Agriculture – IDB Projects – Tapakuma Irrigation Project – Contract 1, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question on this one. We are talking about clearing land and levelling land but I wonder whether the Ministry has any machinery for the allocation of land because in the Ministry's contribution, that is (2) he has not said anything about the question of land allocation. My view still is that we are a land hungry community but the land is just not available with the necessary facilities. At

1982-04-06

17:45 – 17:55 hrs.

the same time he can probably tell us, he gave us an indication last time, when the contract will be completed.

Cde. Tyndall: I am answering specifically to this item and the contract has already been completed.

Division 517 – Ministry of Agriculture – IDB Project – Tapakuma Irrigation Project – Contract 1 - \$1,430,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION 518 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE- TAPAKUMA  
IRRIGATION PROJECT – CONTRACT 2

Question proposed that the sum of \$14,930,000 for Division 518 – Ministry of Agriculture – Tapakuma Irrigation Project – Contract 2, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: A similar and short question. He probably could tell the house when this Phase 2 of the work project will be completed. There is a provision for equipment. If he can identify the kind of equipment that will be bought. Our information, if it is correct, is that a number of equipment is lying idle in this particular project and I am told that there is a kind of cannibalisation of that equipment. The Minister could tell the House what is the position.

Cde. Tyndall: Contract 2 is scheduled to be completed in September this year. In so far as equipment vote is concerned that is for the procurement of operation and maintenance equipment to ensure a higher level in maintenance.

Division 518 – Ministry of Agriculture – Tapakuma Irrigation Project – Contract 2 - \$14,930,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 78 and 79

HEAD 32 – MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

Question proposed that the sum of \$652,000 for Ministry of Fisheries stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: All responses if I speak one to one would be this is one of the Ministries that can be discontinued.

Head 32 – Ministry of Fisheries - \$652,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 80

DIVISION 520 – MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

Question proposed that the sum of \$850,000 for Division 520 – Ministry of Fisheries stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: My information is that this Ministry and that is the Fisheries Complex is being minaturised. In fact it has been run right down.

The Chairman: Look at the legend. Let us deal with the legend. “To rehabilitate and expand fish culture stations at Onverwagt and Botanic Gardens – EEC Grant”. If you deal with that let me see how you will ask your question.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What I would wish to say is that despite Government has been providing money in the estimates for development of our fishing industry it is clear that consumers are compelled to pay high prices.

1982-04-06

17:55 – 18:05 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:55 hrs.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

It is clear that consumers are compelled to pay high prices. While one or two stations may be established and one or two stations may be supported, the important aspect --

The Chairman: No, no I have been giving you a lot of chances. This is a Ministry that you say should be abandoned. Let us leave it at that, let us abandon it.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The fact that the Ministry should be abandoned does not mean that the industry must not be developed. I am saying give the responsibility to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Chairman: This is a provision to provide nets and engines.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: All right, let me have the Minister alone.

Division 520, Ministry of Fisheries - \$850,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Williams, you have to make fish available to Members of Parliament so that they will not talk too much about it.

Cde. Chairman: Pages 50 and 51.

HEAD 21 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$766,000 for Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$766,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Chairman: Pages 52 and 53.



HEAD 22 – POLICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$30,620,350 for Head 22, Police, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, all along I have been intimating to this honourable Assembly for Ministries to be scrapped. I wish to state categorically that this is one Ministry –

The Chairman: I wish to state categorically that you must tell me what you are talking on.

Cde. Collymore: I am speaking on subheads 123, 126, 141, 142, 161 and I wish to reiterate that this is a Ministry of absolute necessity.

The Chairman: Please tell me which subhead you are speaking on.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Subhead 123. This subhead deals with Wages and Salaries – Appropriation, Disciplined Services and personnel. The Government has intimated that it is going to take on two hundred more constables. We have said in the general debate that we do not think it is a wise course and we have intimated that the Government should freeze the recruitment where it is and depend more on community police. We pointed out that this will realise a saving to the Treasury and we calculate that the bare minimum of these savings will be \$782,400. We have said that the Government is expanding community police and perhaps vigilante squads will be able to make its way because we do not have to pay these people. So we are just dealing with the aspect of cutting costs and not actually reducing the efficiency of the Force. That is not our idea at the present time. I would like the Minister to consider expanding the community police and the vigilante.

