

# Official Report

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2018) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN*

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98<sup>TH</sup> Sitting

Wednesday, 31<sup>ST</sup> October, 2018

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*The Assembly convened at 2.45 p.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

### **Leave to Members**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, leave from today's Sitting has been granted to the Hon. Members, Mr. Clement Rohee and Dr. Bheri Ramsaran.

## **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following Papers and Reports were laid:

- (i) Annual Reports of the Ministry of Social Protection for the years 2015 and 2016.  
*[Minister of Social Protection]*
- (ii) Audited Financial Statement of the Guyana Water Inc. for the year ended 31<sup>ST</sup> December, 2016. *[Minister of Communities]*

- (iii) Loan Agreement No. 20 SFR-GUY dated, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2018, between the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for an amount of US\$1,265,000 to finance the Water Sector Enhancement Project. Under this agreement, the CDB will finance the services of consultant (s) to: (a) prepare detailed designs, drawings, cost estimates and the documents for the construction of water treatment plants and the upgrade of a water supply infrastructure; (b) conduct a study to determine the feasibility of utilising water from the Hope Canal as a domestic supply; (c) prepare a National Water Policy and Associated Strategic Plans; and (d) develop recommendations for institutional strengthening and capacity building for Guyana Water Inc. (GWI) and Ministry of Communities.
- (iv) Loan agreement No. 21 SFR-GUY, dated 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2018, between the CDB and the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for an amount of US\$4,367,000 to finance the Transport Sector Enhancement Project. Under this agreement, the CDB will finance the services of consultant (s) to conduct feasibility studies and prepare detailed designs, drawings, cost estimates and bid documents for: (a) construction of a new bridge at Wismar; (b) construction of a new Stelling at Parika; and (c) upgrade of the Lethem Aerodrome. [*Minister of Finance*]

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

The following Report was laid:

- (1) Minutes of Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Selection which was held on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. [*Speaker of the National Assembly – Chairman of the Committee of Selection.*]

## **ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **GUYANA GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO GUYANESE VICTIMS AFFECTED BY RECENT FLOODS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, you have the floor.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have tabled an Oral Question Without Notice. Can I proceed? Thank you. The question is to the second Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who I do not know if he is acting as Prime Minister today. Since the recent floods in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Office of the Leader of the Opposition has received many calls from Guyanese in Trinidad and Tobago saying that they have been unable to obtain any advice or assistance from the Guyana Consulate there. Could the Hon. Vice-President and Minister inform this House as to what, if any, measures have been put in place by his Ministry to: (1) assist those affected Guyanese in the flood areas of Trinidad and Tobago; (2) render any assistance to assist the country, Trinidad and Tobago, in recovering from the recent flood?

**Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mr. Greenidge]:** Mr. Speaker, I have received the Oral Question Without Notice. I must say that I am a little surprised. Firstly, as you know, the Government of Guyana has an office in Port of Spain. There is a Consulate there with a High Commissioner, with whom Guyanese have been in constant interaction. And so, I am astonished that the Leader of the Opposition could feel that the calls that he would have received are the result of inability to obtain advice or assistance.

Let me say that, as far as up to today, the High Commission has received one request for assistance in repatriating someone to Guyana and three other requests for financial assistance. Those persons are due to go into the High Commission to indicate, more clearly, what their needs are. I am very much surprised that it should be suggested that Guyanese are having difficulties. As you know, we opened the High Commission in 2016, and there has been a lot of interface between the High Commission and the Guyanese community, so this particular High Commission has a Consulate within it. This High Commission is one that is 'pretty' active.

There are two specific questions that were put. It seems that my Colleagues on the other side are, perhaps, putting these questions for entertainment rather than for information. We can stick to that mode... [Mr. Ali: It is an improper motive.] Is it an improper motive? [Mr. Ali: Yes.] The intent may be improper, but I am saying that the question does not reflect the reality. There are Consular services, they are being used and we will continue to provide those services.

More specifically, with regards to the Guyanese in the affected areas, we, as I have said, as of today, had three requests and we will do whatever is necessary to render assistance. Let me just remind Colleagues that, last year, following extensive damage in Barbuda in particular, and in Saint Martin, in response to requests, we provided substantial assistance, including the transportation of several Guyanese to Guyana. **[Members of the Opposition: Cost... value.]** Make up your minds. Either you are worried about the cost or you are accusing us of not doing anything. I am saying that we have done something, we will continue to do it and I do not appreciate the fabrication of... *[Interruption]*.

Mr. Speaker, may I say also, if I might be allowed, in relation to the second part of the question, regarding... I spent many years in an air core dealing with aircraft and I know the difference between a turboprop and a jet. I am prepared to advise my Colleagues on this matter. With regards to rendering of assistance to our sister state, Trinidad and Tobago, let me just remind you that we do have a framework for governing our cooperation between ourselves and Trinidad and Tobago, a framework initially initiated in 1999 by the Members on the other side, and which we recently renewed. So there is a framework within which we can cooperate and render assistance and within which they can request assistance. That is in place.

Specifically, in relation to the floods of Trinidad and Tobago, the Minister responsible for these matter, Minister Harmon, who deals with the Civil Defence Commission (CDC), had conveyed to the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago that having heard of the damage caused by the floods, we were desirous of knowing exactly what assistance they needed. I believe, as is normal in such circumstances, between our CDC and the Trinidad and Tobago authorities, we are determining what specific needs they have. But, there is a general agreement that we will be providing or we may be requested to provide, assistance by way of food stuff, and fresh fruits and vegetables, but that has not yet been specified.

And, of course, you will know that, subsequent to that exchange between Minister Harmon and the Trinidadian Minister of Agriculture, the Comrade President was in Trinidad and Tobago and had a meeting with Prime Minister Rowley, at which they discussed this particular matter of support being rendered by Guyana to Trinidad and Tobago. This is not the case of abandonment or neglect of our obligations as a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) or of the failure of the Consular services of Guyana to deliver assistance to Guyanese.

So, I would like to assure you that things are in place and we are continuing to monitor the situation. There has been no request of the nature suggested in the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

**Mr. Speaker:** Ms. Teixeira, do you have another question?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes, Sir. The Hon. Member is being rather sensitive. The issue is, what measures were being put in place? Therefore, the answer that the Minister has given is that, in relation to its support for Trinidad and Tobago, it is all under generalities. There are no measures. We are still in discussions and you have clarified that. Thank you.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Speaker, for purposes of clarity, since it is not clear, I would just like to say that, in cases of emergency throughout the Caribbean, whether it be in Trinidad and Tobago or in Antigua and Barbuda, there is an accepted framework. You do not wake up one morning and send 500 tubes of toothpaste. The Civil Defence Commission contacts the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and CDEMA determines the needs in a specific case, having consulted with national authorities and then, having consulted with others, they decide on who would be providing what. Who is in a best position to provide what in the time. So, there is no absence of a framework.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

3.00 p.m.

## **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **For Oral Replies**

#### **AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO HDM LABS INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF PHARMACEUTICALS TO THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, there are 11 questions on today's Order Paper. Questions 1 to 5 are for Oral Replies. Questions 6 to 11 are for Written Replies. Dr. Anthony, please ask your questions.

**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Could the Hon. Minister of Public Health provide this National Assembly with the following information regarding the award of a contract to HDM Labs Inc. for the award of pharmaceuticals to the Ministry of Public Health:

- (i) How many companies were invited to tender for this contract to supply pharmaceuticals for the Ministry?
- (ii) What were the criteria used for the selection of this company for a restricted bidding process?
- (iii) On what basis were suppliers of pharmaceuticals to the Ministry such as, Ansa McAL, International Pharmaceuticals Agency and International Healthcare disqualified?
- (iv) Why was a company that usually supplies laboratory equipment listed in the restrictive tender to supply pharmaceuticals?
- (v) What were the items procured under the contract with HDM Labs Inc., the quantity for each item and the unit cost for each item?
- (vi) Has HDM Labs Inc. provided all the procured items? If so, when?
- (vii) Does HDM Labs Inc. have the Manufacturer's Authorisation in the territory of Guyana for the items listed in the contract? Have these authorisations been produced for verification?
- (viii) Does HDM Labs Inc., have their Goods certified by WHO, or the US Food and Drug Administration, and the Guyana Food and Drug Administration?
- (ix) Can the Minister of Public Health inform the National Assembly on the experience and technical capacity of the HDM Labs Inc.?
- (x) Is the Minister satisfied that the Ministry of Public Health has received value for money expended on this contract?

**Minister of Public Health [Ms. Lawrence]:** May I remind the House that, this particular matter, was brought here by myself and it has been ventilated in the public media and, also, in the Auditor

General's Report for 2017. Notwithstanding, I would like to proceed to provide answers to the questions posited by the Hon. Member, Dr. Anthony.

With regards to question number (i) – “How many companies were invited to tender?” I am informed that six companies were invited to tender.

With regards to question number (ii) – “The criteria used for the selection?” I am informed that the main criteria used for selecting the persons from the shortlisted companies in the restrictive bidding process, was that suppliers must not have pending contracts that would hinder the delivery of emergency pharmaceuticals to the Ministry.

With regards to question number (iii) – The information I received is that ANSA McAL Trading did not submit authorisation from the bidder to seek reference for the bidder's bank or surety from local or foreign suppliers, also, bank statements or any other form of surety, experience and technical capacity that evidence was not provided to support that this was carried out by the entity in question.

The International Pharmaceutical Agency (IPA) - it is stated that the bidder did not supply its financial capacity, that is, evidence of liquid assets or credit, not less than 25% of the bid price, and this criterion was applicable.

Among the six companies, there is no company listed as International Healthcare, so I cannot provide any information on such a company that did not take part in the process.

Question (iv) indicated – “Why was a company that usually supplies laboratory equipment listed in the restrictive tender to supply pharmaceuticals?” Let me just say to the Hon. Member and this House that, according to the evaluation report, none of the companies listed were declared ineligible to do so.

Question (v), “What were the items procured, the quantity for each item and the unit cost for each item?” I quote from the submission of HDM Labs Inc.:

(1) Metformin 500mg tablets – 27,040, at a unit price of \$13.68

(2) Human albumin 20% 100ml injections – 3,840, at a unit price of \$150

- (3) Seletalisib 81mg tablets – 16,951 at a unit price at \$13
- (4) 500mg tablets – 251 for \$30
- (5) Clindamycin 150mg tablet – 11,927 in quantity; the price \$12.25
- (6) Cloxacillin 500mg tablets – 2,702 at \$37
- (7) Profil 10mg injection – 28,232 at a cost of \$3.85
- (8) Lidocaine 2% injection 20mg – 63,804 at a cost of \$2.14
- (9) Diclofenac 1% 30g gel – 49,303 at a cost of \$1.50
- (10) Diclofenac 75mg tablet – 12,392 at a cost of \$4.50
- (11) Vecuronium Bromide 10mg powder injection – 19,651 at a cost of \$3.75
- (12) Mebendazole 500mg injection – 164 at \$105
- (13) Neulasta 6mg 0.6ml injection – 6 at \$950

With regards to question number (vi), “Has the company provided all the procured items?” The answer is yes. These were provided over the period of October, November, December, January and April.

With regards to the manufacturer’s authorisation, I am informed that the company did submit certified manufacturer’s authorisation and that it has been verified.

“Does HDM Lab Inc. has its good certification by World Health Organisation (WHO) or the US Food and Drug Department?” I am informed that this company is an approved Food and Drug Administration (FDA) facility in the United States of America (USA) and that these pharmaceuticals are listed on the WHO list.

“Can the Minister inform the National Assembly on the experience and technical capacity of the company in question?” The Minister has been informed that this company has been in establishment for approximately 30 years.



With regards to question (x), “Whether the Minister is satisfied that the Ministry has received value for money?” Let me state that the policy of the Ministry is that we ensure that, whenever we expend public funds, we receive value for money. There is no other tender to compare any of the information submitted by HDM Lab Inc. So, a conclusion, that is very concise, cannot be drawn by me as the Minister, since I was not one of the evaluators. The information that was provided to the evaluators was that they have indicated that they have received value for money.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Dr. Anthony, do you have another question?

**Dr. Anthony:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

According to the Auditor General’s Report, section 565(a), it stated that the supplier was required to supply the drugs two weeks after the signing of the contract. That is, all the items should have been delivered no later than the 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2017. At this date, no items were delivered, and delivery commenced in October, 2017. I would like to ask the Minister, since none of the items were delivered, as stipulated by the contract, what penalties were put in place against the supplier?

*3.15 p.m.*

**Ms. Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I have here with me shipping documents, which I used, when I called those months that the items were sent to indicate when they arrived in Guyana and at the main bond of the Ministry of Public Health. Let me put that on record. Secondly, with regards to the question asked by the Hon. Member, I must indicate that this is a matter which is engaging the Ministry of Public Health, the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Public Health and the Procurement Department. At this time, we would not be able to answer that question.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Dr. Anthony, your second question.

**Dr. Anthony:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, Minister Lawrence told this National Assembly that the contract that was awarded to HDM Labs Inc. was for \$366.9 million. When we go to the Report of the Auditor General for 2017, at paragraph 565, it is stated that the contract was \$409.497 million. Could the Minister please verify what were the sums that were awarded?

**Ms. Lawrence:** I believe the first thing that we must establish is the exchange rate used by the Auditor General. The Cabinet's decision dated the 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017, noted that the award was in the sum of US\$1,891,443.46. Let me repeat. We will have to establish the exchange rate that was being used.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Madam Minister, again, the Report of the Auditor General points out that the two weeks' delivery, as my Colleague pointed out, was not adhered to. What is strange, and I would like you to answer, is how is it that this company that had a contract for US\$1,891,443.46 and has not been paid 41% of the contract since the middle of this year, which was since it last delivered, has made no request to be paid? This is rather odd because the company is owed over \$169 million by the Ministry of Public Health. Why is the company not interested in being paid? Is it Madam that this country has had several contracts with the Ministry of Public Health? Therefore, we would like to know how many contracts HDM Labs Inc. has been able to accumulate in the Ministry of Public Health in 2017 and 2018. Thank you.

**Ms. Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I seek your guidance here. This is because the question is two-pronged and the latter question is new. It is not one that was posited to me. It is coming out of the Report of the Auditor General. However, I would answer the first part of the question to posit that, the perception and the information shared by the Hon. Member and others, are not true. I have information *via* emails in the months of April, June and August, 2018 from the company, to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health enquiring about their payments. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Minister. Ms. Teixeira, question two.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I asked the Minister a question, but she has not answered yet. How many contracts has HDM Labs Inc. had with the Ministry of Public Health in 2017 and 2018? She did not answer that part of the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Ms. Teixeira, would you repeat the question?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes. Thank you, Sir. The question that I asked the Hon. Member was not answered. That question was, how many more contracts has HDM Labs Inc. received from the Ministry of Public Health for the years 2017 and 2018? I am speaking about HDM Labs Inc, how many more contracts? This is the same matter that we are on right now.

**Ms. Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, the question posited was about an award that was given to HDM Labs Inc. I am now asked about other matters that are not a part of the question. We are speaking about a specific award. *[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]*

**Ms, Teixeira:** The Minister said that the difference in the quantities was because of the exchange rates. The Auditor General points out that the company is owed over a \$169 million and after six months, the company seems to have had no interest in requesting to be paid. I am wondering and I have a right to wonder, whether this has to do with another contract with HDM Labs Inc.

**Ms. Lawrence:** I did respond to the Hon. Member, indicating that what she has asked does not ring truth. **[Mr. Damon: Who is she?]** It is the Hon. Member, Ms. Gail Teixeira. I am not like you. The Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira asked that question and I said to her that the information, which she is positing and that which is out there in the public's domain, does not ring truth. I have emails from the company to the Permanent Secretary for the months of April, June and August, 2018, asking about their payments. I did answer that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

## **FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER'S EXPENDITURE ON OTHER SERVICES**

**Mr. Speaker:** Question two is in the name of the Hon. Member, Mr. Odinga Lumumba and is for the Hon. First Vice-President and Prime Minister and not acting President. You may reply Prime Minister.

**Mr. Lumumba:** Could the Hon. First Vice-President and Prime Minister inform this National Assembly with regards to how much of the \$109.2 million allocated in sub-head 6284 – Other in the agency code - how was the money spent and what was it spent for, as of 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2018?

**First Vice President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]:** Of the \$109.2 million allocated under sub-head 6284 – Other in Agency Code 02 – Prime Minister's Secretariat, Programme 021, \$21.4 million has been spent, as of August, 2018. With regards to how much has been spent and where has it been spent: Constitutional Reform activities - \$5 million; Launching of regional extension radio in Aishalton, Orealla and Bartica and training of regional radio personnel and

Prime Minister's outreach activities - \$5.5 million; supervisory consultancy for the Regional Radio Project, \$4.6 million; Information Technology (IT) services - \$1.2 million; repairs to furniture at Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and Official Residence of the Prime Minister (ORPM), reupholster of furniture at OPM and ORPM, replace, clean curtains and carpets - \$1.4 million; events and functions at the Official Residence of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Prime Minister \$1.6 million; and other minor expenses for OPM and ORPM - purchase of books, paintings, tickets for events, printing of badges and labels for staff, framing pictures, stipends for work study students, stipends for cleaning services, purchase of cellular phones for the office staff - \$2.1 million. That brings a total of \$21.4 million.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Mr. Lumumba, you have the floor. Do you have another question?

**Mr. Lumumba:** Mr. Prime Minister, could you provide this House with itemised items?

**Ms. Teixeira:** The Prime Minister reported that he spent on Constitutional Reform, could he state more. Was it for a consultant? Are those for consultations? What has the \$5 million been spent on?

Also, as I am on my feet, the \$5 million which was spent on the Prime Minister's outreach, was this done on chartered flights? Where has he done outreaches and for what purpose?

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** The first question, with regards to Constitutional Reform activities, there have been events which were sponsored by the Office of the Prime Minister, to have consultations at the University of Guyana (UG), in partnership with the United Nations (UN) organisation, the Carter Centre and to have an outreach in discussion with students and interested parties on the process of Constitutional Reform.

With regard to outreaches, the Prime Minister has had outreaches in several regions in Guyana. First, outreaches were done in relation to a number events to deal with the outreach and regional radio stations, to deal with issues of Amerindian affairs and consultations. Very few of these were chartered flights. As you can see, the Office of the Prime Minister has been very frugal with regards to other outreaches and expenses relating to the Prime Minister's activities.

*3.30 p.m.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could the Hon. Member say, of the \$5 million for outreaches, what part was used for the Alliance for Change (AFC)'s campaign visits to a number of areas such as Auchlyne, Whim, Bloomfield, *et cetera*, in the lead up to the Local Government Elections (LGE) on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018?

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, that is captured within the ambit of the original question. But, as the Member has asked, and they seem to be propogandising this matter, I, personally, paid for the tents and the chairs at Auchlyne, when I found out that the organisers found the school building too small. They had to rent chairs.... *[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]*

They were forced to rent chairs and two or three tents in an open convivial participatory way to accommodate all the people who wanted to greet and meet their Prime Minister, in his hometown and at the school that was attended by His Excellency, David Granger, myself and my wife.

**[Ms. Teixeira:** Did you pay for the chairs?]                      We paid for the tents and the chairs. My wife provided snacks for the children, at her own expense, and so it cannot be said at all, even though we may trivialise these matters in this season of electioneering and propogandising, that any abuse has taken place with regard to public funds to finance any of the political activities that the Prime Minister is involved in. Other politicians are using the largesse of the State, \$20 million a year and free security and transportation, to do political work. But, unfortunately, in my case, Sir, the response is overwhelming, and, in his case, there has been sparse or no reaction at all. That is the *fruit of the pudding*.

**Mr. Nandlall:** I would like one clarification from the Prime Minister in relation to constitutional reform.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do you have a supplementary question?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes, Sir. Prime Minster, you identified two sets of activities for which the \$5 million have been spent in relation to constitutional reform. Firstly, you referred to a consultation at the University of Guyana (UG) and, secondly, you spoke about consulting with some students. Could you tell us who the students are and from which schools? It is because I am interested in constitutional reform and I did not see that reflected in the press. All of your activities are widely

covered in the *Guyana Chronicle* newspaper. I read it every day and I did not see any outreach on constitutional reform. So, could you assist us?

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I am very delighted that the Hon. Member reads the *Guyana Chronicle* newspaper, which is the nation's newspaper and the only source of factual and truthful reportage. I did not say anything about an activity with students. I said there was sensitising, as regard University of Guyana students and other interested parties, and that was what was reported. I do not know what other activity my Learned Friend is speaking about, but I have given the answer that that was the event.

### **COST OF MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, ADVISORS AND FAMILY MEMBERS**

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister of Public Health Question No. 3 standing in my name. Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly as to the total cost of the medical and dental bills paid for by the Government on behalf of Members of the Cabinet, Advisors, and family members for the period June, 2015 to June, 2018?

**Ms. Lawrence:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and let me thank the Hon. Member for the question.

It was just about a year after we took office that the Cabinet was apprised of expenditures incurred, previously, for medical and other expenses and it took the decision to begin a search of various insurance companies to be able to provide insurance coverage for the members of Cabinet, Ministers and their families, should they wish that. It was so that we do not place a burden on the public funds, as had transpired in years previously, such as in 2012. From the public purse, in 2012, some \$37,138,000 was spent; then, in 2013, \$9,732,000 was spent; and then, in 2014, some \$47,284,000 was spent. From our investigation, that did not include dental expenses, which for the year 2012 was \$2,456,000; in 2013, it was \$1,793,000; and in 2014, it was some \$84,999 for dental.

It is because of some of these things that we sought to go out there and get an insurance company. We came to this House and we asked for consent to have the Government pay 50% and every other Member who is covered would pay the other 50% to the company. Because of us taking that decision, I am happy to report to this honourable House that, of June, 2015, no request was made

to the public funds for medical or dental coverage for any of our Ministers. The same thing happened in 2016; again, there is nil. In June of 2018, again there is nil, but in 2017, prior to us signing on with the insurance company, some \$2,404,000 was spent.

**Bishop Edghill:** I thank the Hon. Minister for the answer. A follow-up. I am unaware of any decision taken by this House for Government to pay 50% and for Ministers to pay 50%. Could she indicate to us when that came to the House and what date that was discussed in the House? While she is discussing that, could she indicate what is the size of the premium that is to be paid and who has paid that premium? Is it the Ministry of Public Health that has paid it and has the Ministers refunded what the Ministry of Public Health has paid on their part?

**Ms. Lawrence:** Let me thank the Hon. Member and let me just remind him that when the 2018 Budget was debated, this matter was ventilated from questions on his side of this National Assembly and we could go back to that. However, in terms of the second part of the question, let me just inform the Member that the deductions are made by the Parliament Office from the Ministers' salaries; and yes, the Ministry of Public Health pays and then that money is recouped.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do you have a supplementary question?

**Bishop Edghill:** Not as yet, Sir, because there was a part of the question that has not been answered. What is the size of the premium?

**Ms. Lawrence:** I am quite certain that the Hon. Member knows that there is no same insurance premium for anyone. It varies based on the questions that are asked and the answers that are provided. Then, the insurance company will do a calculation in terms of the risks and then make a proposition to the person. Thank you.

**Bishop Edghill:** If the State is paying 50%, could the Hon. Minister tell this House what is the sum of which we are paying 50%?

**Ms. Lawrence:** To the Hon. Member, it does not matter what the premium is, it is just 50% and no more. As far as I know, there is one Speaker in this House and one Speaker only and to that Speaker I will answer. At this time, I do not have that figure, but I could assure this House that, at our next Sitting, I will provide that information.

**ALLOCATION OF CONTRACTS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE -WEEDING, CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE OF THE WEST COAST AND CORENTYNE BERBICE PUBLIC ROAD SHOULDERS, REGIONS 5 AND 6.**

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister of Public Infrastructure Question No. 4 standing in my name. Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly as to the reasons for not going to public tender for the abovenamed project in May, 2018? Could the Minister explain how were the 15 contractors selected to bid for the abovementioned project, Lots 19-26, by way of letter dated 11th May, 2018 from the Ministry's Special Projects Unit? Could the Minister state how were these contracts awarded totalling \$120 Million to a number of these contractors without following the procurement laws and Ministry's limits?

**Minister of Public Infrastructure [Mr. Patterson]:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The implementation of the Small Business Act 2004 allows for the allocation of 20% of Government contracts to small businesses.

*3.45 p.m.*

This Act created opportunities and employment for small businesses. The Minister of Finance, if you could recall, in his Budget Speech in 2017, spoke about ensuring a level playing field in the bidding for Government contracts, enforcing the requirements and for every endeavour to be made to ensure that at least 20% of public contracts are awarded to small businesses.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure has so far embraced this initiative and has been awarding contracts, in keeping with the policy of awarding 20% of Government contracts to small contractors. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure enforces the policy by inviting small contractors from the prequalified list to bid for works, which gives the contractors an opportunity to build capacity.

The House would be pleased to learn that the contractors were selected from the prequalified list, which was approved by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB), Ministry of Finance for the year 2018. It was a public advertisement and it went out on ...

**[Mr. Jagdeo:** How could it be public if it was prequalified?]

There was a public



advertisement for contractors to prequalify. If we look in the newspapers now, it was in 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, which was last year, we would have started, and we would have asked all persons who were interested in various things to prequalify. That would explain how we got our list.

Sir, from that prequalified list, which was provided to my Ministry by the NPTAB, a total of 178 contractors were approved, of which 59 indicated their preference to work in Region 2. In the prequalification list, persons have put in their requirements, finances, National Insurance Scheme (NIS) number, Tax Identification Number (TIN) and then they would select their preferred region to work. Fifty-nine persons said they would work in Region 2; 149 persons chose Region 3; 175 chose Region 4; 119 chose Region 5 and 80 chose Region 6.

From this list, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure shortlisted small contractors based on their geographic locations. From the list of 178 prequalified contractors, the Ministry invited 81 to bid for 26 lots throughout the country. For the particular areas, Lots 19-26, West Coast Berbice (WCB), the contractors were, as I said before, extracted from a prequalified list. A total of 15 were invited to bid for 8 lots. The contractors were awarded with contracts. Seven of them are from Regions 5 and 6.

One of the criteria used was locality. If one is from Regions 5 or 6, one prequalified. We also mentioned in the bidding document that there is only one contract per contractor. Therefore, for the 81 persons that bid for the 26 lots, we would have had 26 new contractors. The lots were split up primarily based on length.

Lot 19 - Abary to Golden Grove - was 18500 metres; Golden Grove to Rosignol was 18 500 meters; New Amsterdam to Fryish 17000 meters; Fryish to Bush Lot was 17,000 metres and Bush Lot to No. 51 was 17,000. All of them were basically done by length with no particular reason for the split. That is from where it started at Abary Bridge all the way up to Moleson Creek.

The final part of the question is: Could the Minister state how these contracts were awarded?

These six contracts that he listed for Lots 19-26 total \$80,370,000. I do not know where the Hon Member got his figure of \$120 million. Obviously, it is fake news once again. The procurement was done in accordance with the Procurement Act. **[Mr. Ali: No.]** It was done in accordance with the Procurement Act, Sir, and we have the evidence. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, Mr. Mustapha, do you have another question?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Let me thank the Minister for answering the question. It is very strange that there are over 350 contractors in Region 6 that are doing similar jobs. There are over 275 contractors, likewise, in Region 5 and only this small number was selected or prequalified. It seems that these contractors that were selected and prequalified were the persons who had knowledge of the process.

Secondly, the Minister, in his reply just now, said ...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, are you asking a question or are you making a statement?

**Mr. Mustapha:** I am asking a question.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am being very generous in my approach to this, but we must be careful. Let us ask a question.

**Mr. Mustapha:** I am saying that the Minister just indicated that the contracts were awarded based on geographic areas in the region. The number of persons that the contracts were awarded to are affiliated very closely to is one political group in this country.

My question is: Could the Minister say if there were a number of contractors who were discriminated against in the awarding of these contracts?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand...and if you permit me...because I do hope that the 575 contractors that the Hon. Member mentioned in Regions 5 and 6, in future, would read the newspapers. I have in my hand an invitation for prequalification of contractors for 2018.

“The Ministry of Public Infrastructure invites applicants from contractors who wishes to be shortlisted for the provision of works and services at the Ministry for the year 2018 in respect of the following six categories:

- (1) rehabilitation and maintenance of sea defences;
- (2) provision of electrical air-conditioning services;
- (3) repairs to vehicles and equipment; provision of surveying equipment;

(4) hiring of equipment and transportation services; and

(5) weeding and cleaning provision of labour only.

Interested applicants may obtain a complete set of pre-qualification documents from Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 at no cost from the Ministry's website."

I have listed the website. They also have in this document:

"Only prequalification documents from the Ministry would be accepted. Each prequalification application must be accompanied by a relevant Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) and the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) Compliance Certificate."

It is in bold typing.

This is not a requirement for new entrances. As we have been saying, we are trying to widen the net, bring more people in it and wean them off from what used to happen in the past. The date returnable is 19<sup>th</sup> December 19, 2017 at 9.00 a.m. It was open for two months,

It was advertised for two entire months. Therefore, I cannot see, if persons did not fill this simple form, then how is it that this Government has discriminated against anybody? Because they did not submit a prequalification document they cannot be put on our list of prequalified.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, I have listened to you with rapt attention. However, I have in my hand the Ministry of Public Infrastructure's Special Projects Unit (SPU) document dated 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2018. The list of contractors is invited to submit bids for the weeding, cleaning and maintenance of the West Coast and Corentyne, Berbice Public Road shoulders for Regions 5 and 6. They listed 15 companies. How were they selected when you said that it was a prequalification since October, 2017? This is May, 2018. How, therefore, did the Ministry select the 15 companies? I could read them: CS Santiago Construction Company, Inc, Cosal Ghobnatan, Quad Construction Inc, Aurora Constructing, ARMCO Construction Company, Mario Niamatalli Construction, EJ General Services, MA DEMAX Real Estate Construction Company, SOREIDOM Limited Subchand Ola Maintenance Construction, CP&D Engineering Services, Guy and Family Construction, Sukhoo and Son Enterprise, Kenneth Bowman, EAB Enterprise and Jenkins Services. This is from your Ministry's Special Projects Unit. What does this have to do with prequalification? How were they

selected? Was it by a tender process in the Ministry? Was it by NPTAB? How? It has nothing to do with the prequalification, Sir. You are misleading this House.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I want to repeat that this is the invitation for prequalification for contractors was for the year 2018. We started in 2017 because we had a very early budget. If you look in the newspapers right now, I have prequalification for contractors for 2019. I would like to use this opportunity to invite the contractors and inform them... The Hon. Member mentioned that the over 575 contractors that we unable to submit anything. Let them know that the prequalification process has started. Thank you.

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say how many companies were prequalified and what criteria were used to select the 15 out of the total that were prequalified?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that a total of 178 companies were approved for prequalification and they were in categories, unlike what happened before and would never happen in my Ministry.... You would have had a contractor from Essequibo going to the good region, that is, Region 6 and winning a contract. The 15 were selected based on the geographic locations and this was done throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. The contractors in Region 10 who signified that they could work in Region 10 were asked to bid for the works in Region 10. That is in keeping with our policy to empower the region. We must empower the regions. Every single day the Opposition bemoans the state of employment in Region 6.

*4.00 p.m.*

I would have thought that they would have been applauding and happy to ensure that persons from Regions 6 and 5 get the jobs and not anybody that came from a region outside of Regions 5 and 6. That is what we have to go for. For these small contracts, we have to empower the local persons. That is the only way we could build capacity. The local persons in the regions should be able to do the works.

**Mr. Ali:** The issue is not about creating jobs. We have always created *[inaudible]* jobs. The issue is...

*[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Ali, you are out of order unless you are addressing a question.

**Mr. Ali:** I am going to ask a question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, do address the question.

**Mr. Ali:** The issue at hand is the issue of transparency and accountability and the Hon. Minister cannot invent criteria in the tendering process. Could the Hon. Minister point to the section of the Procurement Act that states that the criteria, after prequalification, is geography? Point to the section in the Procurement Act that states that, after prequalification, the criteria geography. When you go to prequalification, you go to prequalification with a set of criteria and once the ...

*[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, if you have asked the question, you have to...

**Mr. Ali:** I am going to the second part of the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the second part of your question?

**Mr. Ali:** Once you go to a prequalification and you prequalify 154 contractors, it means that every single one of those 154 contractors has equal eligibility to the contract and you cannot invent geographic location for the allocation of the contract. Could the Hon. Minister point to the section of the Procurement Act that states that geographic location could have allowed him to award this contract? This is an issue of transparency and accountability. That is lacking by this Government.

*[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, what we are doing is asking questions, not making speeches, and we have to confine ourselves to asking questions, if we want the answers to the questions. Mr. Mustapha, do you have a follow-up question?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Yes. Could the Hon. Minister provide the documentation in relation to the project awarded in relation to the various lots in the areas - Region 5 and 6? It is all documentation and the prequalification documents that the contractor submitted to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

**Mr. Patterson:** The prequalified list goes to the National Tender and Procurement Administration Board (NPTAB). It is outside of my Ministry and so the request is misdirected. **[Bishop**

**Edghill: Inaudible]** Sir, I am hearing the Hon. Member, who was a former a junior Minister of Finance, making statements. NPTAB... is under the Ministry of Finance and not under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. I know that I am blamed for almost everything under the heavens and earth, but that is not it. Could the Hon. Member direct the question to the relevant person when he is ready?

**Mr. Speaker** Hon. Minister, have you responded to the question from the Hon. Member, Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha?

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you. Do you have another question, Mr. Mustapha?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Yes. I am asking, through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, if these documents could be requested by the Ministry and handed over to us in Parliament.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, there is a question directed to someone else through you.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I would take your guidance. NPTAB is the authority that collects the prequalification. What it does with the prequalification, on completion of its process, it sends out to Ministries the result of the prequalification process. All the background and other information are housed at the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board. All I am saying is that I do not have those documents. I do not know if you Sir, maybe it is better, if you are instructing me to go now to ask NPTAB for its documents to hand over here. That is the question the Hon. Member had asked.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, Mr. Mustapha, do you have another question?

**Mr. Mustapha:** Yes. The Hon. Minister has not answered the part of the question that I asked regarding the contracts that were signed with these contractors. Could the Ministry of Public Infrastructure make those contracts available to us?

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, is there a reply?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, I could provide you with a list of the contractors who were awarded and those things like that, but the background information is at NPTAB. So, I would get what the Ministry has in its possession.

**EXPENDITURE OF \$2.247 BILLION GUYANA DOLLARS (\$10.7 MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS) ALLOCATED TO THE AMERINDIAN LAND TITLING PROJECT**

**Mr. Speaker:** Question number five in the name of the Hon. Member, Ms. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai. It is for the Hon. Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. The Hon. Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs is not present today and no one has been authorised or requested to provide the answer to the question. This question would then be brought up at the next sitting for answer by the Hon. Minister.

*Question deferred.*

**For Written Replies**

**Mr. Speaker:** The questions for written replies, questions Nos. 6, 7 and 8 are in the name of the Hon. Member, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, and it is for the Minister of Public Health.

**STATUS OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S CHILD MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY COMMITTEE**

**Dr. Persaud:** Could the Hon. Minister provide the National Assembly with the following information with respect to the status of the Child Morbidity and Mortality Committee:

- (a) The date the Members of the said Committee were appointed?
- (b) The terms of reference of the Committee?
- (c) How many times has this Committee met in the last 2 years?
- (d) Are the Regional Health Officers and the Director of Medical Services at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation required to report child morbidity and mortality data on a quarterly basis to the Committee? If not, how is this information shared with/provided to the Committee?

- (e) How does the Committee track child morbidity and mortality cases?
- (f) Does it make scheduled visits to the health facilities in the regions to inspect and investigate any changes in the child morbidity and mortality patterns?
- (g) Does the Ministry provide adequate resources to the Committee for it to carry out its terms of reference?
- (h) Does the Committee prepare and submit quarterly or half yearly reports to the Chief Medical Officer on the status of Child morbidity and mortality in the country?
- (i) Has the Committee made any recommendations and, if so, has any been implemented?
- (j) What would you say are the most urgent recommendations the Committee has made to the Ministry?

**Ms. Lawrence:** The Ministry of Public Health and by extension the Government of Guyana continues to make strides to improve infant and child health within the country. As per preliminary data from the Ministry's Statistical Unit, deaths among this population continue to decrease. Though it is our desire that every child has the opportunity to survive into adulthood, we acknowledge that there are many areas within the system that need improvement, hence our continued efforts to ensure universal access and coverage. We would continue our quest to decrease the inequities of the coastland and hinterland by further enhancing the services that are available at the hospitals and primary care facilities. It is our target that every hospital would have specialists to the areas of paediatrics, surgery and obstetrics-Gynaecology and this has already begun. Along with specialists, ongoing efforts will continue to ensure supporting staff are trained especially in the areas of helping babies breathe, integrated management of childhood illnesses, basic life support and advanced life support so that complications will continue to be managed adequately.

Region	2014			2015			2016			2017		
	Neo	Inf	0-5	Neo	Inf	0-5	Neo	Inf	0-5	Neo	Inf	0-5
1	4	10	4	3	8	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
2	16	20	7	10	14	3	4	6	7	2	0	0



3	29	44	4	28	35	8	3	3	3	3		1
4	112	143	14	38	133	17	99	133	14	57	99	13
5	13	16	2	16	23	3	0	0	0	0	1	1
6	19	35	3	24	27	2	17	18	0	5	5	0
7	3	5	3	4	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
8	1	2	0	0	3	0						0
9	0	0	0	4	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	5	11	1	8	10	2	1	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	202	286	38	191	263	39	125	162	24	67	101	16

Figure i: Regional Disaggregated Data for Under 5 Mortality 2014-2017

(Source: (MOPH Statistical Unit))

(a) The Committee was appointed on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014 and re-appointed on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2016, for a period of two years. The current Committee's life is until end of August 2018. The Members are: Dr. P. Mottoo, Dr. R. Jaboor, Dr. C. Bowman, Nurse Barker, Nurse L. Johnson, Dr. E. Hamilton, Dr. O. Scott together with the Secretary.

(b) Yes (see attached)

Terms of Reference for the Child Health Review Committee

Overall Objective

To review cases of child deaths at health institutions and make recommendations to the Chief Medical Officer for the improvement of Child Health Care in Guyana.

Terms of Reference /Scope of Work

1. This committee shall have a chairperson and a secretary. The Chairperson would be the spokes-person of the committee. The Secretary would provide written reports to the Chief Medical Officer on the findings from all visits to the hospital. The secretary would be the designated officer as determined by the Chief Medical Officer,

2. Ensure that all child deaths from institutions are reported in a timely manner to the Ministry of Health in accordance with guidelines established by the Ministry of Health.

3. To visit health institutions and have dialogue with technical and administrative counterparts on issues pertaining to child deaths.
4. To make recommendations to decrease child deaths such as decreasing the prevalence of complications and preventing complications from leading to deaths: by assessing needs and other issues example:
  - a) Timeliness of referrals
  - b) Access to and delivery of services
  - c) Quality of care! training needs of health personnel or protocols
  - d) Level of competence of health worker
5. To identify key areas requiring further improvements and noting priorities for immediate action.
6. The committee should comprise of technical persons namely paediatricians, Ministry of Health personnel and representation from the private and public sector. These persons would be appointed by the Chief Medical Officer in consultation with the Minister of Health.
7. To advise the Chief Medical Officer on findings and recommendations

Regulations in Accordance with the Ministry of Health Act #6 of 2005  
December, 2007

1. These regulations apply as follows:
  - a) **Maternal Death:** Any death of a woman that occurred during the entire period of pregnancy and 42 days after delivery or termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the cause of death.
  - b) **Child Death:** Any death of a child including prenatal from. Birth up to five years of life due to any cause.
2. Autopsy

- (a) An autopsy is required for every maternal death in Guyana.
- (b) An autopsy is required for the death of a child under five years old, if the certifying physician or health care provider cannot determine the underlying cause of death, or if the death was due to any accidental cause including violence, or if the death occurs within 24 hours of admission to a health facility or evaluation by a registered physician.

### 3. Reporting and Investigation of maternal death by institution or provider

#### (1) Notification of death of a pregnant woman

- (a) On occurrence of the death of a woman who is pregnant or was pregnant within the last 42 days prior to death, the certifying officer, registered physician or MEDEA must inform the Chief Medical Officer within 24 hours of the death.
- (b) The Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1 must be completed for all maternal deaths and must be submitted as part of the notification process.
- (c) In the event that the maternal death occurs outside of Georgetown, the certifying officer may inform the Chief Medical Officer's office initially via telephone, fax, radio, telex or within 24 hours of the death, but the Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1 must be submitted and received by the Chief Medical Officer's Office no later than 72 hours after a maternal death.
- (d) In the event that the certifying officer is unable to obtain the Official Notification of Death Form, Annex, the certifying officer may submit a written note stating the deceased name, address, date of birth, age, the date, time and place of death, duration of pregnancy, antecedent cause of death, if known. This must be followed by the submission of the Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1 no later than seven days after the death.

#### (2) Institutional Investigation of Maternal Death

- (a) Once a maternal death has occurred at an institution, public or private, or prior to arrival at that institution, a full internal investigation must be conducted and a report of the investigation must be submitted to the Chief Medical Officer before the end of seven days

after the maternal death.

(b) The report must identify the persons who conducted the investigation and persons providing information, and must include clear identification information for the deceased, detailed antenatal or pre-termination care, sequence of events leading up to death of the woman, details of medical, surgical and other procedures during the period of pregnancy and prior to death, list of all medicines prescribed and administered prior to death along with any other relevant information.

(c) In the case where the woman was referred to the institution by another institution, public or private or by a private physician or other private or public medical provider not associated with an institution, the referral note to the institution must be included in the institutional report to the Chief Medical Officer.

(d) The autopsy report as mandated in section two must also be included in the institutional report submitted to the Chief Medical Officer, but if the autopsy was not completed before seven days, the institutional report on the maternal death must still be submitted within seven days, with a note explaining the reasons why the autopsy report was not included, and the autopsy report must be submitted no later than 14 days after the maternal death.

(e) The report must include a section of recommendations made by the reporting institution of actions to be taken to improve the management of pregnancy in the institution or by providers outside of institutions.

(f) When a maternal death occurs at a private physician's office or at the office of a health care provider providing service in a private capacity or at the deceased person's home, the health care provider must complete the Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1 and submit the form to the Chief Medical Officer within 24 hours or inform the Chief Medical Officer by telephone, fax, telex or e-mail within 24 hours and then submit the Official Notification of Death Form within 72 hours after the death occurred.

(g) Any death of a pregnant woman that occurred at a private physician's office or at home where the woman was in the care of a person providing service in his or her own capacity would be subjected to an independent investigation by the Chief Medical Officer.

(3) Review of the Institutional Report of a Maternal Death by the Ministry of Health

(a) On the receipt of the Official Notification of Death Form and the Institutional Report of a Maternal Death, the Chief Medical Officer will establish a Maternal Death Review Committee to be chaired by the Chief Medical Officer and to include a representative each from the Maternal and Child Health Unit, Adolescent Health and the Office of the Principal Nursing Officer and may include any other person the Chief Medical Officer may wish to appoint, taking care to avoid any conflict of interest, to review the Institutional Report on the Maternal Death.

(b) The Committee must complete the review of the Institutional Report of a Maternal Death, make recommendations and advise the Chief Medical Officer of actions to be taken within 48 hours of the receipt of the Institutional Report.

(c) The Chief Medical Officer would inform the institution which reported the death of actions he (she) intends to take within 24 hours after the Review Committee completed the review of the Institutional Report on a maternal death.

(4) External Investigation of a Maternal Death by an Expert Committee

(a) If the Review Committee, upon examination of the Institutional Report on a Maternal Death, is satisfied that an external investigation is not necessary, the Chief Medical Officer, within 24 hours after the completion of the examination of the Institutional Report by the Review Committee, would inform the institution or a private provider of the Review Committee's decision, of additional recommendations made by the Review Committee, and would further outline the steps to be taken by the Ministry of Health to ensure that all recommendations in the Institutional Report and the recommendations made by Review Committee are implemented.

(b) If the Review Committee determines that an external investigation is needed, or in the case of a maternal death that occurred while a woman was in the care of a private provider, the Chief Medical Officer would inform the institution or the private provider of the establishment of an expert committee to investigate the maternal death.

(c) The expert committee must begin and complete its work within 14 days after it was

established and its report, together with its recommendations, must be conveyed to the Chief Medical Officer within the 14 days period.

(d) The Chief Medical Officer, after consideration of the report from the expert committee and after consultation with the Minister of Health, would inform the institution or the provider of the actions he (she) intends to pursue.

#### 4. Actions to be taken by the Ministry of Health Relating to a Maternal Death

(1) The Chief Medical Office must ensure each three months that recommendations made on the review and investigation of any maternal death are being implemented by the relevant institutions or providers (any institution or independent provider in whose care a maternal death occurred in the last 12 months).

(2) The Chief Medical Officer may suggest remedial training for a person or persons involved in the management of the case where a maternal death occurred.

(3) The Chief Medical Officer may recommend the suspension or termination of appointment for any person or persons involved in the case.

(4) The Chief Medical Officer may submit his or her recommendation to the Medical Council for further action to be taken.

#### 5. Reporting the Death of a Child Less Than Five Years Old

##### (1) All Child Death

(a) On occurrence of the death of a child under five years old, the certifying officer (registered physician or Medex) must inform the Chief Medical Officer within 24 hours of the death.

(b) The Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1 must be completed for all deaths of children under five years old and must be submitted as part of the notification process.

(c) In the event that the death of a child occurs outside of Georgetown, the certifying officer may inform the Chief Medical Officer's Office initially via telephone, fax, radio, telex or e-mail, within 24 hours of the death, but the Official Notification of Death Form

(Annex 1) must be submitted and received by the Chief Medical Officer's Office no later than 72 hours after a death of a child under five years old.

(d) In the event that the certifying officer is unable to obtain the Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1, the certifying officer may submit a written note stating the deceased name, address, date of birth, age, the date, time and place of death, antecedent cause of death, if known, but this must be followed by the submission of the Official Notification of Death Form, Annex 1 no later than seven days after the death.

#### 6. Institutional Investigation of the Death of a child under five years old

(1) Once a death of a child under five years old has occurred at an institution, public or private or prior to arrival at the institution, a full internal investigation must be conducted and a report of the investigation must be submitted to the Chief Medical Officer before the end of seven days after the death of the child.

(2) The report must identify the persons who conducted the investigation and persons providing information, and must include clear identification information for the deceased, sequence of events leading up to death of the child, details of medical, surgical and other procedures during the illness of the child and prior to death, list of all medicines prescribed and administered prior to death.

(3) In the case where the child was referred to the institution by another institution (public or private) or by a private physician or other private or public medical provider not associated with an institution, the referral note to the institution must be included in the institutional report to the Chief Medical Officer.

(4) Where an autopsy was conducted, the autopsy report must also be included in the institutional report submitted to the Chief Medical Officer, but if an autopsy was requested and the autopsy was not completed before seven days, the institutional report on the death of the child must still be submitted within seven days, with a note explaining the reasons why the autopsy report was not included, and the autopsy report must be submitted no later than 14 days after the death of the child.