Subhead 141, Other Direct Labour Costs – Appropriation, Acting Allowance, Duty and Responsibility Allowance. We have to state at this point that we are very much concerned with the degree of crime which is taking place and we have been apprised that policemen are in great danger, particularly those policemen who actually have to go and apprehend criminals. Criminals are armed with sub-machine guns and policemen are sometimes at a great disadvantage. I would like to ask the Minister if this Duty and Responsibility Allowance and the other allowances under subhead 161 include risk allowances. Policemen or detectives who have to go and apprehend these criminals

should be amply rewarded and amply compensated for the great risk they are taking. I would like to have a positive assurance from the Minister to this effect.

Page 53. I would like, with your permission, to speak on subheads 253, 255, 256, 303. If we are to deal with these particular subheads, I must crave your indulgence to point out that at the beginning of this debate the comrade on our side here raised an objection pointing out that the Standing Orders appeared to have been violated. You suspended your ruling for the debate saying that in the course of the debate we will come to the conclusion as to whether or not the necessary details are contained in the Estimates to facilitate our work on this side. I would like to remind you of your ruling and to ask you to note what is happening with this particular page. Formerly, this particular page had forty-four subheads up to last year. This particular page dealing with --

The Chairman: Comrade, please let us deal with subhead 253, Security Precautions.

Cde. Collymore: That is what I am trying to say. You are not allowing me to explain, you are anticipating me. I am saying that the subhead --

The Chairman: Minister please reply.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Cde. Moore): Cde. Chairman, the police are accustomed to dealing with unruly elements -

The Chairman: As I have to sometimes.

Cde. Moore: - and I see that you, Cde. Chairman, are quite capable of doing likewise.

Under subhead 123, I do welcome the suggestion that more community policing would be of assistance to the police. But notwithstanding, we do have strident complaints from the Minority Party about the upsurge in crime. One has only to read the Mirror to hear some of these complaints which are sometimes made and sometimes without substance. The extra constables whom we are in the process of recruiting are for the purpose of giving us the capability of making an even more effective response to crime in our country.

1982-04-06

18:05 – 18:15 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:05 hrs.

(Cde. Moore continues)

We are particularly concerned about the increase in the use of firearms. The member on the other side has made reference to that and he has shown some solicitude for our ranks. I wish to assure him that they do receive risk allowances and when as very often happens they turn in a first class job of work, sometimes apprehending armed bandits, with or without the use of firearms, there are systems of rewards and so their splendid effort is not un-recognised.

On the question of 141, I think that those allowances, I detect a recognition on the part of the speaker on the other side that they are richly and well deserved and we will continue to make them.

HEAD 22 – POLICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$30,620,350 for Head 22, Police stand part of the Estimates.

Head 22 – Police - \$30,620,350 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 54 and 55.

HEAD 23 – PRISONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,519,500 for Head 23, Prisons stand part of the Estimates.

Head 23 – Prisons - \$4,519,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 56 and 57.

HEAD 24 – FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,282,800 for Head 24, Fire Protection Services stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, 57, 6 and 5. Subhead 605. One short question to the Minister. Could the Minister give the House the assurance that this vote is adequate for the purpose of maintenance of vehicles, spare parts and maintenance in this Department. I am very much concerned Cde. Speaker, because on many occasions when calls are being made, we are being told on some occasions that there are lots of vehicular problems. I can remember there was a breakage at a filling station just outside Carnegie. I dialed triple nine and got to the Department. There was a breakage and somebody lit some fire there. They smoked the whole area and I called the Department with the hope of getting the necessary vehicle there, maybe to extinguish the fire and I was told that they could not have acted properly because they are short of staff and they have vehicular problems.

On another area Cde. Speaker, I did call the Department on several occasions because this Department also deals with the Ambulance Service. We have had a case where a couple of our workers are being injured at times and I am sometimes used as a liaison to see if I can expedite some area movement. We found that there is a big problem in this Department. Either the vehicles are unavailable or because of the repairing problems they are not in service. Can the Minister give the assurance that this vote \$180,000 which undoubtedly is a little much more than that for last year is adequate enough to keep this important Department going. We have had lots of fires, unnecessary fires, fires that I must compliment the Fire Department of doing a very good job with their limited resources, but I would not like to know that vehicular problems, spare parts and maintenance is responsible for anything disastrous in this country. I want to ask the Minister if he can give the assurance, if not, maybe the vote can be increased.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Moore: Cde. Chairman, may I first join with my friend in commending the Fire Service for the excellent service they have done. Twice in less than twelve months, they have saved the Ministry of Home Affairs from destruction.

My friends' question reminds me of the boy – David Copperfield, I think it was or Oliver Twist, I am never too sure which one it is, who said please Sir, I want some more. We can all use some more. We have managed with \$180,000 last year. We shall manage with that sum.

Head 24 – Fire Protection Services - \$3,282, 800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 58 and 59.

#### HEAD 25 – REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,475,300 for Head 25, Registration and Elections stand part of the Estimates.

Head 25 – Registration and Elections - \$1,475,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 60.

#### HEAD 60 – BIRTHS, DEATH AND MARRIAGES

Question proposed that the sum of \$341,000 for Head 26, Births, Deaths and Marriages stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, on this head I would like to deal with 121, 124, 125 and 126. Cde. Chairman, you know this has been a concern over a period of time in relation to the comfort of this area of work. I do commend the Ministry in terms of regionalising the system by which it operates. I also commend the Minister for the acquisition, I think it is of the building which was used by the Elections Commission Chairman. I do ask the Minister if he can broaden that system by utilising the Income Tax Registry. The reason why Cde. Chairman, is that there is a lot of confusion in this area of work. I do not think that the workers in this section are comfortably at work. They have some big problems. Books scattered all over the place, ledgers are not properly kept because of the limited space. In terms of work, I did ask the previous Minister and he said that he would have looked at this question seriously, equally that of the area where the vault is occupied. I will be asking this Minister if he can examine the possibility of negotiating the control of the building just next to where the Income Tax Registry is occupying so as to endure that there can be a smoother area of work, maybe from one department into another to ensure that the area gives an optimum service necessary to the public.

1982-04-06

18:05 – 18:15 hrs

Cde. Moore: Cde. Speaker, as a fellow member of the Guyana Labour Union, I am touched by my friends' solicitude for the comfort of the workers.

1982-04-06

18:15 – 18:25 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:15 hrs.

(Cde. Moore continues)

The workers themselves are aware of their surroundings and they have done self-help, they have done cleaning-up, they have done many things to improve their own comfort.

It is true that we have moved into the office of the Chairman of the Elections Commission. I got a letter from him only today complaining that we are encroaching yet further. I will have talks with the Vice-President responsible for Economic Planning and Finance and my colleague Cde. Sallahuddin with a view to seeing whether they will give us some of the space which is currently being used by the Department of Inland Revenue, which is close to the area which is used by the General Register Office. If we do persuade them to vacate, then we will in fact be able to bring some greater degree of physical comfort to our employees in the building. The regional registration centres, as you say, are working well. I myself was in New Amsterdam recently and it is true to say that the service as a whole has improved tremendously.

Head 26, Births, Deaths and Marriages - \$341,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 61.

DIVISION 512 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,090,000 for Division 512, Ministry of Home Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, I should like to speak under subheads 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Where subhead 1, Prison Improvement, is concerned, we have information that the power plant at the Mazaruni prison is not functioning properly. It is constantly breaking down. I should like to ask the Minister if he can give reasons for this and if he can assure this House that a new plant will be provided or the present plant properly repaired because it is a danger to security I am sure.

I should also like to ask the Minister if he is aware that the prison launch is out of order and it is a risk where sea-worthiness and river-worthiness is concerned, and if he can say how soon a new launch will be provided or when that particular launch will be put in good order. Lives are in danger.

Subhead 2, Police Stations and Buildings. I note that a total of \$1.5 million has been provided and it is to renovate police stations at Eve Leary and rural stations and to rehabilitate other Police buildings. We on this side of the House, as I have said before, are concerned about the crime situation. Some of these police buildings that function as stations are not secure. Quite recently we note that there was a mass escape from the Brickdam lockup and only two persons, from my information, have been recaptured. We should like to ask the Minister if he can assure us that there will be proper security, particularly at Brickdam station.

We also have to draw to the attention of the hon. Minister that many policemen are operating under a distinct disadvantage because they are immobile at crucial moments. We have today what we may possibly call a 'hitch-hike' Police Force. Only the other day I had to give a policeman a lift.