(5) The Report must include a section of recommendations made by the reporting institution

of actions to be taken to improve the management of childhood illnesses in the institution or by providers outside of institutions.

(6) When a death of a child under five years old occurs at a private physician's office or at the office of a health care provider providing service in a private capacity or at the deceased child's home, the health care provider must complete the Official Notification of Death Form and submit the form to the Chief Medical Officer within 24 hours or inform the Chief Medical Officer by telephone, fax, telex or e-mail within 24 hours and then submit the Official Notification of Death Form within seventy-two hours after the death occurred.

(7) Each death of a child that occurred at a private physician's office or at home where the child was in the care of a person providing service in his or her own capacity would be subjected to an independent investigation by the Chief Medical Officer.

#### 7. Review of the Institutional Report of a Death of a Child under five years old by the Ministry of Health

(1) On the receipt of the Official Notification of Death Form and the Institutional Report of the death of a child under five, the Chief Medical Officer will review the report of the death of a child under five years old and the Chief Medical Officer may appoint one or more persons to assist in the review of the report.

(2) The Chief Medical Officer must complete the review of the Institutional Report of a death of a child under five years old within 48 hours of the receipt of the Institutional Report.

(3) The Chief Medical Officer would inform the institution which reported the death of actions he (she) intends to take within 48 hours after the receipt of the Institutional Report on a death of a child under five years old.

#### 8. External Investigation of a Death of Child Under Five years old by an Expert Committee

(1) If the Chief Medical Officer, upon examination of the Institutional Report on a death of a child, is satisfied that an external investigation is not necessary, the Chief Medical Officer would inform the institution or a private provider of his (her) decision, of



recommendations he has made and would outline the steps to be taken by the Ministry of Health to ensure that all recommendations in the Institutional Report and the recommendations made by the Chief Medical Officer are implemented and the Chief Medical Officer shall inform the institution no later than twenty four hours after he has completed his examination of the Institutional Report.

(2) If the Chief Medical Officer determines that an external investigation is needed, or in the case of a death of a child that occurred while the child was in the care of a private provider, the Chief Medical Officer would inform the institution or the private provider of the establishment of an expert committee to investigate the child's death.

(3) The expert committee must begin and complete its work within 14 days after it was established and its report. Together with its recommendations must be conveyed to the Chief Medical Officer within the fourteen days period.

(4) The Chief Medical Officer. After consultation with the Minister of Health, would inform the institution or the provider of the actions he (she) intends to pursue.

#### 9. Actions to be taken by the Ministry of Health Relating to a Maternal Death

(1) The Chief Medical Officer must ensure each three months that recommendations made on the review and investigation of any maternal death are being implemented by the relevant institutions or providers (any institution or independent provider in whose care a maternal death occurred in the last 12 months).

(2) The Chief Medical Officer may suggest remedial training for a person or persons involved in the management of the case where a maternal death occurred.

(3) The Chief Medical Officer may recommend the suspension or termination of appointment for any person or persons involved in the case.

(4) The Chief Medical Officer may submit his or her recommendation to the Medical Council for further action to be taken.

#### 10. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer on all Reported Maternal and Child Deaths

The Chief Medical Officer must submit an Annual Report on Maternal and Child Deaths in Guyana for the year and details of the actions taken during the year and the report must be submitted to the Minister within fourteen days after the end of the calendar year.

11. These Regulations do not preclude any relevant party from pursuing other actions the party may want to pursue and does not preclude the Medical Council of Guyana to pursue its own investigation.

- (c) The Committee meets once every quarter from 2014- 2016 and has met twice in 2017.
- (d) Not to the Committee. The Regulations require that all neonatal, under five, and maternal deaths be reported to the CMO who would share this with the various committees for review.
- (e) The CMO provides the information to the Committee.
- (f) The MOPH (MCH Department, Regional Health Services and the CMO) will oversee the implementation of the recommendations. Depending on resources and availability, members of the Committee would accompany the MOPH team.
- (g) The Committee does not have a dedicated budget but is resourced through the CMO's office and the MCH Department.
- (h) The Committee produces a report on each case investigated and submits this to the CMO who would then share with the respected institution.
- (i) Yes, the recommendation for improvement in infection control was implemented; ALARM and IMCI training have commenced.
- (j) The Committee recommended more trained staff at the time of labour and delivery, and for the completion of the ALARM course by all Public Health Care medical doctors and nurses.

**PREVENTING INFECTION LEVELS IN THE NEO-NATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT,  
GEORGETOWN PUBLIC HOSPITAL CORPORATION**

**Dr. Persaud:** With respect to the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, during the period June 2017 to June 2018, could the Minister state:

- (a) How often is scheduled testing for sterility in the NNICU done?
- (b) Were there sufficient culture bottles to identify infectious organisms?
- (c) Were any multi-drug resistant organisms identified in the cases of sepsis and, if yes, which organisms were identified?
- (d) Was medication to combat the identified multi-drug resistant organisms and other organisms readily available? How many occasions were the medication not readily available?
- (e) Was any cause of death due to iatrogenic infection?
- (f) What organism was identified where the cause of death was due to iatrogenic infection and what methods were used to address the sterility of the unit in instances where multi-drug resistant organisms were identified?
- (g) In instances where contamination of the NNICU was detected, were the neonates moved to another sterilized area to allow for a complete disinfection and sterilization of the unit including all equipment?
- (h) In instances where the cause of death was due to iatrogenic infection and where contamination of the NNICU was detected, was any special investigation and or procedure were followed to ensure sterility of the facility and equipment before re-use?
- (i) What was the ratio of trained nurses to babies in the unit during the period June 2017 to June 2018?
- (j) How many specially-trained neonatal nurses are working in the Ministry of Public Health and how many of these specially-trained nurses are working in the NNICU to deal with critically ill babies?

**Ms. Lawrence:**

- (a) There is no Guideline at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), which stipulates that environmental sterility checks must be performed routinely. Sterility checks are performed when nosocomial organisms are identified so that the sources of transmission can be addressed.
- (b) For the period June to December 2017, blood culture bottles were available 100% of the time; however, for January - June 2018, blood culture bottles were available 39.2% of the time.
- (c) Yes, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (multi-drug resistant) was isolated (19 isolates out of a total of 578 blood cultures) for the period June 2017- June 2018.
- (d) The medications listed below are/were used to treat nosocomial infections, however, in periods when these were not available other medications were used to ensure good patient outcomes.**

Medications	Stock out Periods	
	2017	2018
Amikacin	18 <sup>th</sup> September – 23 <sup>rd</sup> October	-
Imipenem	28 <sup>th</sup> August – 5 <sup>th</sup> October	-
Azithromycin	June to December	1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> January

- (e) It is difficult to determine the time of infection of a baby since infections in new-borns occur prenatally, perinatally or postnatally. It is, therefore, challenging for doctors to diagnose an infection that a baby had because of the care that they received while in hospital.
- (f) A. The cause of death due to Iatrogenic infections could not be determined.

B. Sterility checks were conducted on equipment and surfaces when nosocomial organisms were identified through patient cultures. Additionally, thorough cleaning with soap and water and disinfection with 1:10 hypochlorite (bleach) solution as well as 70% alcohol was used to deter nosocomial organisms. Slides were set strategically in the on NICU, tested at the GPHC laboratory and results obtained were analysed. Based on findings, appropriate actions were taken to sanitise the NICU. Cleaning was done in accordance with the GPHC

Infection Control Manual and Centre of Disease Control (CDC) Guideline for Environmental Infection Control for Health Care Facility.

(g) When nosocomial organisms were or are detected in the NICU, the neonates were/are relocated to another area, used by the hospital in cases of an emergency. The area is located on the third floor of the old maternity building encompassing four rooms of which two rooms are equipped to provide ventilatory support.

(h) Again, Iatrogenic infections could not be determined;

B. However, when nosocomial organisms are/were detected, cleaning of NICU and equipment is/was performed after the NICU was cleared of all patients. On completion sterility checks are or were carried out to confirm the cleanliness of the area.

(i) The nurse to patient ratio in the NICU is 1:4.

(j) There are 69 specially trained nurses working within the Ministry of Health. At the GPHC, there are twenty-one (21) trained NICU nurses working in the unit, at present.

## **EXAMINING THE STATUS OF THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS COUNTRYWIDE**

**Dr. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister provide the National Assembly with the following information:-**

(a) A list of government-run Neonatal Intensive Care Units countrywide?

(b) The number of admissions from each government-run Neonatal Intensive Care for each month during the period June 2017 to June 2018?

(c) The number of deaths and the causes of death at each government-run Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for each month during the period June 2017 to June 2018?

(d) The number of neonates referred to the NNICU at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation during the period June 2017 to 2018?

- (e) Did the number of neonates in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit NNICU at Georgetown Public Hospital exceed the capacity of 18 during this period?
- (f) With respect to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation could the Minister state/provide:
  - (i) How many incubators and ventilators were available and working between January 2018 to June 2018?
  - (ii) How many incubators and ventilators have been added since May 11, 2015?
  - (iii) How many incubators and ventilators are operational as of July 1, 2018?
- (g) How many qualified technicians are available to repair these incubators and ventilators?
- (h) The average length of downtime of incubators and ventilators for each month for the period June 2017 to June 2018?
- (i) How many incubators and ventilators are not functioning as of June 2018 in all the government-run NNICUs?
- (j) What measures has the Minister put in place to ensure that all government-run NNICUs are properly equipped and functioning?

Ms. Lawrence:

- (a)
  1. Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation
  2. New Amsterdam Hospital
  3. Linden Hospital Complex
  4. Suddie Public Hospital
  5. Bartica Hospital
  6. West Demerara Regional Hospital (WDRH)
- (b) Number of Neonates admitted to NNICU

Institution	2016	2017	June 2018
Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation	113	189	37
New Amsterdam Hospital	119	83	49
Linden Hospital Complex	79	74	43
Suddie Public Hospital	14	18	16
Bartica Hospital	0	4	3
West Demerara Regional Hospital	0	11	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>151</b>

(c) New Amsterdam Regional Hospital

Month	Number of Death	Cause of Death
June 2017	1	- Severe Hypoxic Ischaemic Encephalopathy
July 2017	2	- Pulmonary Haemorrhaging - Congenital Malformation
October 2017	4	- Pulmonary Haemorrhage - Intraventricular Haemorrhage - Prematurity
November 2017	4	- Pulmonary Haemorrhage (3) - Congenital Cardiopathy, Meconium Aspiration

July 2018	1	- Hyaline Membrane (Immature Lung)
Total	12	

Suddie Hospital

<b>2017</b>	<b>Number of Death</b>	<b>Cause of Death</b>
May	1	- Meconium aspiration syndrome
September	1	- Acute respiratory failure, hyaline membrane disease
October	1	- Cardiorespiratory failure, multiple congenital malformations
December	2	- Cardiorespiratory failure, bronchopneumonia, Broncho aspiration, preterm maturity.
<b>2018</b>		
March	1	- Severe asphyxia by nuchal cord
April	1	- Prematurity
Total	7	

Linden Hospital Complex

Year	Number of Death	Cause of Death
2017	3	- Cardiac Arrest - Congenial Cardiomyopathy



		- Neonatal Sepsis
2018	1	- Asphyxia
Total	4	

West Demerara Regional Hospital

Year	Number of Death	Cause of Death
2017	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respiratory Distress Syndrome, Prematurity</li> <li>- Bronchopneumonia, Ventricular Septal Defect</li> <li>- Pneumonia and Pulmonary Hypertension, meconium</li> <li>- Cardiopulmonary Arrest, Congenital Heart Diseases</li> <li>- Pulmonary Hypertension, Meconium Aspiration, Intra Uterine Growth Retardation</li> </ul>
2018	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy, Prematurity</li> <li>- Severe Intracranial Haemorrhage, Macrosomy</li> <li>- Respiratory Failure, Respiratory Distress Syndrome, Prematurity</li> <li>- Cardiopulmonary Arrest, Respiratory distress Syndrome, Prematurity</li> </ul>

(d) Of 473 admissions to the NICU, 69 were referred from other institutions for the period.

- (e) Yes, the NICU is often overcrowded because the GPHC cannot refuse to admit sick babies from the regions and private hospitals.
- (f) (i) Total Incubators: 11 and of the 11, five are in use and working and six are kept for spare use.
- (ii) Total incubators added 10 (GHTK) and ventilators 6 (GHTK) Note: GHTK- Guyana Help the Kids
- (iii) Incubators in use: five and ventilators not in use: eight
- (g) There are four qualified staff available for the maintenance of incubators and ventilators. Two are biomedical technicians while two are biomedical Engineers.
- (h)

<b>2017</b>	<b>Incubators - 0</b>	<b>Ventilators - 3</b>
Downtime due to failures per month	None Available	24hrs
Downtime due to maintenance per month		8hrs
<b>2018</b>	<b>Incubators – 11 No.</b>	<b>Ventilators – 9 No.</b>
Downtime due to failures per month	0hrs	16hrs
Downtime due to maintenance per month	2hrs	16hrs

(i)

	AMOUNT OF INCUBATORS	AMOUNT OF FUNCTIONING INCUBATORS
Region 2	7 in total	4 working
Region 3	5 in total	5 working
Region 6	8 in total	5 working
Region 7	4 in total	0 working
Region 10	4 in total	4 working

(j) Support the NICU Team to visit facilities two times per year. Visited one already.

- Helping Babies Breathe is an ongoing initiative providing the requisite skills and knowledge to manage the new-born and stabilize children in distress.
- IDB Loan will look at GPHC and West Demerara re purchase of equipment. NICU will benefit.
- Implementation of the Neonatal SIP that would assist with data management, quality improvements/technological- beginning of the paperless system.

### **GUYSUCO \$30 BILLION BOND**

**Mr. Speaker:** Question No. 9 is in the name of the Hon. Member, Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, and it is for Hon. Member, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ali:** Following the announcement of a \$30 billion loan for Guyana Sugar Cooperation (GuySuCo) and the lack of details of expenditure in the loan placement memorandum, could the Hon. Minister of Finance inform this National Assembly as to:

- (i) What are the plans for the use of this loan?
- (ii) Was a feasibility study done to determine the use of the loan?
- (iii) Will the plan and feasibility study be made public?
- (iv) If there is no plan why has \$30 Billion been approved?

- (v) GAWU was informed in discussions with the SPU/Government that the loan will be spent on the three (3) remaining Estates with the setting up of co-generation plants at Uitvlugt and Albion Estates and a White Sugar Plant. Have any feasibility studies and designs been done for these proposed projects?
- (vi) Will any part of these monies be used to pay pension liabilities to the sugar workers?
- (vii) Will any part of these monies be used to pay outstanding severance payments to thousands of dismissed sugar workers?

**Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]:**

- i. The funds were secured to recapitalise GuySuCo. It was agreed and determined between National Industrial & Commercial Investments Limited (NICIL) and the trustee that the net proceeds from the issue of the bonds would be applied exclusively towards financing GuySuCo, in particular: to acquire two co-generation plants; to upgrade existing factories to produce plantation white sugar; to build storage and packing facilities; and to contribute to two years of general operational costs, excluding the repayment of financing cost and other debt servicing commitments to financial institutions.
- ii. GuySuCo was asked to present a plan that would make the entity viable. GuySuCo presented a plan to the Government for consideration. Underpinned by a 10 year supporting cash flow projection, the plan, for the most part, spoke to upgrading two plants; Albion and Uitvlugt to produce plantation white sugar and generate electricity using co-generation. For both of these interventions, feasibility studies were done.
- iii. The plan and feasibility studies could be made available at the behest of the Ministry of Agriculture and GuySuCo's Board of Directors.
- iv. There is a plan
- v. Feasibility studies have been done for both co-generation and plantation white sugar plants. Both studies reflect positive outcomes, based on current production inputs. The outcomes would improve as general efficiencies improve. Designs are available. However, it should

be noted that there are limited providers of the mentioned plants; hence, the providers will provide the final designs when requests for proposals are issued.

- vi. No funds from the bond would or could be used to pay pension liabilities. It should be noted that GuySuCo would have inflows from their operations; these can be used to finance this obligation.
- vii. No funds from the bond would or could be used to meet severance payments. Such payments would be met by way of a transfer from the central government to GuySuCo. The balance of the severance payment is included in a Supplementary Provision to be debated in the National Assembly.

### **AMERINDIAN LAND TITLING**

**Mr. Speaker:** Question No. 10 is in the name of the Hon. Member, Ms. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai and it is for the Hon. Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Following public statements made before the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Natural Resources by the Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs that no new land titles or extensions under the Amerindian Land Titling and Demarcation Project had been issued since 2015, could the Vice-President and Minister inform this National Assembly as to the following:

- i. How many communities that applied for titles and or extensions have been demarcated in this period?
- ii. How many are still waiting to be demarcated in this period?
- iii. Has the Minister been successful in obtaining an extension, and if so, for how long, to continue to access available funds under this Project?

**Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs [Mr. Allicock]:**

(I)

- 1 x 2015 Demarcation was completed in 2016: Batavia

- 3 x 2016 Demarcations were completed namely: Tuseneng, Chinowieng, and Paramakatoi
- In addition, Four Miles is currently in process of demarcation
- This is a total of 5 Demarcations being completed post-2015

(II)

10 villages have not been demarcated; consent has not been provided in these villages:

- 32 villages have further applied for extensions to their original demarcation
- Approximately six villages have applied for recognition as village entities and to be demarcated accordingly
- In total 93 villages, including Four Miles, have been demarcated

(III)

- On 5<sup>th</sup> October, the United Nations Development Programme sent an intermediate extension request for 32<sup>st</sup> December, 2018 to Mr. Bristol, Head, PMO, Ministry of the Presidency to allow time for this consultation. We are awaiting response.
- Stakeholders consultation started on 11<sup>th</sup> October, between the MOIPA, UNDP, National Toshias Council (NTC) and various Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Further meetings have been discussed and planned in order to determine what would go into the request, and what each entity would do to help alleviate roadblocks. The consultation would expand to all concerns Government agencies: Guyana Lands and Surveys (GLSC), Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and the Land Registry.
- The extension will be determined at the end of the stakeholder consultation, including the extension timeline.
- Stakeholders consultations are needed to reach consensus on the way forward.

Annual Budget and Expenditure

	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Total Expenditure
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Output 1 - Land Titles and Issued Demarcation	163,825.53	732,249.30	333,436.83	146,709.82	180,969.95	1,557,191.43
Output 2 – Access to Alternate Mech. For Re.	20,277.23	157,825.74	83,281.05	26,870.07	9,600.01	297,854.10
Output 3 – Revised Communication Strategy	0.00	4,324.93	105,429.10	147,633.85	42,806.64	300,194.52
Output 4 – Project Management	152,058.15	95,773.77	130,072.02	276,017.77	93,717.71	747,639.42
Total	336,160.91	990,173.74	652,219.00	597,231.51	327,094.31	2,902,879.47

**MAHAICA/MAHAICONY/ABARY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
(MMA/ADA) – STATE OF ROADS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Question No. 11 is in the name of the Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj and it is for the Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Seeraj:** A result of many complaints by rice farmers about the poor state of the Farm to Market Roads in this Scheme, could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture inform this National Assembly as to:

- (i) How much subvention is the Government providing to the MMA for capital programmes in the Scheme?
- (ii) Since the increase in rentals and fees in the Scheme, how many farmers are in default as they cannot afford to pay?

(iii) What forms of assistance is the Government providing for Farm and Market Access Roads in the Scheme and across the Rice Belt?

**Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Holder]:** The Mahaica-Mahaicony Abary Agricultural Development Authority (MMA/ADA) is a public statutory authority under the Ministry of Agriculture and is responsible for the operation, management and maintenance of all agricultural drainage and irrigation services in Region 5. In return, farmers who benefit from those services are by law, required to pay a charge to the Authority for the provision of those services as well as land rental charges.

Over the years, farmers as well as some companies, have failed to honour their financial commitments to the authority leading to a situation where \$972,236,272 is owed to the authority as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.

(i) Over the past two years that is 2016 and 2017, the Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Finance has provided the MMA/ADA approximately \$361,168,000 for Capital Programmes such as Civil Works, Agriculture Development and Environmental Monitoring. This year, 2018, the MMA/ADA received \$220 million to construct a new Sluice at D' Edward Village West Bank Demerara, Surveys and Environmental Monitoring. The sluice will cost approximately \$500 million. It is estimated that at the end of 2018, MMA/ADA is projected to spend approximately \$337 million on the Sluice.

(ii) It is important to note that prior to 2017, Land Rent and Drainage & Irrigation charges were not increased for over 12 years. The authority found itself in a position where the cost to maintain drainage and irrigation works outweigh the charges paid by farmers, as a consequence, in 2017 land rent and drainage and irrigation charges were increased. Farmers were duly notified by way of the print media and demand notices were served on each farmer. The MMA/ADA is making all efforts to collect current as well as arrear charges. However, these efforts were stymied by the very author who is requesting answers to these questions. As a matter of fact, he was on national television in Berbice encouraging farmers not to pay the increased charges. It can be inferred that, this Author, is partly responsible for the high level of delinquent farmers.

Currently, out of 2346 Farmers more than 1342 farmers are delinquent with regards to payments of their charges.



<b>Amount Outstanding by Farmers</b>		<b>No. of Farmers</b>
2016		
Amount outstanding 31, December 2016	\$563,694,243	1632
2017		
Amount Outstanding as at 31, December 2017	\$408,542,029	1526
TOTAL	\$972,236,272	

It is therefore, apparent that most of the arrears are due to land Rental and drainage and irrigation charges in force prior to the increase in rates from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2017.

(iii) The MMA/ADA has 30 miles of All Weather Road and 760 miles of fair weather access that is under its responsibility for maintenance each crop. As a consequence of the rainfall throughout the seeding and harvesting seasons, all the roads have deteriorated by farmer's machinery while maintaining and harvesting their crops. This resulted in making traversing difficult and in some cases impossible in most areas. Repairs to dams during the rainy season is well nigh impossible, this activity can only be effectively addressed during dry periods.

With the short window of fair weather during the autumn crop, the MMA/ADA has procured materials valued \$6 million (Crusher run, Loam and white sand) which is being used by the Authority for repairs to the critical sections of the All Weather road. Also, 80 miles of fair weather access were also repaired to enable farmers to harvest their crops.

These accesses were prepared in the Cotton Tree, Bath, Bush Lot, Lovely Lass, Golden Grove, Britannia, Onverwagt, Tempie, Chester, Union, No.40, et cetera.

At present the MMA/ADA is awaiting approval from NPTAB for its approval to procure Laterite, Loam and White sand to carry out repair works on the All Weather Road, a value of G\$11.924 million.

(b) Other Areas across the Rice Belt

The Government has been and continues to provide assistance to farmers in maintenance of farm and market access roads throughout the rice-growing areas. The assistance has been given through the NDIA, the Water Users Associations, the RDCs and the NDCs. A breakdown of the assistance is tabulated below:

Region No.	Area	NDIA		WUA		NDC		
		No. of Dam	Total No. of Rods	No. of Dams	Total No. of Rods	No. of Dams	Total No. of Rods	
2	Zorg en Vlygt/ Charity Annandale / Good Hope	20	17,500		WUA used			385 loads of earth placed on 63 dams by WUA  RDC graded 16 dams (9200 rods)  396 loads of road materials Placed on dams by RDC  over 100 loads of earth to upgrade dams
3	Vreed-en-Hoop			16	15,000			
	Den Amstel/ Fellowship			3	1750			
	Vergenoegen/ Naamryck	2	1800					

	Wakenaam					3	1,500	
	Leguan					25	12,500	
4	Cane Grove	13 done 8 to be	6,711 3,826			-		
6	Crabwood			6	4120			RDC spent
	52/74 Area			26	37864			\$31.4M
	BBP	7	7320	Spent \$4.7M upgrading dams				upgrading dams  throughout region

**Mr. Speaker:** The answers to questions six, seven and eight had been circulated at the last sitting and questions number nine, 10 and 11 been received and have, therefore in accordance with our Standing Orders, been circulated.

Hon. Members, we have passed the 4 o'clock hour. I crave your indulgence for us to push on, somewhat, or we could, if you wish, take the break at this time and then return. We would return at 10 minutes after 5 o'clock.

*Sitting suspended at 4.10 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5.20 p.m.*

#### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTER, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, there is a request from the Hon. Member, Minister David Patterson, to make a statement.

#### **Statement on the Berbice River Bridge Crossing**

**Mr. Patterson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a statement on the Berbice River Bridge crossing and it goes thus:

The Berbice River Bridge Act 2006, Act No. 3 of 2006, was passed in the National Assembly on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2005 and was assented to on the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2006 by the Former President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Bharat Jagdeo at the time.

The Berbice River Bridge Concessional Agreement between the Ministry of Public Works and Communication, now the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Berbice Bridge Company Incorporated (BBCI) was signed on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 for 21 years. This Agreement sets out the parameters for the design, construction, development, operation and maintenance of the Berbice River Bridge. The shareholders, at the signing of the Concessional Agreement were, CLICO Life and General Insurance Company, Hand-in-Hand Mutual Incorporated, Secure Financial International Incorporated, the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and the Demerara Contractors and Engineers Limited. In the Concessional Agreement, the former Government of Guyana agreed to a period of 21 years for exclusive operation by the Berbice Bridge Company Incorporated for transportation services for vehicular traffic across the Berbice River. This project was completed and commissioned in December, 2008.

It should be noted that, since the commencement of operations of the Berbice River Bridge, there has been one request for toll increase under the seven years of the People Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) Government, which is from 2008 to 2015. This request was made in March, 2015 and it was rejected.

In keeping with its campaign promise, in its A Partnership For National Unity and Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) Manifesto of 2015, the Coalition Government kept its word to reduce tolls. On 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2015, an agreement between the Government of Guyana and the Berbice River Bridge Company Incorporated was signed to provide subsidies on tolls charged to commuters of the Berbice River Bridge. In January of 2016, motor cars and minibuses were subsidised by \$300 per transit, while all other categories of vehicles, excluding vessels, were subsidised by 10% on current tolls.

As a consequence, from January, 2016 to date, the Government of Guyana has provided subsidies totalling \$465 million to the Berbice River Bridge Company and by the end of the concessional period, the Government of Guyana would provide \$1.8 billion in support.

Since the present Administration took office, the Berbice River Bridge Company Incorporated has sought three toll increases in three years - in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

*5.25 p.m.*

These were never approved. The draconian increases proposed by the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. (BBCI) from 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 are as such: Cars will move from \$2,000 to \$8,040, an increase of 365%; pickups will move from the current toll of \$4,000 to \$14,600; four-wheel drives have a similar rate; minibuses that transport persons across the Berbice River Bridge will move from \$2,200 to \$8,040; small trucks, medium trucks and large trucks will increase, similarly; large trucks, which provide the bulk of the cargo to Berbice, will move from \$13,600 to \$49,600; boats that will cross the Berbice River Bridge will move from the current \$55,000 to \$410,040.

There has been a general cry in relation to the proposed rates, which will not only affect *Berbicians* but all Guyanese. It is unconscionable, which this coalition Government cannot and will not accept under any circumstances. The unilateral announcement by the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. is in breach of the concessional agreement on section 4(1), subsection (2) of the Berbice River Bridge Act 2006.

At a meeting held with the officials of the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2018, it was agreed that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure would write officials of the Berbice Bridge Company Inc., communicating his offer to assume full responsibility for the maintenance and rehabilitation of the bridge's pontoons. The Berbice Bridge Company Inc. has been in breach of the concessional agreement with respect to maintenance of the pontoons over the years. By correspondence, dated 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 to the Berbice Bridge Company Inc., the Ministry of Public Infrastructure had firmly reiterated its commitment to assume full responsibility of the maintenance and rehabilitation of the 39 pontoons. The Berbice Bridge Company Inc. has since acknowledged and accepted this proposal and the Ministry is working towards commencement of maintenance in 2019.

At the said meeting, the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. reported that it had debts of in excess of \$6 billion. A commitment was given that full details of this debt will be provided following which the information would have been forwarded to the Ministry of Finance, after which another meeting was to be scheduled. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure has requested submission of

this information by 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018, so the matter can be addressed expeditiously. Colleagues, I received a copy of its audited accounts this morning. It is not the full information that we want, but it has commenced in providing this to us.

While the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is working assiduously, along with other Ministries of the Government, to find a reasonable and acceptable solution under the confines of the law, the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. has been threatening *Berbicians*, and Guyanese as a whole, to unlawfully implement and introduce the proposed depressive increases in tolls on or before 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018.

The coalition Government has no intention of improving the toll increases proposed by the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. and assures the people of Guyana that in the interest of peace, order and good governance, we stand ready to protect our legitimate right to a peaceful life in Guyana.

I thank you. [*Applause*]

## **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

### **Local Government Elections**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I received a request at 9.55 a.m. today from the Hon. Member Ms. Gail Teixeira, Opposition Chief Whip, for an adjournment of the Assembly at today's sitting to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance. That matter relates to the local government elections. I have examined the request and I have found that it treats as a definite matter and is one of public importance. The object of the request is to enjoin the Assembly to express disapprobation of the conduct of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) in treating certain incidents and allegations detailed by the mover and seconder of the proposed motion. The claims made in the request are not undisputed. The allegations, therein, invite the House to draw conclusions on matters which are, at best, argumentative and which appear to be appropriate for treatment elsewhere. In the circumstances, I have disallowed the request.

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING**

### **THE NURSES AND MIDWIVES BILL 2018 – BILL No. 13/2018**

The following Bill was introduced and read for the first time:

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to make provision for the registration and regulation of nurses, midwives, nursing assistants and specialist nurses, and for related matters.” [*Minister of Public Health*]

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

## **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

## **MOTION**

## **CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/2018 – CURRENT AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly Financial approves of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 3/2018 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) - totalling \$7,584,274,488 for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018.” [*Minister of Finance*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Assembly resolves itself in the Committee of Supply to consider Financial Paper No. 3 of 2018.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply*

**Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]:** Mr. Chairman, 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 Financial Paper No. 3 of 2018 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$7,584,274,488 for the period 2018-01-01 to 2018-12-31 and I now move the motion.

*Motion proposed.*

## **CURRENT ESTIMATES**

**Item 1 05-052 Ministry of the Presidency – Defence and National Security - \$19,210,654**

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say to us what exactly was the \$3,116,654 used for? In the remarks, it states, “to complete emergency repairs in Diamond housing scheme.” Emergency repairs to what?

I may ask the Hon. Minister, in relation to the well drilling project in Region 9, are these the wells that are being done under the Guyana Water Inc. (GWI)?

**Minister of State [Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon]:** The sum here relates to the capping of a gas well at Sixth Avenue, Diamond, East Bank Demerara. It is not really the Diamond housing area.

**Mr. Ali:** That is what is in the remarks column.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** What?

**Mr. Ali:** It is in the “Diamond housing scheme”.

**Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon:** “In the Diamond housing scheme”, it is not the housing scheme itself, it is the capping of the well. The gas facility had to be capped, so that is where that is concerned.

The other one, of course, has to do with the drilling of wells in the South Rupununi. This is part of an agreement between the Government of Guyana and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil. It is being done by the Construction Engineer Battalion of the Brazil army. There are eight wells that are being drilled, six have been completed and two more will be completed by the end of November.

*5.40 p.m.*

It also includes some capacity building for the Guyana Defence Force (GDF). After this is completed, that knowledge of actually drilling wells in remote areas would have been passed on to the GDF. In fact, out of the eight wells to be drilled the final two will be drilled by the GDF under supervision of the Brazilian engineers who are there. This will, of course, provide facilities for our Indigenous population in the South Rupununi. It is bringing tremendous benefit to those communities. In addition to the drilling of the wells, we would be constructing roads between those



villages. I believe that the communities have expressed their happiness about not only the wells, but the roads that would have been constructed from Lethem all the way to Bashaidrun.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could the Hon. Minister say if these moneys have been spent already and therefore he is coming to get coverage?

Secondly, there is in the first line issue to do with the Venezuelan migrants. Could you say how the \$4.8 million for food and other supplies were distributed to the persons in need? Was the conduit the Civil Defence Commission (CDC), the GDF or the Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs)? Could you explain what was the conduit through which this money was challenged, or did it come from Ministers walking around and doing handouts? Which one was it?

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** The Hon. Member never ceases to amuse me with her last comments. I think it was public knowledge that the CDC is the entity with responsibility for distribution of these items. What it would do is that it works collaboratively with the regional administration and with the various Government entities that operate in the areas. The affected areas are Regions 1, 7 and 8. Generally speaking, the bulk of the Venezuelan migrants have actually gone to Region 1, so that is the area where we have the greatest level of impact. The CDC is working with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations, the Ministry of Citizenship and with the regional authority to bring relief to those Venezuelans who have fled the conditions in their own country. It is because of our commitment to provide a safe place for these Venezuelans, we have actually gone to do these things which we have done and the expenditures which have incurred in that regard.

**Ms. Teixeira:** The earlier part of the question was whether these moneys had been spent already and I would like to have an answer on that if you would not mind.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** These moneys have not been spent yet. We are now asking permission for the moneys to be spent.

*Item 1 05-052 Ministry of the Presidency – Defence and National Security - \$19,210,654 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 2 05-053 Ministry of the Presidency – Public Service Management – \$95,713,750**

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** Looking at this item here for the provisions in the sum of \$95,713,750, there is a hefty sum that comes under the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of 2018 for the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) and that amount is \$83,255,750. Could the Hon. Minister say how many persons were catered for under this amount? It was an event that lasted for five days. And it was in the media for a little while. It was not something countrywide spoken about. The amount that we are seeing here, could the Hon. Minister say how many persons it catered for and the cost related, how was this money used, for what purpose and the benefits that would have been derived from this conference?

**Minister of Public Service [Dr. Roopnaraine]:** Three hundred and fifty persons attended. There were the Commonwealth Ministers meeting and the delegates meeting from the Commonwealth. The breakdown for the conference: There was the Ministers' meeting - \$1,052,000 and then there were the transportation, side events, the security supplies for the conference and the use of technology, the live streaming. In terms of the conference itself, there was the plenary sessions, the accommodation, the meals, the side events and transportation and security. There was the printing of programmes and the information technology (IT) support, all of which accumulated to \$95,713,750.

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** I was speaking in relevance, specifically to the Commonwealth programme. However, since the Hon. Minister sought to highlight the events or the items that took place for the three events, could he lay over to this Assembly the itemised cost for each of the items that he did give to us because the only cost we got was the Ministers' meeting for \$1,052,000. That does not add up to the rest.

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I would be very happy to provide the information being requested by the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Minister, for these conferences, the dates were 19<sup>th</sup> October to the 24<sup>th</sup> October. Were these moneys spent already?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** The answer is no.

**Ms. Teixeira:** If it is that you are saying no, Sir, those two conferences, I assume, were part of the Ministry's programme for 2018. After the conferences had been held, you are coming for a large

sum of \$95,713,750. I repeat, Sir, for the Minister, that you have said that this is not money that was spent. Is that what you said clearly to this Assembly?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** Yes. I did say so.

**Ms. Teixeira:** You are denying that this is money that was spent.

**Mr. Ali:** It is clear that the conference would have had to be paid for from somewhere. Could the Hon. Minister say to us what payments were made to date and where those payments came from?

The second question is: When were those conferences conceived?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I am advised that the major payments to the hotel, and so on, have not been paid.

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister give us the list of those hotels, the list of all the liabilities and the amount for each entity that is owed and when it was incurred?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I would be very happy to respond to the Hon. Member and provide the information being requested.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, could the Hon. Minister confirm that Guyana was the original host of those conferences, because normally at the end of one of those conferences you would know which country would be the host for the next year. If Guyana was the original host, why was this not part of the national budget of 2018?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** We did make the request in the budget, but we did not get all the money that was needed, so, in fact, we are in some debt.

**Mr. Ali:** In addition to the documents that we requested, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to share with this National Assembly the print out from the Integrated Financial Management and Accounting System (IFMAS) when those payments would be made?

*5.55 p.m.*

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I am advised that when the moneys become available we will provide the information.

*Item 2 05-053 Ministry of the Presidency – Public Service Management - \$95,713,750 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

## **CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

### **Item 1 05-053 Ministry of the Presidency – Public Service Management - \$19,500,860**

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say what was the total value of this contract? When was it awarded? Who was it awarded to? What was the duration of the contract?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** These provisions are for the additional resources for the completion of the rehabilitation of the building to house the classroom of the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service. The previous allocation was found to be inadequate due to unforeseen works that were needed to ensure the building was fit.

The original bills of quantities did not adequately address the foundation issue. The building was leaning which resulted in a redesign of the foundation, defective members on the first floor, inadequate quantities for electrical works. This supplementary would take the total investment cost to \$112.5 million to upgrade the old Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) buildings of Ogle to accommodate the Bertram Collins College of the Public Service.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, I just wish to repeat the question for the Hon. Minister. What was the total contract sum? When was it awarded? Who was it awarded to? What was the duration of this contract?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** The contractor was the MP Investment. The contract was for six months and the extension was sought and given in December of 2017.

**Mr. Ali:** I wish to repeat the question. What was the contract sum? When was the commencement date?

The Hon. Minister said the duration was six months and he spoke about an extension that was given in 2017. We have gone passed that six months by a long way, by almost two years, and this

project is still not completed. We are still spending money on this project. In 2017, the extension was sought. I am listening. On this single building, we have already spent \$112.5 million on the renovation.

Could the Hon. Minister say to us, what date this contract was signed and at what value? It seems as if we have variations here that are far in excess of the contract sum. What date the contract was signed, the duration of the contract and what was the original contract sum?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I would be very happy to provide this information in writing to the Member, so that he could be assured of complete accuracy.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, with total and complete respect for the Hon. Minister, these are very basic questions that we are asking in relation to the supplementary provision. This is a serious process and the questions we are asking are fundamental. We have the Permanent Secretary, who is here, who should be in possession of these basic information that we are requesting. We are not asking anything extraordinary. There is no extraordinary request here, Mr. Chairman. I am of the firm belief that the Government must be in a position to answer these basic questions if we are to have accountability and transparency in the system here. I think that the question should be answered tonight. I am asking that the answers be provided tonight.

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I wish to assure my friend, the Hon. Member, that the building was, in fact, completed and handed over today.

**Mr. Ali:** We still need the information. The second issue, if the Hon. Minister is saying the building is completed and handed over, are all the moneys owed to the contractor being paid to the contractor?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I will provide the information.

**Mr. Ali:** How could the Government commit public funds without the parliamentary approval? This is a big issue of transparency. The Government cannot commit public funds without the parliamentary approval. If we did not have these resources, where would they have fund these resources? This is a breach of the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act (FMAA); this is a breach of the financial architecture of this country. This is a breach and we cannot facilitate this breach. If we vote in favour of this provision, we are facilitating a breach of the financial

architecture and the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act of this country. It is clear that the Government cares nothing about this breach.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am bound to express my concern of the fact that we seem to be speaking not to the issue of asking questions, but we are making statements of a nature more suited for another place. Let us try to keep what belongs in here in here. What we are doing is giving the impression that we are on the hustings. This is Parliament and we have got to respect that difference. That goes for every Member in here and I hope we would remember that.

Hon. Member, you have answered the question that was put to you.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate the scope of works for the original contract and if this work that was undertaken was additional works? It is 50% of the voted provision that is being sought as a supplementary. Is this additional works or was it the original part of the scope?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** We have indicated that this was in fact additional work. The building was leaning, and in some jeopardy, and the foundations had to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. This is what the amount covers.

**Bishop Edghill:** Based upon the legend, \$112.5 million would be the total investment. For this year, with the \$38 million that was voted and the \$19.5 million that is now being sought would bring us close to \$57.5 million. It meant that a significant sum was already expended before. Could the Minister indicate to us when the decision was made for these additional works?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** The decision was made this year because of problems that we encountered with the building and its foundations.

**Bishop Edghill:** The legend tells us about a leaning building which is a problem with the foundation. Is the Minister indicating to the National Assembly that we fix the roof, window, wall and then we fix the foundation?

6.10 p.m.

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I think the Hon. Member knows enough about construction to know that we did not start with the top, we had to start with the foundations.

**Bishop Edghill:** The Legend is stating that the supplementary provision was being sought because the building is leaning and works needed to be done to the foundation. The question is: Was the building leaned when the work started, or did it start to lean after? Ninety million dollars after the building leaned.

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I think if the Hon. Member trouble to read the actual remarks, he would find the explanation that he is seeking.

**Bishop Edghill:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Hon. Member for the answer, and I did read it.

“The original bills of quantities did not adequately address the foundation issue (building was leaning), which resulted in redesign of foundation; defective timber members on first floor; and inadequate quantities for electrical works. This supplementary will take the total investment cost to \$112.5 million...”

Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly that a contractor started a project where there was no provision for the remedying of the foundation and he proceeded to work - at the time of the signing of the contract?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I wish to inform the Hon. Member that the original sum was totally inadequate.

**Bishop Edghill:** The questioning could have been concluded a while ago if we knew what the original was. This is because we would like to compare what the original contract sum was and where we are as it relates to spending. There are rules of engagement as it relates to how much a contract could be increased by. There are rules of engagement. Could we get the answer of what the original contract sum was?

**Dr. Roopnaraine:** I would be very happy to submit the original contract.

**Bishop Edghill:** That is not a question that will be answered tonight. Corruption again.

*[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

*Question put.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, there has been a request for a Division.

*Division bell rang.*

*Assembly divided: 29 Noes, 33 Ayes, as follows:*

***Noes***

Mr. Bharrat

Ms. Veerasammy

Mr. Gill

Mr. Anamayah

Mr. Dharamlall

Mr. Charlie

Mr. Damon

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Chand

Mr. Neendkumar

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Mustapha

Ms. Selman

Dr. Westford

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Burton-Persaud



Mr. Croal

Mr. Hamilton

Ms. Chandarpal

Dr. V. Persaud

Mr. Seeraj

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Lumumba

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Ali

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Jagdeo

*Ayes*

Mr. Rutherford

Mr. Rajkumar

Mr. C. Persaud

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Carrington

Mr. Allen

Mr. Adams

Ms. Bancroft

Ms. Wade

Ms. Patterson-Yearwood

Dr. Henry

Ms. Charles-Broomes

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Sharma

Ms. Garrido-Lowe

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Hastings-Williams

Mr. Holder

Mr. Gaskin

Ms. Hughes

Mr. Patterson

Ms. Lawrence

Mr. Trotman

Mr. Jordan

Dr. Norton

Mr. Bulkan

Dr. Roopnarine

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Ms. Ally

Mr. Williams

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nagamootoo

*Motion carried.*

*Item 1 05-053 Ministry of the Presidency – Public Service Management - \$19,500,860 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

## **CURRENT ESTIMATES**

### **Item 3 21-211 Ministry of Agriculture - Ministry Administration – \$3,051,000,000**

**Mr. Seeraj:** Through you, Sir. This supplementary provision being sought, added to the previous supplementary provision, is taking us more than 50% of the original sum that was voted for. Would the Minister agree with me that this is a reflection of poor planning and no vision for this sector?

**Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Holder]:** Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what the question is.

**Mr. Seeraj:** I am asking the Minister if he agrees with me that this is a reflection of poor planning and no vision, as it relates to the voted provision being sought being more than 50% of the original sum that was votes for.

**Mr. Chairman:** I will put the question.

*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Chairman:** The Minister has not answered the question. Hon. Minister, a question has been put to you.

**Mr. Holder:** Mr. Chairman, I do not agree with the statement.

**Mr. Seeraj:** Mr. Chairman, through you. I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for his response. Sir, in the remarks column, I have noticed, and I quote:

“This request is in keeping with the Government of Guyana’s policy...”

Could the Hon. Minister direct us to where this policy is, what is the policy, and if it is in written form?

**Mr. Holder:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps, I can read the remarks for the Hon. Member.

“This request is in keeping with the Government of Guyana’s policy for the Authority to assume responsibility for drainage and irrigation duties that were once under the purview of GUYSUCO...”

I think that is very clear. That is the policy, to assume duties for the Guyana Sugar Corporation’s (GuySuCo’s) drainage and irrigation.

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say whether the contracts have been awarded for these areas and what are the sums of those contracts?

**Mr. Holder:** What particular areas are we talking about? The current expenditure in terms of what?

“...operational and maintenance cost of machinery and equipment due to extensive unplanned...”

It is all there. What particular contracts are we talking about?

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, we are asking about the maintenance contract. This Minister is seeking a supplementary provision of more than \$2.5 billion. There must be a contract in place - a maintenance contract. What is the sum of those maintenance contracts and when were they entered into?

6.25 p.m.

**Mr. Holder:** There is in place a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Guyana Sugar Corporation for the maintenance of these areas and equipment that fall under the National Drainage

and Irrigation Authority (NDIA), for purposes of drainage and irrigation. This is important, so that these individuals, who were previously doing it with GuySuCo, would not be put on the breadline, but would be incorporated to maintain the equipment. That is the contract that we are talking about. The contract – a MOU with GuySuCo for the maintenance of machinery and equipment – that is all.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, a MOU cannot be a contract. If the Hon. Minister is saying the contractors that GuySuCo was using were transferred to NDIA to do the work, who are those contractors and what were the sums that were paid to each of the contractors?

**Mr. Holder:** GuySuCo had a number of employees who were functioning. They were running the pump stations; they were doing drainage and irrigation works for GuySuCo. These are the people who are now contracted to do those same works which they were doing under the aegis and management of the NDIA. Is that clear? I hope the Hon. Member understands what we are doing here.

**Mr. Ali:** Is the Hon. Minister saying to us that this entire sum of \$2.53 billion will be used to pay workers hired by the NDIA to do the maintenance? That is what the Hon. Minister said, that they took workers from GuySuCo.

First, the Hon. Minister said that they took contractors from GuySuCo. Then he modified the answer to say that they took workers. So, I am asking whether this entire sum will be used to pay workers that NDIA was using, previously, from GuySuCo.

**Mr. Holder:** I am not sure that I am following. We have a request - a supplementary cost of \$3 billion – of which \$2.4 billion is for severance payment. So, that is off the table. I hope you are not arguing about the severance payments for the 4,700 workers. Then there is the remainder which comprise what we are talking about here. So, this sum, part of it, has been contracted out to GuySuCo that had workers employed in the maintenance of drainage and irrigation operations on the GuySuCo estates, both the ones that they have and the ones which they gave up. They also maintained a number of pump stations with a number of pumps. All of these came under the aegis of the NDIA and those workers are now gainfully employed, continued to be employed, under a contract arrangement between GuySuCo and NDIA. Is this quite clear? [Inaudible]... by NDIA, yes. So, these funds are going to NDIA because these workers are no longer with GuySuCo.

**Mr. Chand:** Comrade Chairman, of the \$600 million being sought, it is said here that this comprises of expenditure for drainage and irrigation works assumed from GuySuCo. Could the Minister advise why the NDIA failed to fully budget, in its estimates for year 2018, the sum required to undertake services, previously, provided by GuySuCo?