The Chairman: You are talking under subheads 2, 3 and 4 together?

Cde. Collymore: Yes, Cde. Chairman, with your permission. We are asking the Minister to look into these things and where it concerns the security of the policemen. Other Equipment, subhead 4 -- [Pause]

The Chairman: Has anybody stopped you?

Cde. Collymore: I am continuing. Cde. Chairman, I am very concerned about it. That is why I was trying to elaborate a few minutes ago. Quite recently, on the East Coast of Demerara, policemen turned out in response to a distress call from a person who was being robbed by armed gangsters. They had guns. The policemen arrived on the scene from the station. This incident occurred at Lusignan. They confronted the gangsters. I am shocked to know what happened and I think you also will be shocked. The policemen had guns and those guns failed to go off. Why? The bullets were cold. That is why I was telling the Minister to look at the risk allowances of policemen because those policemen could have been shot down dead. In fact, the gangsters, when they realised that the policemen were powerless because their guns were useless, opened fire and the policemen ran helter skelter for shelter. The gangsters escaped.



The Chairman: Cde. Collymore, you wouldn't do the same? You wouldn't run helter skelter if they opened fire on you?

Cde. Collymore: That is the problem. Since these gangsters are well armed I am concerned about the policemen. They are at a disadvantage. Therefore I am going to ask the Minister to take an inventory and see that the weapons are functioning properly, because we are in a precarious situation. Cde. Chairman, even you yourself were robbed on a previous occasion.

This is very serious. I had to point out that it would appear that we are losing the war against crime. I want the Minister to get up in this House and say that we are not losing the war. Of course, they won a few battles. Some people have been shot, some are in hospital. It does not appear that we are winning the war. Therefore this is one of the points I wished to raise under Security Precautions, that the nation is insecure.

The Chairman: You have an opportunity now.

Cde. Collymore: Thank you very much for your indulgence. You are reasonable when you want to be.

The Chairman: When you are not rude you get all the latitude.

Cde. Collymore: I have to point out that I wrote a letter to the Minister a while ago and he responded but the response was not conclusive or comprehensive.

The Chairman: You will say I am unreasonable. What has the letter to do with it?

Cde. Collymore: The letter has to deal with crime and the activities of the Police. The letter also has to deal with instances of torture, instances of deaths in the police custody. The Minister did not satisfy the situation. The letter also has to deal with searchers under the National Security Act.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore, we are having that Bill tomorrow, the National Security Bill. You can talk then on that.

Cde. Collymore: I will go on to subhead 5, Fire and Ambulance Station. I should like to ask the Minister if he can say when we will get a new fire boat. This fire boat issue has been hanging in the balance for quite a long time. Since the "Forbes B." has been condemned we note that there has been no fire boat.

The Chairman: You did not hear Vice President Naraine say that they are going to provide a fire boat this year?

Cde. Collymore: I was not here.

The Chairman: That is the trouble.

Cde. Collymore: I had other things to do. I am glad to hear that a fire boat will be provided this year because it is timely and quite necessary.

The Chairman: Cde. Ramsaroop.

#### Suspension of Standing Order

The Vice President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): May I move the suspension of Standing Order No. 9(2) to enable us to go beyond 18:30 hours, which is the statutory time, so that we can complete consideration of the Estimates of Income and Expenditure for the year 1982, the Appropriation Bill 1982 and Financial Paper No. 1.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 9(2) suspended.

The Chairman: Mr. Abraham.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, Prison Improvement. In early February I had the unenviable experience of sharing the same ward in the Lethem Hospital with a prisoner. In fact, he had been sent to the hospital because his blood pressure in the prison was running high. I said, “Boy, what are conditions in the prison like?” He said, “Man, I could not stay in the place because all over the floor was strewn with filth and smelling of urine”. He said that the conditions in that particular prison were totally intolerable. So I just want to find out if this is the general condition in the hinterland prisons.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Chairman, page 61, subhead 2, Police Stations and Buildings. I notice that the legend states that this deals with rural stations and “to rehabilitate other Police buildings”. I should like to ask the Minister if he has in mind the Charity Police Station and the Aurora Police Station on the Essequibo Coast, which are very inadequate. I should also like to recommend, if the Minister has in mind to rehabilitate the Aurora Police Station, that this Police Station be now resited in the Supenaam area.