**Mr. Holder:** Let me try and make things simple. All of these funds are going to NDIA. To ease the Member's comprehension, of the \$600 million, \$250 million will be going to NDIA for works that it was responsible for, prior to the assumption of the GuySuCo operations. Three hundred and fifty million dollars will be going towards the works that are now being taken over by NDIA, which are GuySuCo operations. The NDIA's remit or its responsibilities have been increased by well over 50%, having to assume responsibility for works that were previously done by GuySuCo on all its seven locations. So, of the \$600 million, \$350 million goes towards what was previously under GuySuCo and is now under NDIA and \$250 million goes directly to NDIA ...[Inaudible]...under them initially.

If you wish a further breakdown of that I could: fuel and lubricants – \$108,139,507; maintenance of drainage and irrigation works, cleaning channels and all of that sort of thing – \$235,285,000; servicing and repairs to pumps, equipment and transportation of same – \$167,009,214; and the other operating expenses, including the operating cost of pumps and equipment – \$89,545,567. The total \$600,000,000.

**Mr. Seeraj:** Earlier, I had asked about the policy because the point I want to get at is: What is the cost of this policy? The Minister read out in the remarks column that the policy is to takeover these works. What is the cost of this overall policy to take over these works? Are we going to have more provisional supplementary being sought?

Secondly, here in the remarks column, it speaks about a Court decision. Could the Hon. Minister inform us about this Court decision and what was the decision of the Court, in relation to this matter with NDIA and the Guyana Tractor & Equipment (GUYTRAC)?

**Mr. Holder:** There was a decision of the Court between the Guyana Tractor and Equipment and the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority over an issue that came up or was created under the previous Administration. It would appear that there was a contract or an award of a contract to the Guyana Tractor and Equipment for the purchase of some equipment – hydraulic machineries

(Hymacs) and things of that nature. I think I have the list somewhere here. This was approved by the then Cabinet and the contract was awarded by NDIA. The then Cabinet changed its mind and withdrew the contract. The Guyana Tractor and Equipment took the Government to Court, which by now the Government had changed, and the Court awarded in favour of the Guyana Tractor and Equipment. So, the responsibility ...plus, of course, a lot of damages and things of that nature.

What we did was to discuss with GUYTRAC, who was willing not only to settle for the equipment for the initial award of \$226 million or whatever it was, but also to agree to a change in the equipment that we wanted. Apparently, the then Government purchased equipment for election purposes. Some hymacs to clean drains around village areas and so on, which is not really NDIA's kind of equipment. We managed to change that and get a better deal. We got a better deal for the same amount that was awarded, and the individual forego the damages, the millions in extra costs and so on. It was a reasonable arrangement under the circumstances. So, that is genesis of it.

**Mr. Seeraj:** What the Minister is actually telling us is that there was no Court decision, but that there was an arrangement or agreement between the Government and this contractor – there was an agreement. That is what I am trying to ask the Minister. Did it have to do with a decision by the Court or was it an agreement between the Government and the contractor? If that was the agreement, what is the scope of that agreement? Was the equipment supplied, after this agreement, in keeping with the original specification or are these new equipment under new arrangements for some sum of money? Thank you. [*Interruption*]

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, it is difficult for the Hon. Member who was on his feet to be heard either in answering or asking a question. I thank you.

**Mr. Holder:** I think this came up before, sometime ago. The Court awarded on behalf of the Guyana Tractor and Equipment. So, the Government had to pay out the \$226 million, plus another \$70 million, plus another set of cost or something. I cannot remember the details, I do not have them here. What we did, and I have before me – what is the term of it – the draft settlement agreement, where there is a settlement agreed on. This is what was supposed to be done. Damages for breach of contract in the sum of \$26 million; damages for loss of profit, \$44 million; interest and so on.

After this, there was a settlement. We spoke to the contractor and he was willing to settle for the original sum and to forego all the extra money that the Court had awarded him. He was generous enough and had also agreed to alter the contract to give equipment that was useful to NDIA - not useful for the political purposes that the previous Administration was looking at. This, in a nutshell, I think, is where we are. I believe this came up in the records of the Parliament, which would have come up, previously, when we had a supplementary provision.

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** In the remarks column, at number two, it states that \$2.4 billion of this amount is to meet severance payments to former workers of the Guyana Sugar Corporation and that this amount represents the final sum to be paid in severance. My question to the Hon. Minister is: Is any part of this amount allocated to pay the sugar workers at the Wales Sugar Estate their severance?

**Mr. Holder:** Yes. We have added that in to pay the sugar workers at the Wales Sugar Estate.

**Opposition Members:** All?

**Mr. Holder:** Yes, all.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, do you have another question?

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Is the Hon. Minister saying that all sugar workers, including the sugar workers at the Wales Sugar Estate, will be paid from this amount - all their severances?

**Mr. Holder:** Yes, including the sugar workers at the Wales Sugar Estate, who are now working at the Uitvlugt Sugar Estate.

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chand:** Comrade Chairman, in relation to the answer given by the Minister, could the Minister advise on the number of workers he is referring to? It is important for the Minister to identify the number of workers and when they would be paid.

6.40 p.m.



**Mr. Holder:** I am advised that it is 4773 workers, plus the workers from the Wales Sugar Estate.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Komal Chand, you have another question.

**Mr. Chand:** Could the Minister specifically refer to the number of workers in relation to the Wales Sugar Estate and when would those workers be paid? All the workers; give us the number of workers for the Wales Sugar Estate. The money was due since December, 2016. Give us the number of workers for the Wales Sugar Estate.

**Mr. Holder:** It is 460 workers. In terms of payment, as soon as the funds are made available from the Treasury and assuming that this honourable House passes the supplementary provision, the workers will be paid.

**Mr. Chand:** Would the Minister provide the answer for all the workers, those who got a part of their severance paid before and the 460 that he mentioned for the Wales Sugar Estate? Those other shuttered estates in Albion, Rose Hall and East Demerara, could we get the number of workers with respect to those? You already gave us for the Wales Sugar Estate. You must have gotten the number of workers and their names. [An Hon. Member from the Government: The names?] Yes, the name of each worker. We are asking you to provide those details later, but please provide the number of workers with respect to each of the other three estates.

**Mr. Holder:** We will undertake to make the information required available to the Hon. Member within two weeks. I cannot promise you addresses and telephone numbers, but certainly the names.

**Mr. Chand:** Could I remind the Minister to give me the numbers now, as he has given me the numbers for the Wales Sugar Estate? It is the number of workers for the three other estates. As I am on the floor, does the severance payments, which are catered for now, include interest payments?

**Mr. Holder:** When he has gone into those areas of monetary, interest and so on, that is outside of my pay grade. I cannot make those decisions about interest and what is due. I do not think that was part of any agreement that we sought. That is a new issue that he may want to raise.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member. Hon. Ms. Teixeira, you have the floor.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Minister, could you please state, categorically, when will the Wales Sugar Estate workers receive.... First, when will workers from the Wales Sugar Estate, in particular, receive their severance pay? In fact, all of the 4773 workers that you referred to, when will they receive their severance pay? Will it be by 12<sup>th</sup> November or by 31<sup>st</sup> December, when you must close the books? Which one is it? The people want to know whether they are going to have it for 12<sup>th</sup> November, or not.

**Mr. Holder:** I am sure that they will have it in good time, certainly prior to the year's end. They can only have it if this honourable House approves the supplementary provision. Therefore, we cannot predict what this honourable House will do.

**Ms. Teixeira:** The Hon. Member knows that, last week, we wanted to have a suspension of the Standing Orders to discuss this right away so that we could have gone through.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member. I now put the question. Hon. Member, Mr. Komal Chand, do you have another question? You do not wish me to put the question now. Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Chand:** I want to remind the Minister that he has not provided the number of workers for the three other estates, which he must have available. Secondly, would the Minister return to the House to seek another supplementary provision to satisfy the interest payments, should the Court so advise that the interest payments are payable?

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member. Hon. Minister, there is a question.

**Mr. Holder:** The question is speculative and, therefore, unanswerable. Prior to getting the other information you want, the severance summary shows there are 521 workers for the Wales Sugar Estate; 1504 for the East Demerara Sugar Estate; 848 for Rose Hall Sugar Estate; and 1755 for Skeldon Sugar Estate. That is a total 4628 workers.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Ms. Teixeira, I shall allow one other question after this one.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am still waiting on the Hon. Minister to say when is the date that the workers will receive their severance pay. I have asked that three times, Sir. The Minister has judiciously avoided

me. We are hearing about a supplementary provision, when would be the day? You must know when you are going to pay them. *[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member for the question. Hon. Ms. Burton-Persaud, this is the last question on this matter.

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. It is important that we know when the money will be paid because the workers from the Wales Sugar Estate have been waiting for two years. This is a violation of the Labour Laws at it relates to the Severance Pay Act...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, are you asking...

**Ms. Burton-Persaud:** I am asking the question now. I am asking the question to the Hon. Minister. Is he aware that there is a penalty of a \$20,000 fine and three months' imprisonment if the employer does not pay severance one month after giving notice of termination?

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member. Hon. Minister, there is a question with...

**Mr. Holder:** Mr. Chairman, at this point in time, there is no money to pay any severance. It has to be passed by this House and it has not been passed yet. I cannot give a time when it can be paid if there are no funds to pay.

*Question put.*

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** I would like to have a division.

*[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, ...

*[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, the request for a division is not one that could just be made for the sake of making it. It is, however, used when there is doubt about the numbers, so that if there is a request for a division... I just said that so that Members would know. If there is a request for a division, then we proceed with the division.

*[Interruption]*

*Division bell rang.*

*Assembly divided: Noes 0, Ayes 62, as follows:*

**Ayes**

Mr. Bharrat

Ms. Veerasammy

Mr. Gill

Mr. Anamayah

Mr. Dharamlall

Mr. Charlie

Mr. Damon

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Chand

Mr. Neendkumar

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Mustapha

Ms. Selman

Dr. Westford

Ms. Burton-Persaud

Mr. Croal

Ms. Chandarpal

Dr. V. Persaud

Mr. Seeraj

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Lumumba

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Manickchand

Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Ali

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Jagdeo

Mr. Rutherford

Mr. Rajkumar

Mr. C. Persaud

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Carrington

Mr. Allen

Mr. Adams

Ms. Bancroft

Ms. Wade

Ms. Patterson-Yearwood

Dr. Henry

Ms. Charles-Broomes

Dr. Cummings

Mr. Sharma

Ms. Garrido-Lowe

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Hastings-Williams

Mr. Holder

Mr. Gaskin

Ms. Hughes

Mr. Patterson

Ms. Lawrence

Mr. Trotman

Mr. Jordan

Dr. Norton

Mr. Bulkan

Dr. Roopnarine

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Ms. Ally

Mr. Williams

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nagamootoo

6.55 p.m.

*Item 3 21-211 Ministry of Agriculture – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$3,051,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

**Item 3 21-211 Ministry of Agriculture - Ministry Administration - East Demerara Water Conservancy – \$70,738,198**

*Item 3 21-211 Ministry of Agriculture - Ministry Administration - East Demerara Water Conservancy – \$70,738,198 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** We have just passed the 7'o clock hour. If Members would agree, we could continue.

**Hon. Members:** Let us continue.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank you.

#### **CURRENT ESTIMATES**

**Item 4 73-731 Region 3 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$3,741,162**

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Could the Hon. Minister say to us how many administrative buildings are benefitting from security services in the region?

**Minister of Communities [Mr. Bulkan]:** Mr. Chairman, the answer is four administrative buildings.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Thank you, Minister, but something seems to be wrong. In the remarks column, it states:

“...to cover 6 administrative buildings”.

So, I was wondering whether there were more than six administrative buildings. That was the reason for my first question.

My second question, therefore, is: if it is four administrative buildings, then why are you asking, at this stage, for 21.6% increase to cover three months of remaining cost when the legend states that there was an increase by \$30 per hour? So, the follow-up questions are as follow: When was this increase approved? By whom or what authority was this increase approved? Which is the security firm providing the service? When was this firm engaged? What process was used in engaging that firm?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you, Hon. Member. Mr. Chairman, just for the purpose of clarity, the provision being sought now is to cover six buildings that are the responsibility of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), four of these are administrative buildings and the other two building are for the Regional Chairman and Regional Vice-Chairman. Hence, the legend is correct even though the answer is both four and six.

The reason for the shortfall and the provisions being sought now is due to two main factors; it is an increase in the rates being paid from \$300 - \$330, that is Monday to Saturday, and \$495 per hour on Sundays when, formerly, it was one flat rate of \$300. So, it is now \$330 and \$495 on Sundays and increased hours. Formerly, not all the locations benefitted from 24 hours security. This is now the case with an upgrade of 24 hours security for the Regional Vice-Chairman as well as the Regional Executive Officer (REO).

Regarding the security provider, it is an annual contract which was awarded to Sentinel Security Group Incorporated and this contract was awarded in November of last year. It replaced a four-year contract that was previously awarded to Home Safe Security. Those are the answers, Mr. Chairman.



**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister just indicated that this contract was awarded to Sentinel Security Group Incorporated in November of last year. It was a price-specific contract. Could the Hon. Minister explain to this House what process was used to amend this contract and if it was opened to other providers to provide better rates?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, at the time when the 2018 Budget was prepared, there was an existing contract to the previous provider and I just gave the name. So, subsequent to the preparation and approval of the 2018 Budget, which would have been November-December, 2017, a new contract was entered into for security services for the period November, 2018 to November, 2019. This new contract had the new rates of \$330 and \$495 on Sundays. So, this is what is responsible for the original provision being insufficient to meet payment for 12 months.

**Bishop Edghill:** Access to funds for *Budget 2018* became available when the Appropriation Act was signed, sometime in December, 2017, for moneys to start flowing in January, 2018. Would the Minister agree that if he had entered into a contract in November, he would have entered into a contract for a sum that he did not have available to him? How is that possible?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I would proffer to provide an answer and it is that the payment would not have been due until the services would have been rendered. So, a contract having been awarded to the company, in this case Sentinel Security Group Incorporated, they would have provided the service and I do not think there was any doubt in their minds that they would have been paid by the Government of Guyana.

**Bishop Edghill:** A follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister tell us the date that Sentinel Security Group Incorporated took over the locations?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have information on hand, save and except to say that the contract was entered into November, 2017. So, the services would have started some time subsequently.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate the total sums paid to Sentinel Security Group Incorporated for the year 2018 so far under this line item?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The security provider is providing a total of 19 guards, Monday to Sunday, for which they are being paid the sum of \$330 from Mondays to Saturdays and the sum of \$495 an hour on Sundays.

7.10 p.m.

The total sum that would be due to this company for the twelve-month period would be approximately \$19.9 million.

**Bishop Edghill:** The total sum that will be needed for this security service is \$19.9 million. Why, then, is a provision of \$3.741 million being sought, which would give over \$20 million under this particular line item? What is the balance for? It is security.

**Mr. Bulkan:** These figures are generally rounded figures and they do not match to the dollar.

**Bishop Edghill:** May I remind the National Assembly that accounting is a precise science? If you are paying a particular rate for a certain number of hours and so much on Sundays, a calculation will yield a particular number. The reason I asked the original question of how much has been paid is because I would like to know how a shortfall of \$3.741 million was determined. How much has been paid to date that we know there is a shortfall for now for this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I did explain earlier that the original voted provision was insufficient. It was inadequate to meet a service for which the rates had been increased from \$300 to \$330 and \$495.00, respectively, Mondays to Saturdays and Sundays, as well as increased hours under the new contracts where 24-hour service was being provided to all six of the locations that are provided for under this heading.

**Bishop Edghill:** Follow-up: I have noted that the Minister has carefully avoided answering the question. I guess he has a reason. Could he help the House by telling us who are the principals of Sentinel Security Group Incorporated and when was this company established?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I could provide that information subsequently.

**Bishop Edghill:** The Minister said earlier that this company was assured that it would be paid even though the moneys were not appropriated or available. It means that the Ministry has to have some kind of relationship with this company. Could he not tell us who are the principals and when it was established? If he does not know when it was established, could he tell us who are the principles? You must know who you are talking to. Your Permanent Secretary (PS) is here with you.

**Mr. Bulkan:** This contract was provided via a process of open tendering.

**Mr. Chand:** Cde. Chairman, is the Minister aware that Sentinel Security Group Incorporated is the successor of COPS Security Service, once a popular security company that is highly indebted to workers, including their National Insurance Scheme (NIS) payments?

What safeguard could the Minister assure this House that workers in Sentinel Security Group Incorporated would not suffer in a similar way?

**Mr. Chairman:** Is there a question, Hon. Member?

**Mr. Chand:** Yes, there is a question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay.

**Mr. Bulkan:** That question cannot be properly put to me, Mr. Chairman.

**Bishop Edghill:** A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister give this National Assembly the assurance that due diligence on this company was done before the award of this contract?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is yes. This company was in possession of an NIS Compliance Certificate at the time of the award of the contract.

**Bishop Edghill:** Alright.

*Item 4 73-731 Region 3 - Security Services - Regional Administration and Finance - \$3,741,162 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 5 73-734 Region 3 – Education Delivery - Security Services – \$171,554,306, Maintenance of Buildings – \$17,500,000 and Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - \$4,100,000**

### **Security Services**

**Mr. G. Persaud:** The budgeted sum is \$160 million. The supplementary provision being sought is \$171,554,306, which is 107% more than the budgeted sum. I guess the Minister will tell us that these figures are not rounded.

My first question is: how many security guards are employed under this line item?

My second question is: if we budgeted for \$160 million and the Minister is asking for \$171,554,306 to cover the period October to December, it means, therefore, that there is either a number of security guards who have not been paid for prolonged periods under this line item or there is some inexactness with regard to this request. Maybe, the number is not rounded. [An Hon.

**Member:** Ask the question.] If you listen, you will get it. Think about security and you will be better. It is security we are talking about, but it is a different one.

My third question to the Hon. Minister is: how many additional buildings would have benefitted, under this programme, from security coverage during this year? Thank you.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to the first question is 371. With regard to the second question, the assumption that these guards have not been paid is incorrect. The answer to the third question is 32.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Thanks to the Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you have another question?

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. If my assumption is incorrect, then, let the Hon. Minister be kind enough to explain to me how \$160 million can cover payments for nine months but he needs \$171,554,306 to cover payments for the same number of guards for three months. That is mind-boggling, Sir.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer lies in the fact that the guards are not being paid by the Government but are being paid by the security provider.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** I, personally, in this National Assembly, had to approach the Minister of Labour on three occasions, on behalf of these very security guards from Region 3, who had complained that they had not been paid for prolonged periods. These security guards have been making their stories known publicly. Maybe, the Hon. Minister needs to recheck the source and accuracy of his information. I thank you very much.

### **Maintenance of Buildings**

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Would the Hon. Minister tell us the names of the four schools?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The four schools are Bagotville Nursery, Parfaite Harmonie Nursery, Eastern Leguan Primary and Maryville Primary, which is in Leguan as well.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Hon. Minister, could you say whether maintenance work has been completed on those buildings? If the response is no, why were the defects not identified during the long vacation period? Why is it coming now?

*7.25 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** The repairs would have been identified prior to today, but, of course, we would appreciate that this honourable House was recess for two months. These requests would have been put sometime before, but it is only now that it has the opportunity to come before the House. It is for the total sum of \$17.5 million for these four schools.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Thank you, Hon. Minister. So, is it correct to conclude that the roofs of these four buildings continue to leak and that the children in these four schools are exposed to these leaking roofs during normal learning hours?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Not all four of the locations have problems with the roofs. In the case of La Parfaite Harmonie school, the repairs to be done there are to windows, the internal concrete and timber walls as well as electrical fixtures. They do not have problems with their roofs at La Parfaite Harmonie school.

### **Maintenance of Other Infrastructure**

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Hon. Minister, could you tell us the 15 school buildings that would benefit from this request?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The locations are the Windsor Forest Primary School, Blankenburg Primary School, Patentia Primary School, Goed Fortuin Primary School, Cornelia Ida Primary School, Bagotville Primary School, teachers' toilets at Vreed-en-Hoop Primary, Uitvlugt Secondary School, Leonora Secondary School, Endeavour Secondary School, L'Aventure Secondary School, Cornelia Ida Nursery School, Den Amstel Nursery School, La Parfaite Harmonie Nursery and Patentia Nursery School; a total of 15.

*Item 5 73-734 Region 3 – Education Delivery - Security Services - \$171,554,306, Maintenance of Buildings - \$17,500,000 and Maintenance of Other Infrastructure - \$4,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 6 73-735 Region 3 – Health Services - Security Services - \$27,401,907 and Maintenance of Buildings - \$10,000,000**

**Security Services**

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Mr. Chairman, the remarks column states that these guards are being paid \$645 per hour on Sundays and holidays, while the other security guards, under the education programme, are being paid \$495 per hour on Sundays. So, I am wondering why this disparity. Could the Hon. Minister please explain that?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Hon. Member, the \$645 is for armed guards and there were no armed guards under the other programmes. I think the \$430 may actually be a misprint; it should be \$495. So, it is \$495 and \$645, but the \$645 is for armed guards.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us who is the security provider? When was this contract awarded? And what is the number of security guards that are under this line item?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is the one security provider that was awarded the contract for security services for the Essequibo Islands/West Demerara. The name has already been provided as well as the duration of the contract. It is for 41 locations for a total of 104 guards.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** I do not want to make assumptions, so I would be very happy if the Hon. Minister could let us know the name of the security firm. I do not know if there is some bad taste or some fear why the Hon. Minister seems to be shying away from the name of this security firm and the major players in this security firm. So, I would ask the Hon. Minister to give us the name of the principal of this company and the name of the company. Thank you.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The contract is for all the programmes for the region. We have already examined Regional Administration, Education and we are now under Health Services. It is Sentinel Security Group Incorporated.

**Maintenance of Buildings**

**Dr. Anthony:** Could the Hon. Minister say to us how much of this \$10 million would be expended on the Leguan Cottage Hospital and for what reason?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is the sum of \$2 million and it is to effect works to the kitchen floor and stairs, cupboards, leaking ceiling as well as to do some painting.

**Dr. Anthony:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money has been expended on each of the health posts, where these health posts are located and what type of emergency work was needed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The locations are at Maria's Pleasure, Sand Hills and Makouria; the respective sums are \$2 million, \$3 million and \$3 million; and it is to effect the maintenance works to ceilings, stairs, painting of internal and external walls. That covers the major scope of works for all three of the locations.

*Item 6 73-735 Region 3 – Health Services - Security Services - \$27,401,907 and Maintenance of Buildings - \$10,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7 74-741 Region 4 – Regional Administration and Finance – Security Services- \$19,993,451**

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us the name of the security firm and when this contract was awarded?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The name of the provider is Kalibur Security and the contract was awarded in December, 2017.

*7.40 p.m.*

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Did this security firm provide the taxpayer identification number (TIN) and National Insurance Scheme (NIS) Compliance Certificate?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, this contract was awarded via public procurement, open tendering, and these are standard criterion in bid documents. Bidders have to be NIS compliant, Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) compliant, and there are many other requirements. The answer is yes.

**Bishop Edghill:** I would like to ask the Minister to clarify the \$35 million that was expended in January to September. In the legend, he is asking for \$19,993,451, almost \$20 million, for the period of October to December. Could he tell this National Assembly what changed at the end of September that would require \$20 million, which is more than 50% of the sums appropriated to complete his expenditure in this line item for the rest of the year? The legend states October to December.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is that nothing would have changed from October to December. The total annual requirement is approximately \$55 million. The sum of \$35 million which was voted for originally, as I said before, was inadequate and insufficient to meet the cost under the contract for 12 months. Hence, the sum of approximately of \$19.993 million is required to cover the cost of providing this service to the end of December, 2018.

**Bishop Edghill:** For the purpose of clarification, could the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly under what authority he entered into a contract for sums that were not appropriated? He just told us that it needed \$55 million but it got only \$35 million, and yet he entered into a contract for \$55 million when only \$35 million was appropriated. What authority, under the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, allowed that to happen?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I think the jeopardy would lie if a contract was entered into for a lower sum. In this instance, the contract was to meet the needs of the services for 12 months. The original provision or allocation, I repeat, was inadequate and insufficient, hence this request before the National Assembly for the additional sum to meet the cost of the service to the end of this year.

**Bishop Edghill:** I am a bit confused and I would like to have clarification, Sir. An Appropriation Act allocated a specific amount of money to be used for security in a sector. A Ministry goes out to tender and a contractor is engaged at 50% above the appropriated sums – 50% above the appropriated sums. What authority exists in our financial laws that allows that to happen?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I repeat what I said earlier, that at the time of the preparation and approval of Budget 2018 there was a contract in place. That contract was to Homesafe Security and Domestic Services. It came to an end in November of 2017. Subsequent to the preparation and presentation of Budget 2018, a new contract was entered into with Kalibur Security Services that required a total sum of



approximately \$55 million. The initial allocation was insufficient and inadequate, hence the need for the provision now being sought.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, I am rather confused because the legend states, 19 times in the supplementary, that this is “to meet payments for increased security charges from \$300 per hour to \$377 per hour, plus 14 percent VAT” in order to cover the period from October to December. What you have done, according to the legend, is to increase the rates. You have increased the rates. What authority have you done that? It is because your own contract, which you said was issued in December, 2017, and I assume is a 12-month contract, would have ended in December 2018 or January, 2019. How is it that you negotiated new fees, new increases, and is then coming to the National Assembly for the additional money? In fact, the \$35 million under this head appears to have been inadequate in relation to the rates you were paying then, under that agreement. Is it that in the middle of a contract, I assume, it has been tendered that you suddenly agreed to new rates and is now coming to cover yourself because you have gone over your budgetary requirements? You cannot do that, actually.

The second issue has to do with the company. All of the security companies of Guyana, all of the private security companies, have to be in compliance with the Private Security Services Act. Is this company, as the Sentinel Security Inc. and others, in compliance with the Private Security Services Act? Are you, Minister, familiar with what the requirements are for security service job compliance with that?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Perhaps the Hon. Member was not paying attention to my earlier explanations. The contract that has been entered into was subsequent to the passage of Budget 2018. The rates were not – n-o-t – adjusted nor increased during the life of this contract. This contract started in 2018. The rates under this contract was increased from the rates under the previous contract, which was \$300 an hour, and it is now \$377 an hour. It is increased hours and an increased rate.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Member tell us how many responsive bidders there were on this advertised contract and if that was the lowest responsive bidder?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The request that is being put to this Assembly now is for supplementary provision in the sum of \$19,993,451 to cover security costs, under a specific heading, for a contract that has received prior approval by this Assembly, earlier. It is a contract that was awarded, rather, by the

National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB). Whether the security provider was the lowest responsive bidder, I cannot answer that question, at this point in time.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Is the Minister saying that the contract that was given to the company was amended to pay the increased fees for October to December? I am asking, under what authority have you done that? I understand exactly what I am asking. You said that a contract was issued in 2018. He said 2017 and I said 2018. The issue is that it is a one-year contract, I am assuming, which was tendered for at an agreed price, awarded by the NPTAB and executed by the Ministry of Communities. How is it that in the tenth month or eleventh month that contract, or ninth month of that contract, there are brand new fees that come up to this amount?

The reason why I am asking this is that when you go through this one by one, you do not realise that these 19 items of security services come up to \$543,848,000. Nineteen items, which the Minister is coming for today, on contracts to pay people for the last three months of this year at increased fees, is costing the taxpayer \$543,848,000, half a billion dollars for security. Yet he is saying that he does not know about this and that this was what was done before and was awarded by the NPTAB. He could not. It is unless the Minister issued a contract at the rate that is now before the Assembly, knowing that his budget was not sufficient and figured that he would be able to come back with a supplementary and therefore proceeded to have a contract which he did not have money for, and it has now come to this time of the year to get the money to cover him. It is illegal, Sir. It is against the procurement laws of this country.

You either did one of two things. You have either committed one of two wrong acts, Minister. You have either, in the middle of a contract, renegotiated with every one of these security companies to increase the rates, which you have no authority to do, no union has represented them, and they are all not under the Private Security Services Act as registered private security companies. Or, it is that you knowingly and willingly issued contracts that were above what was in your budget for 2018 and figured you could come back and be able to cover yourself. One of two wrongs has been committed, Sir. Which one is it?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira, Hon. Members are permitted to ask questions, and there is a certain attitude that I have permitted, but now we are giving speeches. We have to try and stay within the bounds of what is reasonable. Hon. Members have gone beyond the bounds of

reasonable in asking their questions. Members are sometimes not even interested in the answers, because members are having conversations while the answer is being given. We have to be sure as to what we are doing here.

Hon. Minister, is there an answer you want to give to a question? I did not hear the question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. For the purpose of clarity, and for the *Hansard*, I would like to state once again that there was no adjustment of the rate nor was there an increase in the rate during the life of the contract.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member tell us how many buildings are benefiting from this security service?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is 12.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Is he telling us that at each location there is only one building?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is yes.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Mr. Minister, I am assuming that the remarks here are accurate. You are saying to us, as an explanation, that you want this \$20 million to meet payments for increased security charges from \$300 per hour up to \$377 per hour plus value added tax (VAT).

*7.55 p.m.*

All we are asking: What caused the increase? Did you amend the contract? By what authority did you amend the contract to your detriment? It is a one-year contract that you had. You said that. That is all we want to know. What was the reason for the increase and on what basis did you amend your own contract to your detriment?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That question is the identical question that was just posed by the Hon. Member's colleague. The answer is that this contract was not adjusted. This is a new contract that took effect in 2018. The previous contract paid a rate of \$300 an hour. This contract pays an hourly rate of \$377. It allows also for increased hours.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Could I have a follow-up, Sir? What is the date of the new contract? The contract for \$300 per hour ended at some point in time. Could you tell us when that ended, when this new one started and how long this new one would last?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The previous contract ended at the end of November, 2017. The new contract took effect on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 and it was for a period of one year.

**Mr. Nandlall:** From December, 2017 to December, 2018, there is the new contract.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Correct.

**Mr. Nandlall:** That contract charges \$377 per hour.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Correct.

**Mr. Nandlall:** You knew that since December of last year and that is very easy to calculate at a rate of \$377. Why are we here? We passed the budget in December of last year. Moneys would have been disbursed.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall, are you going to ask a question?

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** As you said, it is a follow-up question.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes Sir. I am asking very simply. You signed this contract in December, 2018.

**Mr. Bulkan:** It was in in 2017.

**Mr. Nandlall:** It was in December, 2017. You knew at the time when you signed it that it was \$377 per hour. Why are we coming for a supplemental? Could you answer that one then? We would clarify it. You would get the answer.

**Mr. Bulkan:** When budget for 2018 was being prepared it would have used the sum of \$300 per hour, which was the rates applied at that time. Subsequent to the passage of that budget, a new contract was entered into for one year, which started in December of 2017 and ran for the period of 12 months.

**Mr. Nandlall:** We have had supplementals for the year. This is number three. Is there any reason why you did not come earlier knowing that you had 12 months to pay?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Government decides when to bring a supplementary and the supplementary is here being debated this evening.

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, we have an Integrated Financial Management and Accounting System that we operate. Is the Minister of Communities telling this National Assembly that NPTAB awarded a contract in excess of sums that were appropriated in the Budget 2018? The Integrated Financial Management and Accounting System tells NPTAB how much is appropriated for everything that is to be expended and NPTAB is restricted and is against the law to award what has not been appropriated. Are you telling this National Assembly that NPTAB offered a contract above the sums that were appropriated? Salary increase is catered for in the line item in the Ministry of Finance budget.

**Mr. Bulkan:** That question should be properly put to NPTAB.

**Bishop Edghill:** We will put it in writing. It is going to the Public Procurement Commission (PPC).] That is an illegality and Mr. Greenidge knows that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, you have asked the question and you have got an answer not the one you wanted, then by continuing to grumble about the answer will not change it.

*Item 7 74-741 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica – Regional Administration and Finance - \$19,993,451 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 8 74-742 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica – Agriculture - \$5,342,154**

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us the name of this security services and the principals?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is Kalibur Security Services.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** He did not answer and tell me who some of the principals are.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am not required to provide that information.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** The security guards and the people out there are looking. I am afraid that there are too many phantoms who are getting paid. I would like to know how many security guards are benefiting from this security service under this line item.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I did not hear a question, Mr. Chairman. Is there a question?

**Mr. Neendkumar:** My question is: How many security guards are benefiting from this payment? I am concerned about the phantom security guards who are looking after family and friends. I know what I am talking about, Mr. Bulkan.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is 23.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you have another question, Mr. Neendkumar?

**Mr. Neendkumar:** I noticed that in October and December, we are asking for \$5,342,154 but the contract will run for up to November. Why is it he is charging this money when the budget is coming up? I am seriously concerned about what I am talking about. People are being paid and they are not working.

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is a statement. He said that people are being paid but they are not working. I dispute that answer.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Neendkumar, do you have another question?

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Yes. How many occasions are being covered by this and can you give us in writing, and lay it over to us, so that we can double-check?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There are eight locations, and these are all pump stations. They are referred to as or they are known as the Joyce Phillip, Cane Grove, Victoria, Nabaclis, Haslington, Buxton, Triumph and there is a Ruston Bucyrus (RB) dragline. I am not sure what is the location of that dragline, but there is a total of eight places being guarded, one of them being a dragline.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Mr. Chairman, is it an army dragline? Is he serious?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No. It is a RB dragline.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** It is a RB dragline. I thought you said an army dragline. Where is this RB dragline? I want to know where this RB dragline is. Is it at Ronald Bulkan's place?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I will have to provide the location of this dragline. I do not have the location here.

*Item 8 74-742 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica – Agriculture - \$5,342,154 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 9 74-744 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica – Education Delivery - \$156,447,798 and \$77,223,247**

**Ms. Chandarpal:** Could I ask, through you, Mr. Chairman to the Minister, if he could provide the name of the security firm as well as the number of guards that are employed to oversee the 134 buildings?

Secondly, we would like to know if there are any private dwellings and as well, we would like if you can lay over the list of the 134 buildings.

*8.10 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the name of the security provider is Kalibur Security Services. There are 134 buildings at 127 locations, a total of 512 guards. And the list that I have, shows that they are all Government's institutions. There are no private residences.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Hon. Minister, could you say when was this contract signed? Further to that, could also say when the negotiation took place to increase the rates from \$300 to \$377?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There was no negotiation. This was a tender that was publicly tendered. Bids were submitted. They were evaluated by an evaluation committee, recommendation was made that would have had to meet the approval of NPTAB and subsequently cleared at a different level and an award would have been made and it allowed for an hourly rate to be paid of \$371 an hour.

**Mr. Bharrat:** The other part of the question was...

**Mr. Bulkan:** It was December 2017.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Hon. Minister, could you say whether this \$156 million being requested is the amount that we catered for the increase only or if there are additional expenses including in the \$156 million? What are those additional expenses, if any?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is increased hours and an increased rate.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Hon. Minister, could you say if there were any additional buildings or entities that were added after the signing of the contract?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is no.

**Ms. Chandarpal:** Could I ask when these centres were established? That is my first question. Second, where is the location of May 25 Day Care Centre? My third question, are these Centres managed by Government only? How many persons are benefiting from these two facilities?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, no. The one new facility was opened, that is the Anns Grove Early Childhood Centre was opened in September, 2018. The bulk of the allocation is for the payment of 221 sweeper/cleaners whose rates would have been adjusted in 2018. The location of the May 25 Day Care Centre is in Melanie.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much of this \$77 million was paid to sweeper/cleaners after the real struggle which they had? I must congratulate them for the struggle. How much was paid to increase salaries to the caregivers of May 25 Day Care Centre? How much money was given to the caregivers at the newly opened centre at Anns Grove Early Childhood Centre?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The bulk of the allocation being requested would be for payments for sweeper/cleaners, the number is 221; the caregivers at Anns Grove Early Childhood Centre total is 14 and the caregivers at May 25 Day Care Centre total is 16 and one supervisors. The bulk of the request is for the sweeper/cleaners.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, the rates you are talking about with the sweeper/cleaners, I am glad to see they are getting an increase in salary. However, could you say if these are the rates that are applicable to all sweeper/cleaners across the country in the education sector? If that is so, then why is only provision made in this Supplementary Financial Paper for sweeper/cleaners in Region 4



alone under education? Would the other sweeper/cleaners in the other region not be also benefiting from an increase in salary and rates? Why is that not reflected in any of the region's education figures? Only Region 10 has a provision for part-time cleaners. Are part-time cleaners have been increased and sweeper/cleaners the same thing or they both are under education delivery? Are they different people doing different things or is it just using a name differently?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to the first question is yes. The supplementary being sought here it is for two regions. This is one and there is a subsequent region as to why for others that are not brought here, I do not think that question is relevant to the provision that is being sought here now.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Hon. Minister could you say if there is a fee attached to the services offered by this day care centre or if it is offered free to the residency of Melanie or Ann's Groove?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I am not in a position to answer that question at that point. The answer will be provided to the Hon. Member at the earliest possible opportunity.

*Item 9 74-744 Region 4 – Demerara/Mahaica - Education Delivery - \$156,447,798 and \$77,223,247 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 10 74-745 Region 4 – Demerara/Mahaica - Health Services - \$21,117,404**

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Could the Hon. Minister give us the names of these 31 health facilities?

**Mr. Bulkan:** These are the Buxton Health Centre, the Beterverwagting Health Centre, Cane Grove Health Centre, Clonbrook Health Centre, Enterprise Health Centre, Helena Health Centre, Lusignan Health Centre, Melanie Health Centre, Mon Repos Health Centre, Dr. C.C Nicholson Health Centre, Plaisance Health Centre, Unity Health Centre, Victoria Health Centre, the Diamond Diagnostic Centre, Mocha Health Centre, Herstelling Health Centre, Golden Groove Health Centre, Craig Health Centre, Supply Health Centre, Soesdyke Health Centre, Timehri Health Centre, Kurukururu Health Centre, Long Creek Health Centre, Moblissa Health Centre, Silver Hill Health Centre, Dora Health Centre, Low Wood Health Centre, Laluni Health Centre, Hauraruni Health Centre, Yarowkabra Health Centre and number 31 is the Friendship Administration Office.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us what is happening with the Eccles Health Centre?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The provision relates to 31 health centres which I have just read out. That is not one of the 31.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** I am also concerned about the Supply Health Centre where I know that the work is abandoned there. I am more serious with the Eccles Health Centre which we have had budgeted allocation since 2015 that it is now a garbage place. Garbage is being thrown and burnt there and cows are now being kept in that place. Could the Minister who lives there also tell us what is happening at Eccles and Supply?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I do not think that question is relevant and pertains to the supplementary under consideration.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** I am seriously concerned because the residents in that area, also myself and Mr. Bulkan, are suffering when the people put their garbage and they are burning...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Neendkumar, you are asking questions in relation to supplementary provision. What we are doing now is we are having a wide range in questioning. I do not think that we should embark on that now. Let us try to confine our questions to the issues which present themselves in the document you have before you.

**Mr. Neendkumar:** I plead with the Minister to ensure that we have security at the building of the Eccles Health Centre.

*Item 10 74-745 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica - Health Services - \$21,117,404 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

*8.25 p.m.*

**Item 11 75-755 Region 5 Health Services – Security Services - \$22,586,592**

**Mr. Gill:** Could the Hon. Minister identify the security provider?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Integrated Security Services Inc.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Gill, do you have another question?

**Mr. Gill:** Yes Mr. Chairman. Is the Hon. Minister aware that Integrated Security Services Inc. is paying its workers \$255 an hour and it is not paying the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions for these workers? Is the Minister aware of this? At this rate...

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member for his statement.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the answer is no.

**Mr. Gill:** I have had several meetings with members of this security team and I have also written about this in the newspapers. The Minister must be aware that these security guards are underpaid. As a matter of fact, on a 40 hour...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Gill, we really must ask questions.

**Mr. Gill:** Mr. Chairman, I am asking the question.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hour is going, and we are not getting to the question. Could you please get to the question?

**Mr. Gill:** Mr. Chairman, this has been an ongoing problem with this security service for a very long time in Regions 5 and 6. They are being underpaid by the amount of \$19,200 a month. The Minister must be aware of it. I want to ask the Minister what he is doing to correct this situation. The Government's minimum wage is \$60,000 a month and these security guards are getting \$40,800 a month.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I will repeat, the answer is no. I am unaware, but if a request for an investigation is being made now, I will certainly follow it up.

**Mr. Gill:** I am asking the Minister to launch an investigation into this security firm because these workers are the ones punishing. They are being underpaid and the NIS contributions for these workers are not being paid. Thank you.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly what is the system that is in place for quality control and monitoring of this security service?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I am not in a position to provide a definitive answer at this point in time, but I will undertake to provide this information to the Hon. Member, subsequently.

**Bishop Edghill:** Follow-up: The sum that is being sought is an increase of about 54% above the voted provision. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how this would be allotted, what is to facilitate the increase and what portion is for the new sites and when did those new sites come into existence? There are six new sites.

**Mr. Bulkan:** When the contract would have been entered into, as with the other contracts that have been referred to here earlier, it was subsequent to the preparation and passage of the 2018 Budget. This contract was entered into and took effect on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. The previous contract would have covered 10 locations. For the six new locations, it took effect in 2018. The previous contract paid a rate of \$300 an hour and this one allows for a rate of \$350 an hour. So, there are six new locations, as well as an increased hourly rate that is responsible for the request for the additional funds, Sir.

**Bishop Edghill:** Would the Minister be kind enough to tell us what date did the six new locations *kicked in* – was it January, February, August?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I will have to provide those dates. I have the locations, I do not have the dates when they became operational. These locations are: Woodley Park; Dundee; High Dam- I think High Dam was towards the middle of this year; Strath Campbell; Morrow Point and Experiment.

**Bishop Edghill:** Is the Minister aware that the region has employed staff to monitor this security system in the region. It might be more than one based on the information available at the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Has that been added to the security cost or is that part of the administration cost?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That additional staff will not be included in this provision. That would be, as the Hon. Member is alluding to, an administrative cost.

*Item 11 75-755 Region 5 Health Services – Security Services – \$22,586,592, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 12 76-761 Region 6 – Regional Administration and Finance – Security Services – \$4,914,361**

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly of the security firm that is being engaged in this contract?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The name of the security provider is Integrated Security Services Inc.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, let me thank the Hon. Minister. Could the Hon. Minister indicate when the contract was awarded?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The contract took effect on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017 and it is for one year.

**Mr. Mustapha:** If the contract started on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017, and it is for one year, I am seeing here that the supplementary provision is to provide increased charges. The contract was awarded one year, and now we have increased charges for October to December, in the same contract that was awarded in December, 2017.

**Mr. Bulkan:** As obtained, with the previous locations that have been addressed here earlier, when this contract was awarded, it was subsequent to the passage of the 2018 Budget. The original voted provision was insufficient to meet the total cost of the service for 12 months. This is why there is a shortfall of approximately the sum that is being requested here to cover payments to the end of December, 2018. The contract would have not have been adjusted during the life of the contract. This is a new contract that was entered into, subsequent to the passage of the 2018 Budget.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly of the three buildings and their locations?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The first one is for the residence of the Regional Chairman. I think that is Mr. Permaul Armogan. The second one is for the Regional Democratic Council's (RDC's) compound, Vryman's Erven. I think that the Hon. Member is familiar with that location, not necessarily in that order. Thirdly, the Regional Executive Officer's (REO's) office at Whim on the Corentyne coast.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the cost for each location?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have the break down for those three locations, but the bulk of the guards are at the RDC compound. Twelve from a total of 17 guards are at the RDC building. I will provide this information subsequently.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this National Assembly the hourly rate of the guards?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes Sir, it is \$350.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Is that for the guards of the company – the contract? I want the Minister to state to this National Assembly the hourly rate that the security guards are earning; the payment that the firm makes to the guards.

**Mr. Bulkan:** This is the sum being paid to the company. The Ministry has no individual arrangement with these guards.

**Mr. Mustapha:** As a Government, we have certain responsibilities - there are certain responsibilities. I think that if you are paying a security firm to hire guards, then they must not be working below the minimum wage. Could the Minister advise us in this National Assembly what is the hourly rate of these guards?

**Mr. Bulkan:** An employer-employee relationship is not a matter for this National Assembly.

**Mr. Mustapha:** I am very disappointed with that answer. As a Government, you have certain responsibilities. If this Government is calling itself pro-labour and it does not have responsibility for the guard earnings...

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

*8.40 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Mustapha, let us ask the question, please.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Can the Minister provide this National Assembly, and investigate from the security company, the hourly rate the guards are being paid?

**Mr. Bulkan:** If the guards are dissatisfied with the terms and conditions, there is a procedure; there is the Department of Labour. That is the Ministry that has to address those concerns.

**Mr. Gill:** I have been in several meetings with the guards from this security service...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Gill...

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

**Mr. Gill:** I have also...

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Gill, you are claiming the floor to ask questions. The question of the guards on the true payment has been well ventilated in this Chamber. I am not sure that repeating it will necessarily take us beyond where we are now. So, please, ask the question you wish to ask.

**Mr. Gill:** The Hon. Minister just said that there is a procedure and I am advising him that I went through that procedure with the Minister with responsibility for Labour. The Minister with responsibility for Labour is aware that this security firm has been underpaying the security guards.

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Gill, you are to ask a question.

**Mr. Gill:** I am asking the question now.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am forbearing. Now ask the question.

**Mr. Gill:** Was due diligence done on this security company, before it was given this contract, knowing that it has a history of underpaying its workers?

**Mr. Bulkan:** At the time when this contract was awarded in November of last year, this company was in good standing. The validity of the contract is only for 12 months. Unlike what was obtained with the providers that they replaced. Earlier, I referred that the previous provider enjoyed a four-year contract. This is only for one year – 12 months – and its performance will be reviewed, prior to any extension or renewal of these contracts.

**Mr. Gill:** Is the Hon. Minister aware that there have been several strike actions against this security company throughout Regions 5 and 6?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I have taken note of the statement made by the Hon. Member.

*Item 12 76-761 Region 6 – Regional Administration and Finance – Security Services – \$4,914,361, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 13 76-762 Region 6 – Agriculture – Security Services – \$13,072,959**

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate which security firm was awarded this contract?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There was one tender for the security for all the programmes in the East Berbice Corentyne region. One company was awarded the contract and that is the Integrated Security Services Inc.

**Mr. Mustapha:** May I ask the Minister when was the contract awarded?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Minister indicate to us the 12 locations in the region?

**Mr. Bulkan:** These are: The Whim office, Black Bush Polder Pump Station, Manarabisi Pump Station, Borlam, Seawell, Eversham, and there are some abbreviations here that the Hon. Member might be more familiar with than I am. These being the Lesbeholden (LN), Lesbeholden/Mibikuri (LM), Mibikuri/Johanna (MJ), Johanna/Yakusari(JY) and the Yakusari (YS) regulators and the Joppa Pump. The total of 12 locations and 53 guards.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown for each location?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There is a total of six guards each at Whim, Black Bush Polder and Manarabisi; there are four guards at Borlam, LN, LM, MJ, JY, YS, Eversham and Joppa; and three guards at the Seawell Pump.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Mr. Chairman, this will be my final question. May I ask the Minister to find out for us what is the hourly rate the company is paying the guards?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I will inquire, Sir.