1982-04-07

18:25 – 18:35 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:25 hrs

Cde. Moore: Cde. Chairman, the power plant at Mazaruni is unreliable and one of the things that we hope to do this year is put it right. On the question of police buildings, there are a number of police buildings which are in the process of renovation in Georgetown and in various parts of the country. What we hope to do this year with the available allocation, is to complete the works and if there are any funds available, we shall deal with new projects, but I think this year the hope is to complete that which is already in train.

To answer the question raised about Charity and Aurora, the question of the reciting of the station will be locked at in consultation with the commissioner of police. The Charity police station, I agree, is in need of rehabilitation but I would like to say that since policing concerns the community – a point made very eloquently by the Hon. Member, Cde. Collymore – then I will invite the member who raised the question on the condition in the Charity and Aurora Police Stations to make whatever input in self-help and or materials or any other thing which the community would wish to give. The police would certainly be happy to work in co-operation with public spirited citizens in that regard. Reference was made to the escape from the Brickdam Police Station. We admit that. Of those who escaped, five have been recaptured including the person whom we believe to be the mastermind. If my friend, the member on the other side seeks to bestow upon this Brickdam Police Station some special distinction because it has been the scene of an escape it is in the same company therefore with places like Alcatraz, Devils Island and the Park Hurst and all the other maximum security prisons throughout the world from which prison breaks have been made. That is not to say that we are happy about the break. A break is always a disturbing thing, but as long as human ingenuity is what it is, there is no prison which any man can make which is escape proof. Ask Ronald Briggs, he will tell you.

The question of the immobility of the police force bothers us. We would like to have more vehicles and again we appeal to the members on the other side if they have vehicles which they wish to make available we would welcome those. But we have begun to deploy horses in areas which are suitable, particularly in the rural areas, to traverse places where even vehicles cannot go, to deal with cattle rustling and that sort of thing, and praedial larency and therefore the over all mobility of the police force has improved. If a policeman found himself without transportation and used his resourcefulness in order to hitch a ride from a public spirited citizen, I would commend him for his present mindedness in the circumstances. Again Cde. Chairman, there is some truth in the report that a gun did fail to go off. I do not know which gun does not

jam or fail to go off on some occasion. These police guns are serviced regularly, but with the best will in the world, a gun will jam occasionally. It is not really a reason to make, to my mind, a great song and dance about it. You tune your car and one morning it refuses to start. Such is the behaviour of things which are mass produced. I assure this honourable Assembly that the police equipment is regularly serviced, is regularly oiled, is regularly cleaned, and that all things being equal they should function when one wants them to function rather than mal-function. The war against crime like poor will always be with us until the end of time and as long as people are what people are, we will never, I am sorry to say, totally, completely and absolutely eradicate crime. If that is what the speaker on the other side is suggesting then I have to say that I would not stand up and tell this honourable Assembly that I and the Police Force will guarantee the eradication of crime. I think what we can realistically say, is that we have curtailed crime within the proper bounds and I dare anybody to say otherwise.

It is true that the Hon. Member did write me a letter and that I did make a reply. He described my reply as not being conclusive and comprehensive, but inconclusive and incomprehensive, but what I suspect is that it was incomprehensible to him. Cde. Chairman, I think a simple expedient would be to take it perhaps to one of the other members on the other side and they will explain my meaning a little bit more clearly. There have been reports, let me say candidly to this Assembly, of what has been called the torture of two persons. I have read those reports and I have, myself, personally examined the two persons who made the complaint. I personally directed that they be taken to a doctor. I personally received a report of their visit to the doctor, and I personally saw the medical certificate and I personally gave directions that investigations be carried out. I can do no more than that. The investigations are continuing. If anyone is found culpable that person will be dealt with. On the question of the death of Samar, I also became aware of that fact, I also became aware of that fact, I also personally supervised the investigation of that matter. The investigation is continuing and it will proceed to a conclusion.

On the question of searchers, I really am a little bit troubled or confused by the call on the one hand to eradicate crime, to win the war against crime, and then when you do the very thing which you have to do in order to achieve that objective. That is to search the home and other places where you believe the evidence of crime or the instrument of crime are to be found,  $\frac{3}{4}$  you got complaints being made, Cde. Chairman in this honourable Assembly that the police are carrying out searches. I would really wish that there would be some consistency in this matter. You cannot call upon the police to eradicate crime and at the same time complain that in the pursuit of that objective, to carry out searches, you somehow suggest that the searches are improper.