*Item 13 76 -762 Region 6 –Agriculture –Security Services – \$13,072,959, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 14 76-763 Region 6– Public Infrastructure – Security Services – \$8,068,512**

**Bishop Edghill:** The Minister indicated that all of the agencies in Region 6 are benefitting from the services of the same provider. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us, if it is a one-year contract,



why is he asking for provision for December, 2018, when this contract would come to an end in November, 2018?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is expected that the service will be provided in December of 2018. The service does not come to an end. The contract comes to an end at the end of November, but moneys will have to be available to pay for these guards to protect these facilities, whoever would be the provider in December of this year, Sir.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly if the region is in the process of procuring the services of a security provider to take responsibility from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2018 and what is the stage of that procurement process?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The process has started, and it is in progress.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us if this security contract has been advertised. Have bids been opened; is it at the evaluation stage? Where are we now?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Those details will be subsequently provided – the exact stage of the process.

**Bishop Edghill:** Just to say that it is pretty strange that the Minister could tell you about 13 pumps and all the rest of it, but a simple matter like procurement we have to get later.

The total sum for all of the project heads will be an increase of about \$125 million for Region 6. Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly, in light of all the concerns that have been in the public space, had the Department of Labour included, if, at the time of engaging this company for an additional \$125 million of service, there was any discussion about quality control and workers' welfare?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The supplementary provisions that are being sought now are to cover annual payments for a contract that was valid from December of 2017 to the end of November 2018. We are still within the life of the contract.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate if there is a termination clause in the contract that is signed between the region and this company? If there a termination clause, does non-performance of the contract warrants termination?

**Mr. Bulkan:** To the best of my knowledge, I believe that all contracts have provisions for, termination, for failure to meet certain conditions.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the six locations and the breakdown for each location?

**Mr. Bulkan:** These locations are the Guyana House, which is in New Amsterdam, also known as State House, where there are nine guards. There is the Regional Democratic Council sub-office at Benab – four; the district administration at Springlands – six; Tarlogie Compound – six; the Amerindian Hostel in New Amsterdam – six; and the Amerindian Hostel in Springlands – six; a total of 37 guards, Sir.

*Item 14 76 -763 Region 6 – Public Infrastructure – Security Services– \$8,068,512 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

*8.55 p.m.*

**Item 15 76-764 Region 6 – Education Delivery - Security Services - \$70,753,376**

**Mr. Mustapha:** Could the Hon. Minister, indicate to us when this contract was awarded?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, we are still in the same region and as I have said, one company was awarded the contract for all the programmes for the RDC.

**Mr. Mustapha:** In the remarks column, I am seeing 88 locations. Could the Minister indicate those locations and the breakdown of them, the number of guards working there? I also want to ask of the Minister, since he does not know what the hourly rates are for the guards working for the security company. In the same vein, could he investigate if these guards are receiving overtime pay and meal allowances?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Okay, I would like to make a correction to the remarks column. I believe there is a typographical error. I believe there are actually 80 locations and not 88. If the Member is desirous, I could provide the 80 locations at this stage. He might prefer that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, perhaps you may choose another method of communicating rather than reciting it here.

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is okay, Sir. There is a total of 253 guards at 80 locations.

**Mr. Gill:** May I ask the Minister, considering the massive amount of money that was awarded to the Integrated Security Services Inc. to provide security, was any due diligence done on the Directors of this company? If this was not done, why not?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This company was awarded this contract *via* a process of open public tendering. There are several safeguards and criteria in the bid documents. These would have been fulfilled by the company. The bid would have been deemed to be responsive. It is on that basis that they would have been awarded the contract, eventually, Sir.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Is the Hon. Minister aware that some of the guards working in Region 6 have not received their salaries since February of this year?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, I do not believe we will go there. I do not believe that we should abuse the opportunity provided for questioning to ignore what the Speaker has specifically asked you not to do. Let us be clear.

*Item 15 76-764 Region 6 – Education Delivery - Security Services - \$70,753,376, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 16 76-765 Region 6 – Health Services - Security Services - \$27,479,364**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** The remarks column states, "...to cover 19 locations within Region 6..." for health services. I would like to ask the Minister if health facilities in Siparuta, Orealla, Barakara, Angoy's Avenue, Number 64 Village and Crabwood Creek are included in these 19 locations?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Sir, the information that I have suggests that the answer is no for those four locations.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Could the Minister lay over the facilities that are covered with security guards and the amount of guards? In addition to that, could the Hon. Minister say what role, if any, did the Ministry of Communities or the RDC play in the screening of the service providers? Could he, also, identify what was done up to the stage of the signing of the contract? Is any review being done, monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that we are getting quality for moneys that are being paid without the exploitation of the workers?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Public Procurement Process is one that is largely driven by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (*NPTAB*). The Ministry of Communities, of course, does have a part in the process, but, eventually, the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee are submitted to NPTAB. The National Procurement and Tender Administration Board's approval is required prior to the award of any contract.

**Mr. Gill:** Could the Hon. Minister advise whether there is a required dress code for these security guards when they are stationed inside hospitals, for instance, the New Amsterdam Hospital or other Government facilities?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the question. I am not in a position to provide a definitive answer at this point. I think it is a very valid and important consideration. If it is not one of the criterion in the bid documents, it certainly should be placed there. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for this.

**Mr. Gill:** Hon. Minister, I thank you for that. I ask that you look at the photograph that I have just sent to you *via WhatsApp* messenger. It shows a security guard inside the New Amsterdam Hospital. He was very inappropriately dressed.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Was it a person?

**Mr. Gill:** Yes, a person. He works with the same company and he was on duty. The person was on duty at the time when I interviewed him.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, you asked the question, that is...Ms. Teixeira, do you wish the floor?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Minister, I have noticed that in a number of the security services requests, some of them have overtime rates for Saturdays and Sundays and some do not. For example, in this one, Region 6 - Health Services, there are 19 locations and there is no provision for Saturdays and Sundays, nor is there any overtime rate. I am wondering why is it that these educational and health facilities have no security on the weekends, or, they are not being paid for overtime? That would be in breach of the Labour Act. That is one question. I would like clarification as to why in these 19 items you have presented, some have overtime rates for

Saturdays, Sundays and holidays and others only have from Monday to Friday. You may be able to clarify that for me.

The second thing is that, you have referred to NPTAB several times, Sir. My understanding is - NPTAB recommends to Cabinet rates over a certain amount based on the PPP and the Procurement Act. I am assuming that all these that go over \$16 million for the Ministry of Communities have been cleared by Cabinet, otherwise, it would not have been here. Is that correct?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is correct.

**Ms. Teixeira:** In other words, these are Cabinet's decisions, not NPTAB's decisions. These are NPTAB's recommendations and, therefore, Cabinet gives its no-objection or an approval. Which one is it?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is neither of the two.

**Ms. Teixeira:** What does it do?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It notes the award.

**Ms. Teixeira:** It notes. That is interesting because the law states a no-objection. [*Interruption*]

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Minister, I had asked if there were any monitoring and evaluation being done to ensure that we are getting value for money and that workers are not exploited.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Indeed, there is monitoring and evaluation. As for the question of exploitation, it is not from which a determination could be made by the Ministry of Communities. A complaint by an employer would properly be taken to the Department of Labour.

**Ms. Teixeira:** My question has not been answered as to why, under this heading, there are provisions for overtime payments for Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. In several of them there are no such provisions and in others from the 19, there are provisions for these rates. Why is that? These are health facilities that I assume have guards on a 24-hour basis.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The observation is noted. What I can say at this stage is that the facilities are protected on the weekends. There is no question that they are unprotected on the weekends. As to why there is not a rate differential specified here in this remarks column, would have to be interrogated and an answer would be provided subsequently.

*9.10 p.m.*

**Mr. Bharat:** Hon. Minister, a follow-up question to the question that was asked by Dr. Mahadeo on monitoring and evaluation. Could you say whether there are security supervisors employed by Regional Democratic Council (RDC) 6 to monitor these locations and to ensure that the Government is getting its value for money?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, to the best of my knowledge, I do not believe that there are dedicated supervisors being employed by the RDC for this specific purpose. That is not part of the monitoring and evaluating mechanism.

*Item 16 76-765 Region 6 - Health Services – Security Services - \$27,479,364 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 17 79-794 Region 9 – Education Delivery – Security Services - \$5,758,813**

**Mr. Charlie:** Could the Hon. Minister relate to the National Assembly (1) the name of the security company, (2) the number of security guards that are attached to the programme and (3) the 10 locations that are benefitting from the security services?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to the first question is Radar Security Service; for the second question, the answer is 18 security guards are attached to the programme; and for the third question, the locations are the Aishalton Secondary School, Arapaima Nursery and Primary Schools, St. Ignatius Primary and Secondary Schools, the Department of Education, St. Ignatius Nursery, Sand Creek Secondary, Annai Secondary and the Learning Resource Centre at Lethem.

**Mr. Charlie:** Could the Hon. Minister relate to this House when the contract was awarded to this security company?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the contract took effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 and it is for a period of one year. *[Interruption]*

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we should not compete.

*Item 17 79-794 Region 9 – Education Delivery – Security Services - \$ 5,758,813 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 18 79-795 Region 9 – Health Services – Security Services - \$ 1,949,769**

**Mr. Charlie:** To the Hon. Minister: Again, could you state the security company's name, when the was the contract awarded, how many security guards are attached to the health programme and what are the five locations in Region 9?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to question number one is Radar Security Service; number two: the contract was awarded on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017; number three: 51 security guards are attached to the health programme; and number four: the five locations are the Lethem Public Hospital, Sand Creek Health Centre, Annai Health Centre, Karasabai Health Centre and the Aishalton District Hospital.

**Mr. Charlie:** Like my other Colleagues' sentiments, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to investigate the working conditions of the security guards, not under Health Services programme only, but other programmes also. Also, I would like to ask the Department of Labour to be more proactive and investigate the conditions under which our security guards work. Thank you.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I have noted the request.

*Item 18 79-95 Region 9 – Health Services – Security Services - \$1,949,769 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 19 80-801 Region 10 – Regional Administration and Finance – Security Services - \$6,537,416**

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, for Region 10, could you state the name of the company that was awarded the tender, when and for how long is the contract?

The second issue is: when the Ministry tenders for security services, are there standard rates that are used by the Ministry? It is because I have noticed that, for several regions, the rates are the

same and then in other regions, like in this case, it is higher. I understand that sometimes geography can have an influence, but in Region 9 the geography is much more difficult. So, are there standard rates, and if there are, why are there these variations in the case of Region 10 and in one case in Region 3. In one particular item, there is a big difference against all the others. Could you explain that?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The security provider is Kalibur Security. The contract started on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2018 and it is valid for a period of 12 months. The answer to the third question is no, there are not standard rates. The rates are offered by the respective bidders or providers and it is location specific.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am looking at the same company's rate in Region 4 which is different to Region 10, Again, in comparison with other companies in other areas, there are different rates. Certainly, when the Ministries tender for their work, is there not some guideline or is it just picking people *willy-nilly*? Certainly, one has to deal with budgetary constraints or restrictions. And so, why would one be hiring a company that has rates that are so vastly different from most of the other regions? Why would that be the case? Is it that nobody tendered for Region 10 and, therefore, you had to take the one you got?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the process is a competitive bidding one. The rates are not predetermined by the employer or, in this case, the Government of Guyana. The rates are offered by the providers and, generally, the award is done on the basis of competitiveness. I note that the Hon. Member has described the differential as vast. [Ms. Teixeira: I did not say vast.] You said, "vastly different", madam. [Ms. Teixeira: That does not mean vast.] I would question whether the difference among \$371, \$377 and \$381, in this case, constitutes vastly different.

**Ms. Teixeira:** On the issue of standard rates and budgetary allocations, could the Minister say whether, in the case of these security services for all the regions, but I will ask about Region 10, the lowest bids were selected? Was and are there no security companies indigenous to Region 10 that would have been able to tender and compete with these rates?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Each invitation for bid contains criteria and bidders are expected to be compliant with all the criteria in the bid documents to be deemed responsive. Once bidders are responsive to



the conditions or criteria in the bid documents, then the principle of competitiveness applies. And, generally, under public procurement, it is the lowest responsive bidder that is supposed to be awarded the contract.

*9.25 p.m.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** My question was specific. Was the contract awarded to the lowest bidder in this case?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I cannot provide an answer to that at this stage.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, your Permanent Secretary is sitting next to you. That is why he is sitting next to you; it is to advise you.

**Mr. Bulkan:** He is a human. He is not a computer.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, could you provide an answer?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No, Sir. I have already provided an answer. It is public tendering. Awards are generally made to the lowest responsive bidder.

*Item 19 80-801 Region 10 - Regional Administration and Finance – Security Services - \$6,537,416, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 20 80-802 Region 10 – Public Infrastructure - Security Services - \$3,246,945**

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this National Assembly the name of the company that was providing the service at \$342 per hour?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That would be Home Safe Security Services.

**Bishop Edghill:** A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly if this security provider tendered for this contract in Region 10?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have the answer to that question at this point.

**Bishop Edghill:** A follow-up: The legend indicates that the supplementary provision is being sought because of an increase. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House if any security provider tendered for this contract lower than \$381 per hour in Region 10?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have the information that is requested, at this time. I am unable to provide an answer to that at this point.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister commit to providing the National Assembly, he could lay it over, with a list of companies that tendered for this contract and the declared price at the opening of the bids?

**Mr. Bulkan:** What I could say, at this stage, is that the awards are made to companies whose bids are deemed to be responsive to all of the criteria in the bid documents. Thereafter, the general principle is that the contract is awarded to the most competitive bidder or tenderer that is deemed responsive to all conditions in the bid documents.

**Bishop Edghill:** The Minister has spoken very definitively and so I hope that he could speak definitively to this question. Could the Minister assure the National Assembly that this contract went to the lowest responsive bidder?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have this information at this time.

**Bishop Edghill:** You said that it goes to the lowest bidder.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I said that it generally goes to the lowest bidder.

*Item 20 80-802 Region 10 – Public Infrastructure - Security Services - \$3,246,945, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 21 80-803 Region 10 – Education Delivery - Security Services - \$35,601,690, Other - \$15,149,619**

**Ms. Teixeira:** Under this head, the Legend states that the request is to meet the payment of 128 part-time cleaners from 4 to 8 hours. Could the Hon. Minister say what period the request for supplementary provision is for? Is this for the whole year? Is it for three months, as it was the increase in security services? When one divides that, the figure that has been asked for is about

\$118,356 per cleaner, obviously without inclusion of tax. I do not know if this is for the last three months of the year or it is an incremental increase for the entire year. The legend does not provide adequate information. Could you please advise?

*Mr. Chairman left the Chair.*

**Presiding Member [Mr. Adams]:** Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you. Welcome to that Chair, Sir. I had to look twice. Hon. Member, I believe that the remarks are a bit imprecise. It infers or suggests that it is a doubling of the hours, but in actual fact, it is an increase in the rate from \$26 hourly to, in some cases, 37 hours and 49 hours for the 128 sweeper/cleaners. The original provision of \$60 million is inadequate or insufficient to meet the payments to the end of this year and that is why the sum of approximately \$15 million is required to meet the cost of that service for the entire year.

**Bishop Edghill:** A follow-up: Could the Minister clarify the hourly rate as \$26 moving to \$37 and \$49? Is that the hourly rate?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Sorry, that is \$26,000 to \$37,000 and \$49,000. It is not the hourly rate, but the monthly rate.

**Bishop Edghill:** A follow-up: Could the Minister confirm that the increase for sweeper/cleaners was a countrywide improvement?

*Mr. Chairman in the Chair.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is yes.

**Bishop Edghill:** Is there a specific reason why supplementary provision was not sought in all the regions?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Different arrangements would have been made for the payment of those sums for the sweeper/cleaners in the respective regions. What is under consideration here is for certain specific regions. In this instance, it is for the Upper Demerara/Berbice Region.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly what are those specific arrangements that were made in the other regions?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That question does not pertain to the item under consideration here and I do not think an answer is required.

*Item 21 80-803 Region 10 – Education Delivery - Security Services - \$35,601,690, Other - \$15,149,619 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 22 80-804 Region 10 – Health Services - Security Services - \$9,030,532**

*Item 22 80-804 Region 10 – Health Services - Security Services - \$9,030,532 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

9.40 p.m.

## **CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we now turn to capital estimates. We have already dealt with item number 1 and so we would look at item number 2.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, could I ask that we deal with the capital items for the regions and the Ministry? It would be items 10, 11, 14 and 15, Sir

**Mr. Chairman:** You are saying that items 10, 11, 14 and 15 are with respect to regions.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Ministry and the regions, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. We are now dealing with item 10 in the list of capital estimates.

**Item 10 42-421 - Ministry of Communities – Sustainable Communities Management – Local Government Commission - \$10,091,600**

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, first of all, could you say why is it that for the Local Government Commission you are requesting sums under the Ministry of Communities?

**Mr. Bulkan:** At the submission, presentation and approval of the 2018 Budget, the Commission was catered for under the Ministry of Communities.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, therefore, would you agree that the Local Government Commission is supposed to fall under constitutional agencies?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is correct, but the Commission was not operationalised until late last year and, hence, the provision was made under the Ministry of Communities. I think it is expected that there might probably be a change for the 2019 Budget.

**Mr. Jordan:** No.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I take that back, sir.

**Mr. Croal:** So, let me get the conclusion. You took that back; what is your final statement?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There has to be a change in the listing of the constitutional agencies under the law before the provisions could be made to it.

**Mr. Croal:** With that answer, Hon. Minister, could you say when would this be done, when would the amendment be coming?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have an answer to that question at this point in time.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, the additional staff that are to be recruited, could you say what is the category of staff being recruited?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It would be all categories of staff, including Human Resource (HR), Administration and Finance. At the presentation of the budget, at that stage last year, there were zero staff at the Commission.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Minister, as you referred to the 2018 Budget, you had been holding, in December, 2017, money for the Local Government Commission, which had been budgeted in 2017, which was not handed over because the Commission was formed late in 2017. Could you say if that money has been handed over and why that was not used to purchase the equipment, furniture, *et cetera*, when the Commission was brought into effect? Why have you come for a supplementary when there was \$50 million in the budget in 2017 for the Local Government Commission, which you admitted in the House was kept in a bank account, I believe?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not think the figure that is being advanced, \$50 million, is correct. It was a much lower figure than that and this could be verified, but whatever was allocated, was handed over to

the Local Government Commission. It was for recurrent expenses and not for capital expenses, which is what this provision is for.

*Item 10 42-421- Ministry of Communities – Sustainable Communities Management – Local Government Commission \$10,091,600*

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Ali, you are on your feet.

**Mr. Ali:** Are you not yet ready?

**Mr. Chairman:** You wish to ...

**Mr. Ali:** I wish to ask a question.

**Mr. Chairman:** I know you know how to do that, so I would not tell you how you should do it.

**Item 11 42-422 Ministry of Communities – Sustainable Communities Development – Hinterland Water Supply - \$52,000,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you wish to have the floor now, Mr. Ali?

**Mr. Ali:** Hon. Minister, in the description, it states that the work would commence in 2018. Has the work started? That is the first question. And, if it has, when was the contract awarded and what is the total sum of the contract?

**Mr Bulkan:** I believe, in my probably limited comprehension, that the words “will commence” suggest that it is an activity in the future. So, of course, it is dependent and contingent on the availability of the funding, which is what is being requested here, by this Committee in this honourable House. So, this activity would not have been catered for at the time of the 2018 Budget.

We heard earlier this afternoon from the Hon. Minister of State, the Lt. Col (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon, that eight wells are being dug by the Brazilian army under the Guyana/Brazil Cooperation. Six of those wells have been completed. The other two, we have learnt, would be largely completed by the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) under the supervision of the technicians from the Brazilian army. These wells, of course, bring the water to the surface, as the Hon. Member is well aware. Thereafter, it has to be distributed to various points and to residents in the communities. This provision is to cater for that distribution as well as storage. So, as it states in the legend and in the remarks, it is for the construction of trestles at each of those locations, which are named, including

the installation as well as the distribution network within those villages in the South Rupununi, namely Aishalton, Karaudarnau, Achiwuib, Awaruwaunau, Bashaidrun, Maruranau, Shea, and Churidenau.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, just like the Hon. Minister, I comprehend well what it written here. Now, what is written here is ‘will commence’. So, the project has not started; you have cleared that up.

My question, therefore, is: since this is a capital investment of \$52 million that, obviously, you cannot spend by the end of the year and you have the national budget coming within a month’s time, why is it that you are seeking a supplementary provision here and this cannot be accommodated in the budget that is coming one month from now? If this is yet to commence, it means that you still have to go through the process of spending, which includes tendering and so on, which would take you beyond the budget period. It is a capital programme and so you have to follow the procedure. My question is: Why is it that this expenditure could not have come under the budget that would be presented less than a month from now rather than being here a supplementary, a huge capital investment?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It was one of the considerations which was open to the Government - whether to wait for 2019 to commence the construction of the storage tanks and the distribution network in these communities. The determination has been made that we would not wait on the 2019 Budget, but, rather, subject to the approval sums being requested here, those works could commence, so that the residents in those eight villages that have been named would be able to be assured of a better supply and water security within their communities for their welfare and benefit.

*9.55 p.m.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Prime Minister, we will take a request for a continuation.

**First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]:** Mr. Speaker, I move that this House continues to meet until the completion of the Supplementary Provisions.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Standing Orders suspended.*

*In Committee of Supply*

**Mr. Ali:** At the time of the mid-year review from the Ministry of Finance, the expenditure on this head was lagging way behind or, as a matter of fact, it was dragging behind due to poor performance. Could the Hon. Minister say to us what percentage of the allocation has been expended today?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That precise figure can be submitted subsequently. What I can assure the Hon. Member is that there are inadequate finances to be able to start the activities in these eight villages to provide for the storage and the distribution. The sum of \$52 million is not the complete sum that will be required to complete.

There would not be any sums available from the \$150 million that is voted for in 2018 to allow for it to be used for this activity. The actual sum that is being expended to date, that information can be provided subsequently.

**Mr. Ali:** These will not be new activities. These are activities within the framework of the project. Let me rephrase the question. Has the Ministry expended the total allocation of \$150 million to date?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is the answer that I just gave, that I am not in a position, at this point, to say exactly how much of this \$150 million has been spent. The projections are that all of the \$150 million will be spent before the end of the year.

**Mr. Ali:** Minister, I have some difficulties with the answer. However, I am going to ask the Hon. Minister to provide the Assembly with an update in relation to the Hinterland Water Supply, under project 2802100, in relation to the budgetary allocation, and what has been expended to date, because the mid-term report from the Minister of Finance showed sluggish performance under this head. The Minister of Finance spoke about it publicly, too. I would like this to be presented to the Assembly.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The request has been noted and the information will be provided.

*Item 11 42-422 Ministry of Communities – Sustainable Communities Development - \$52,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*



**Item 14 77-774 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni – Health Services - \$2,000,700**

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, could you say if the tomography machine that is proposed here, that you are going to spend \$2,000,700 installing, whether this is a brand new computerised tomography (CT) scan or if it is part of a gift of two CT scans that are old and are actually outdated. One has gone to New Amsterdam, that is not working, and one you are now designating to the Bartica Hospital. Could you say if this is a brand new piece of equipment, because to spend \$2 million on putting in an out of date machine that will not work is a waste of taxpayers' money? Do you not think?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that it is a brand new tomography machine.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could the Minister say under what budgetary head was provision made for purchasing a new tomography machine in the Ministry of Communities for 2018?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It was a donation by the Vanderbilt University.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Is this the same donation that was given to the New Amsterdam Hospital?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes. It is under the same programme.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Then, Sir, I would advise you to check if these are old machines. The New Amsterdam Hospital has spent money in trying to install that machine there and it has not worked; it has to be reprogrammed. Money was spent. Therefore I am trying to save you money by not spending money on a machine that will not work. It may be better to hold your money, I propose, and to buy a new machine for 2019, in the budget, yours' or Minister Lawrence's, so that the people of Bartica get a functioning machine and not one that is going to be a dud.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The provision being sought is for a transformer to be able to supply electricity of a certain quality to the machine. This is not for the machine itself.