You have dealt adequately, Cde. Chairman, with the fire boat. And Cde. Abraham's complaint, I myself will shortly visit Lethem and I will personally look into the matter of the condition of the Lethem prison there. I give that assurance to this honourable Assembly. With reference to the question of the buildings at Aurora, I believe I have already answered the Hon. Member on that question. [Applause]

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, may I ask the Minister a supplementary question? Will the Minister say how soon the Government is going to either renovate or remove the prison situated in Camp Street?

The Chairman: That is not supplementary, you know.

Cde. Collymore: It is.

The Chairman: Supplementary means matters that you have raised and he has replied and arising out of that. Anyway, Cde. Minister, since we have been proceeding happily all along I think we should end on that happy note.

Cde. Moore: I am happy to end on a note of agreement with my friend the Hon. Member. We have recognised that the Georgetown prison is by no means happily located and we would wish really to have it removed to some more convenient place. Already there has been a certain spread out. There has been the prison at Timehri, there has been the prison at Lusignan, at Melanie Damishana and at Belbaag and that process will continue and hopefully, one of these day, I do not wish to make an unrealistic promise by saying that it will be soon, one of these days the Georgetown prison will be removed from its present location.

Division 512, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$3,090,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

1982-04-08

18:35 – 18:45 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:35 hrs

The Chairman: Comrades and honourable Members, this completes consideration in the Committee of Supply of the 1992 Estimates of Expenditure. The Assembly will now resume.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: Cde. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance.

The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): I beg to report that the Committee of Supply considered the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1982 and made a few corrections. The motion for approval of the Estimates by the National Assembly may now be put by you.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker: Cde. Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 12

The Vice President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, now that the Estimates have been approved, it is necessary under paragraph (2) of article 218 of the Constitution for an Appropriation Bill to be introduced in the National Assembly to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund for the sum necessary to meet the expenditure as approved and for the amount required. I have consulted the members and there is full agreement to the Bill being disposed of at this time. Consideration of the Bill under the Standing Order is a mere formality as we all know. As we have passed the time and stage on the Order Paper for the Introduction of Bills it is necessary for Standing Order No. 12 which sets out the order of the business to be suspended to enable the Bill to be tabled in its stages. I respectfully ask and therefore seek your leave to move a suspension of Standing Order 12.

The Speaker: Leave is granted.

Cde. Ramsaroop: Having obtained your leave I now formerly move that Standing Order No. 12 be suspended to enable the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance to introduce the Appropriation Bill 1982 at this stage.

Question put and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 12 suspended.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the first time:

Appropriation Bill 1982 – Bill No. 3/1982. [The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance.]

### PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sum necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1982, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of that sum for specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” [The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance]

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, in accordance with paragraph (2) of Article 171 of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Appropriation Bill 1982 for consideration by the National Assembly. I will now present the Bill to the Assembly and move that it be read a Second time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Cde. Hoyte: I now ask that the Bill be read a Third time and passed as printed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

MOTION  
APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 1

“Be it resolved that the National Assembly approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1982 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision – Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ended 1981-12-31. [The Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance.]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Cde. Sallahuddin.

The Minister, Finance in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Sallahuddin): In accordance with Article 171(2) of the Constitution I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in the Financial Paper No. 7 of 1982 – Supplementary Estimates totalling \$7,565,879 for the period ended 1981-12-31, and I now move the motion.

The Chairman: Will those Members who wish to speak kindly indicate. [Pause] We will consider page 1, items 1-8. Page 2, items 9-18. Page 3, items 19-28. Page 4, Section B – Capital Estimates, items 1-4. This completes consideration of all the items.

Question –

“that the Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1982 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision – Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ended 1981-12-31.”

Put, and agreed to.



1982-04-09

18:45 – 18:48 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:45 hrs

Assembly resumed.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No.1/1982 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in its said Resolution.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: Comrades, there are two Bills which we will do tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to tomorrow, Wednesday, 1982-04-07 at 14:00 hrs.” [The Vice President, Party and State Matters.]

Adjourned accordingly at 18:48 hrs.