**Ms. Teixeira:** In other words, the Minister is uninterested in whether the machine works or not. It is just that you are spending money on a transformer to link to a machine that will not work, and that is okay with \$2 million of the workers.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I would not be here if I had that frame of mind.

*Item 14 77-774 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni – Health Services - \$2,000,700 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 15 78-783 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni – Education Delivery - \$14,400,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** In 2016, I can recall that an independent consultant services were required to do a total technical review of the status of the Kato Secondary School, to the tune of about \$29 million to \$30 million for the service. My question is: Was the storm water drains and the reservoir part of the technical review report or is this a new addition?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to the question is no, that these activities were not part of that consultancy. Those had to do with the building and all of the defects that had become evident and had manifested themselves in relation to both the design and the structural integrity of the buildings themselves, and not, as the case here, the waste water and fresh water supply to the complex.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** I notice that the provision being sought here is \$14,400,000 and it is being sought in the month of October, the last day in October. May I ask the Minister whether this money has been spent already or what portion of this money? If not all of the money, could it be spent from now to the end of the year, in relation to the construction of these two structures?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to the first part of the question is no. None of the expenditures have been undertaken. There are no funds available to subject to the approval of this request. The projections are that the works will be completed, at least substantially, by the end of the year.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** I would wish to be assured that cheques will not be cut and placed in a cabinet with respect to this \$14,400,000. The Minister had a very revealing response to my first question, and I wanted to ask, in the review of the independent consultant, who was expected to provide the structural, the foundation and all of the defects of the Kato Secondary School, whether the issue with the water trestle and the sewage that are now plaguing that school in such an early stage of its opening was a part of the technical review report and why it was not catered for.

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is the same question that is being repeated. I have already provided an answer that these activities were not a part of the original review and consultancy. These problems are now evident that these design features were not catered for at the time when this complex was originally conceived and conceptualised.

*10.10 p.m.*

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** The issue with the water trestle and the sewage system, I am sure that since you are coming to the Assembly to request \$14 million, you should probably have also included those two defects that are now plaguing that secondary school.

**Mr. Ali:** Hon. Minister, has this project been advertised as yet?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is no.

**Mr. Ali:** When do you propose to advertise this project?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is subject to the approval and the provision of funds, Sir.

**Mr. Ali:** What period do you intend to advertise this project?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Given that this facility has only just recently been put into use and the fact that it is an emergency requirement, I think there is provision that you can have restricted tendering or even sole sourcing as dictated by the exigencies of the circumstances.

**Mr. Ali:** Hon. Minister, are you saying that you are pursuing the path of sole sourcing or selective tendering for this project?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The path that we are pursuing is one that will take the welfare of the children in mind that is to provide them with safe, clean and pure water.

**Mr. Ali:** That is a path that we would all support, but the path of accountability and transparency is also very important.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Ali.

**Mr. Ali:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are going to ask questions.

**Mr. Ali:** I am going to ask a question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well you will do that now please.

**Mr. Ali:** I am going to ask the question now, Sir. Could the Hon. Minister say to this Assembly, and say precisely, what system of procurement will be utilised to complete this project within a time frame? We need to know that.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I have just provided several options and it remains, as I have said, under the Procurement Act.

**Mr. Ali:** The Hon. Minister has not precisely said what system of procurement will be utilised for this project. The word option is not a precise answer. I asked the first question, he said it will be advertised. I asked how long it would be advertised. His answer was no, it would not be advertised but sole sourced or they would go for selective tendering. The answer is changing based on how the Minister feels and that cannot happen here. It cannot. The question remains: What is the precise procurement process that this Ministry is going to utilise for this project?

**Mr. Bulkan:** As I have said, given the emergency situation, as against the fact that this facility has just been put into use and that the problems with the lack of pure water supply and the need to address that situation under the Procurement Act, it is possible that the activity can be provided for under restrictive tendering or sole sourcing. Those are some of the options that will be considered.

*Item 15 78-783 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni – Education Delivery - \$14,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** We must now turn back to the start of capital estimates which is SECTION ‘B’ as shown on your form. We will proceed seriatim until we have come to the end.

**Item 2 03-031 Ministry of Finance – Policy and Administration - \$490,296,951 and \$47,512,180**

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say what is the total revenue Guyana earned under the Low Carbon Development Strategy initiative?

**Mr. Jordan:** I do not think I have that figure offhand. I am told US\$190 million so far.

**Mr. Ali:** Hon. Minister, I must laud the Low Carbon Development Strategy which has earned Guyana tremendously and I must compliment you for pursuing, with diligence, the components of

this strategy that will continue to benefit Guyana. Could the Hon. Minister say whether proceeds earned from this strategy is now helping with the development and implementation of the Green State economy?

**Mr. Jordan:** I think \$1.5 million has been allocated for the development of the Green State Development Strategy but if US\$190 million is coming into the economy over time, I mean, no one can doubt that it would help the economy. One hundred and ninety million united states dollars is quite a bit of money. That would be my answer, Sir.

**Mr. Ali:** Hon. Minister, how much revenue do you project the Green State Development Strategy would earn Guyana in the medium term?

**Mr. Jordan:** I think the supplementary being sought is specific in respect of the Low Carbon Development Programme.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, in the front bench who wish to carry on a dialogue then the Speaker might need to reconsider whether he should sit here.

*Item 2 03-031 Ministry of Finance – Policy and Administration - \$490,296,951 and \$47,512,180 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 4 25-252 Ministry of Business – Business Development, Support and Promotion – \$192,948,977**

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say what was the original sum of this contract when it was advertised and what percentage of the contract has been disbursed to date?

**Minister of Business [Mr. Gaskin]:** It is not one contract. The sum requested is for several different infrastructural works, I think, incorporated in about four or five contracts. I can give you a breakdown of how that sum is to be expended if you wish but your question is misplaced. It is not one contract, so you can rephrase the questions.

*10.25 p.m.*

**Mr. Ali:** How many contracts are included here? What is the sum of each contract? When did each contract commence? What is the amount disbursed on each contract to date?

**Mr. Gaskin:** Let me, first of all, list the works that make up the sum requested. It is the infrastructure works at the Belvedere business incubator in Berbice which is part of the Belvedere Industrial Estate. That is for completion for those works. The sum requested is \$28,109,888, that is part of a contract that totals \$117.4 million and that contract was awarded in November, 2017.

**Mr. Ali:** What was the duration of that contract?

**Mr. Gaskin:** It was a multi-year contract. It will conclude at the end of October, which is now. The other one was a consultancy for that Belvedere business incubator. We are requesting in this supplementary the sum of \$926,098 that is part of a total contract for the sum of \$11.5 million which was awarded in June of 2017. The sum also includes infrastructure works on the Lethem incubator, which is a business incubator on the Lethem Industrial Estates, and the amount requested in this supplementary is \$32,462,125. The total contract sum for that business incubator is \$271.3 million and that contract was awarded in December of 2017. There is another \$50,934,084 that is for the general infrastructure works at Lethem Industrial Estate. There were two contracts awarded, they are split into Lots 1 and 2. Lot 1, the total contract sum for that was \$360.9 million and that contract was awarded in December of 2016. The Lot 2, part of the infrastructure works for the same estate, we are requesting in this supplementary \$30,402,454 and the total contract for that lot was \$348.4 million that was awarded in December of 2016.

There is an addition \$1,931,803 and that is for the consultancy, the design and supervised consultancy for the Lethem business incubator and the total contact sum for that amount was \$80.1 million. That included the consultancy for the entire infrastructure works for the estate. The incubator consultancy was an extension of the overall consultancy. In addition to that amount, a further \$13,192,667 is being requested here for consultancy for the additional works that will take place on the estate. It is part of the same contract that I just mentioned. That contact was awarded in November of 2015.

The final amount requested that will make up the total of the supplementary that we are asking for is \$34,989,859, that is for an access road to the business incubator. The total amount on that contract is \$139,959,430. It is an extension of a contract that was awarded in 2016. I hope that answers your question.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister did not say to us the duration of the contract, except in the case of Belvedere, which he said will be completed by October, 2018 – that is today. My question is: Has this project been completed?

Secondly, would you agree with me that the contractors in most of these contracts especially the Lethem infrastructure work and the general in infrastructure contract would have exceeded the time allocated for these projects in the contract? If they have exceeded that time, did the Ministry charge liquidated damages as it is required in the contract?

**Mr. Gaskin:** The contract for Belvedere, which was supposed to finish today, has actually been completed. The other contracts, an extension was sought and bought for those contracts for the infrastructure works at the Lethem Industrial Estate. The consultancies, those are dependent on the completion of the works. The access road to the Lethem business incubator, that is an extension to the Lot 2 infrastructure works to the estate.

**Mr. Ali:** Two observations. One is that the extension has been granted for more than one contract, those extensions are costing us not only the contractor, but also the consultancy would also increase, because the supervision time would be longer. Could the Hon. Minister say what additional resources these extensions have cost us in terms of extended consultancy requirement also extension of the work?

Secondly, in a number of instances here, the Minister is pointing to additional works in excess of \$30 million, a road in excess of \$30 million. How could we extend the contract of the contractor with new works to the value of more than \$30 million? Would it be better for us to go back to competitive process, a free, process, an open process? Does the Procurement Act allow you to extend these contracts to include new project to the value of \$30 and \$40 million?

**Mr. Gaskin:** The two contracts, Lot 1 and Lot 2, for the infrastructure works at the Lethem Industrial Estates, have not exceeded their contract sums for the works that they were set out to do. The scope of works of one of the contracts was extended to include some additional roads leading directly to the incubator which was not part of the original plan for the estate. The extension - I hope the Hon. Member is listening to my answer because I do not want to have to repeat it - to the Lot 2 of the contract sum made use of some savings which resulted from... There were some

savings on the original works to Lot 2 which were utilised for the new roads that the contract was extended to cover.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Minister confirm that the \$350 million that was appropriated has already been spent?

**Mr. Gaskin:** As of the end of September, an amount of \$298,079,000 was spent. Which is why we have requested a supplementary because we know that we would require more before the end of the year. As of today, \$340 million of the \$350 million has been spent.

**Bishop Edghill:** The Minister has just indicated, \$340 million out of the \$350 million would have been spent. This project is to the value of \$1,278,200,000. Seven hundred and two million was spent previously to 2018, \$340 million spent in 2018 and \$192 million now being sought. Could the Minister indicate the percentage of work that has been completed or is expected to be completed by the end of 2018?

**Mr. Gaskin:** I cannot give you a precise percentage, but I could tell you in all the work that has to be done, the infrastructure works at the Belvedere business incubator has been completed. The consultancy for the Belvedere business incubator will be completed by the end of this year. The infrastructure works at the Lethem business incubator will still have some outstanding works to do next year which does not take it beyond its original deadline. The infrastructures, both at the Lethem Industrial Estate, both Lot 1 and Lot 2, have been completed. The only thing that has not been completed is the extension to the scope of those works to include the new roads and those will be completed by May of next year. The consultancy for the Lethem business incubator will continue until the works are complete, which I believe is in May of next year.

*10.40 p.m.*

**Bishop Edghill:** Based on your project and the scope, could you tell us what is the estimated sum for the completion of this project?

**Mr. Gaskin:** Can I ask the Hon. Member to specify the project because we are dealing with multiple projects.



**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, your project profile, Industrial Development, which comprises of different locations, is a project for \$ 1,278,200,000. That is the money that have been allocated in your project profile. Prior to 2018, you spent \$702 million. You have just reported to the House that, so far for this year, you have spent \$340 million and you are seeking an additional \$192 million. I would like to get a forecast from you, what would be the required sums to complete this project profile that is being presented to the National Assembly?

**Mr. Gaskin:** Hon. Member, do you want a lump-sum, or do you want the individual lump-sum? I am told that the sum is \$492 million, which will be spent next year. That is what we have requested for next year.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, is the Hon. Minister indicating to this House that this project will have a cost overrun by almost \$450 million. This is because when you get this supplementary of \$192 million, there will only be \$34 million remaining, based on this project profile. Your budgetary request is for another \$492 million for next year, which means you would be overrunning your project by \$450 million. Could you explain and justify the overrun of \$450 million?

**Mr. Gaskin:** It would help if the Hon. Member would share with me the copy of the estimates that he is reading from. This is because I do not have that before me. I am not sure whether that includes the business incubators. I know for sure that it does not include the access roads to the business incubators. So, I would have to see the list of works that are under that particular project.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, just a reminder. The moneys are being sought under project code 4503300. In your profile, that is explaining everything at number 90 in the budget book.

**Mr. Gaskin:** I do not have that one with me.

**Bishop Edghill:** Your Permanent Secretary (PS) should, at least, have these forecasting. I can lend you a copy. This is the Parliament Office's copy which I had requested.

**Mr. Gaskin:** This does not include any works to the access roads which we spoke about. I think that is valued at \$139,959,430. What we are seeing here is a total project cost of \$1,278,200,000, of which \$702,109,000 would have been spent prior to 2018. We have estimated that we will be spending in 2018, the \$350 million that we had requested, plus an additional \$192,948,977 that we

are requesting now. What we are speaking of, with respect to the works that have to be done next year, are not works that are included in this particular project profile here. These are new activities. We spoke about the new access roads, plus there is landscaping to be done, there are some electrical works. There are a number of new activities that we have requested funding for. That funding has not yet been approved or even appropriated, so to speak about that is a little premature.

The only areas that we have specifically sought money from this House on is the \$34,989,859 for the new access roads. That is part of a total estimate of \$139,959,430 for those access roads. The other sums that we are anticipating spending in 2019 are not contracted sums. These are moneys that we have requested for 2019 for new activities that were not included in the original project profile.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, having heard all of your very lengthy descriptions, I would like to ask you. Today is 31<sup>st</sup>, October and it will soon be 1<sup>st</sup> November. On 26<sup>th</sup> November, the Budget will be read. Would it not have been more prudent to have held back your request for \$192,948,977 on the supplementary provision and included it in your 2019 Budget, assuming, as you have said, the money has not been spent? This is not money you have spent already, this is money that you are asking for. Particularly as you will have two months to execute. This is because, even if this is approved tonight, this is supplementary provision, the President still has to sign off on the Bill, it still has to go to the Ministry of Finance to be released. These moneys may not be released to you until after 12<sup>th</sup> November, leaving you with less than six weeks to spend \$192 million. I am just saying, while I am listening to you giving all of your details and all the works to be done, why was this not kept for the 2019 Budget? You cannot spend \$192 million in five to six weeks. I am assuming that you have not gone to the Tender Board as yet, and I am to assume that you will be going to the Tender Board? Would you not? You cannot spend \$192 million in such a short time. Do you really believe that you can?

**Mr. Gaskin:** We would not have requested the money if we did not think that we could have spent the money. Earlier, I was asked by the Hon. Member Ali about the specific contract sums, the duration and all the information on those contracts, which I provided. Two of the contracts which were awarded at the end of 2016 were for approximately \$350 million each. Those work are

ongoing and have actually been completed. There are outstanding amounts of \$81 million on those two contracts, so that needs to be paid. The works have been completed.

Additionally, infrastructural works at the Lethem incubator, that is an ongoing contract. The sum of \$32, 462,125 will be due to be paid before the end of this year, based on the ongoing infrastructural works. The infrastructure works in the Belvedere incubator, which I said had been completed, as of today, \$28,109,888 is due on that. The consultancy fees for the Belvedere incubator is \$926,098 which will be due for that also. All of these amounts will be spent before the end of the year, that is why we are coming to this House for a supplementary provision. Thank you.

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Member, Mr. Gaskin, the project sounds very interesting. I want to ask you a question. Will \$450 million be your final request as per your profile? I want you to tell this National Assembly, are all the roads that you have completed in perfect shape? No erosion from the last floods and no further supplementary estimates would be coming to this National Assembly to repair roads? Thank you.

**Mr. Gaskin:** I have not come to this National Assembly for a supplementary provision to repair roads. We have come for a supplementary provision for additional roads. I suspect that we will come back for a further supplementary provision or for further budgetary appropriations to do other things for other activities in the Industrial Estate. There is no perimeter fence for the entire estate. It is a very large area, the one in Lethem. We have not sought to spend money on that yet. At some point, we may very well do so. I cannot stand here and say to this House that we would not come back to the House for further funds for the Lethem Industrial Estate.

**Mr. Damon:** I have a follow up question. I am saying that the work that you have completed, the roads that you have already built...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Damon...

**Mr. Damon:** The roads that your Ministry has already built - we had a terrible flood up there. Was there any erosion where the roads are concerned that your Ministry has built; are you prepared to come back for more moneys to repair those roads that your Ministry has already built? That is what I am asking you.

10.55 p.m.

**Mr. Gaskin:** I was there two week ago, I visited the estate and I spoke with the consultant engineer. I specifically spoke to him about the flood. He said that the estate was not flooded; the roads were not flooded; there was no undermining of those roads. So, as far as I am concerned, I see no danger of a flood. There was no erosion. There is nothing that leads me to believe that I need to come to this House for moneys in the event of a flood. But, I cannot predict the weather and I do not know what will happen. I am sure that there can be some weather-related incident that may cause some destruction to the estate – I cannot predict it – but, if that happens, yes, I will come back to this House for some money.

*Item 4 25 -252 Ministry of Business – Business Development, Support and Promotion –Industrial Development – \$192,948,977, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 5 26-261 Ministry of Natural Resources – Policy Development and Administration – Forest Carbon Partnership Project – \$133,000,000**

*Item 5 26-261 Ministry of Natural Resources – Policy Development and Administration – Forest Carbon Partnership Project – \$133,000,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 6 32-321 Ministry of Public Infrastructure – Policy Development and Administration – \$20,000,000 and \$54,787,589**

### **Government Buildings**

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister point, specifically, to which building we are talking about?

**Mr. Patterson:** Before I start, just let me thank my staff for being here at this late hour - no overtime. Thank you for the dedication. Yes, Hon. Member, we are speaking about a Document Centre in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. I think that it is in the *Legend*, but just for clarification.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell the House what is the contract sum for the building of this Document Centre?

**Mr. Patterson:** It is \$99,925,579.

**Bishop Edghill:** Under this project code, there is \$111,671,000 available to the Minister. Could the Minister indicate how much of this has already been spent and why is he seeking an additional \$20 million?

**Mr. Patterson:** Just for clarity, the \$111,671,000 is not only for the Document Centre. It is for other Government buildings. We are dealing with a supplementary provision for the Document Centre only.

**Bishop Edghill:** Is the Minister confirming to the House that the entire \$111,671,000 is for the Document Centre? If the contract is for \$99...

**Mr. Patterson:** Just for clarity, I said that it was not only for the Document Centre.

**Bishop Edghill:** Okay. Could the Minister indicate whether, when the contract was signed, the roof of this Document Centre was designed to hold the solar systems that he is now trying to mount?

**Mr. Patterson:** The original design did not cater for provisions to support the solar panels. That is why the supplementary provision is here.

**Bishop Edghill:** Is the Minister indicating to the House that a building was built for \$99,250,000 and that, when that building was completed, it was decided to have that building powered by solar and now \$20 million is being requested to redo the roof so that solar panels could be accommodated? Could you confirm that to the House?

**Mr. Patterson:** The roof was not built and then changed as you are claiming, Sir.

**Bishop Edghill:** I cannot hear you.

**Mr. Patterson:** The roof was never built and changed as you are inferring. There is a change now to accommodate the solar panels. This is what we are coming here for, our supplementary provision to cover.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Minister tell this National Assembly, what is the stage of the works on this building? This is a capital consideration that we are talking about and not repair and maintenance; this is a capital item. Does the building currently have a roof?

**Mr. Patterson:** The project is 70% completed. The roof is not completed. We are coming here for a supplementary provision, as you can see, to accommodate the redesign and to have it completed. It is anticipated, if approved, to be completed by December, 2018.

**Bishop Edghill:** Would the Minister agree that, with the request being made, the contract sum is going to be moving from \$99,250,000 to in excess of \$119 million? He is adjusting the contract sum.

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes. That is correct, if approved.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly the justification for adjusting a contract sum and what was the process used to arrive at that decision?

**Mr. Patterson:** We are in the process of going, and, obviously, once approved, we will finalise the process with NPTAB to get the change and the addition approved. We are in the process of it and when the Natural Resources Fund comes in, we would be graciously granted it by this Assembly.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate the dimensions of this building that this roof would cause a \$20 million adjustment to facilitate solar panels?

**Mr. Patterson:** The prints of the building is 40 feet x 70 feet. I just want to highlight that it is the 40feet x 70feet - that answers the question. I just want to highlight to the Hon. Gentleman that the request is not only for the roof, it is also to make some changes, as you can see in the *Legend*, to the internal walls.

Before he asks, we are modifying the internal walls to use lighter construction material to allow more natural lighting, in keeping with the energy efficiency and our new 'Green State' construction methods. Thank you.

**Bishop Edghill:** The Minister is explaining to this House that he came to the National Assembly for money to build a Document Centre. We have approved \$111 million. He entered into a contract

for \$99,250,000. The work is 70% completed. And, while this building is being built, we have now had a change of mind about how we would like to have the roof and the walls. As a result of that change of mind, we are asked to appropriate another \$20 million to facilitate this. Could the Minister give justification for this? That is what I am asking.

**Mr. Patterson:** First thing, we have not approved the \$111 million, as yet. The National Assembly only approved...

**Bishop Edghill:** What have we only approved?

**Mr. Patterson:** Only \$99 million has been approved so far. We have not approved the \$111 million as you are saying. If I get approval tonight, it will go to \$111 million.

**Bishop Edghill:** No, Sir. Please read your document. [*Interruption*]

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

*11.10 p.m.*

**Mr. Patterson:** I am talking about the cost for the Document Centre. The \$111,671,000 here is for several other buildings. The Document Centre is \$99 million. When we did an analysis, after it was decided and agreed upon for energy efficiency and staying with our Green State Development Strategy (GSDS) construction that we should incorporate solar panels, that we would incorporate the use of more natural light, which would be a costing use of the building, which, in the long run, would be more cost efficient. That is why we are coming here now, Sir. I do think that it is value for money.

**Bishop Edghill:** The Ministry of Public Infrastructure is a premier Ministry, and I am sure other Government Ministries may want to follow in the 'Green Initiative' of putting in solar panels and the rest of it. Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly if a cost analysis was done and what would be the savings over a period by investing \$20 million more to remodel a roof? What would have been the normal charges, if you had built a normal roof? What would be the savings? This is because the capital cost for the solar panels and batteries are not here in this \$20 million. This is the roof. If every Government building must accommodate solar panels and this is 40 feet by 70 feet, which is the size of a regular house, what would it cost the Government of Guyana to

remodel roofs to accommodate solar panels? That is the fundamental issue here tonight - to facilitate this 'Green Initiative'. What is this cost analysis and savings that would come to the Government by this outlay?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, it is anticipated or calculated that when you reduce your energy cost to the grid, operational cost by 30% per annum, with the installation of solar panels, the more solar panels there are, the lesser the demand it is on the grid. More operational cost would be reduced. I would give the Hon. Gentleman, the economic benefits to include from installing these 10-kilovolt ampere (kVA), solar panels. The savings would be 492,000 kilowatts per year. You are avoiding 2995 kilograms (Kg) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. The payback period for a photovoltaics (PV) system of this type is between one to two years. Sir, obviously, it is a very beneficial project.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Minister for his statement. Hon. Bishop Edghill, before I give you the floor, I must say to you that what we are doing is asking questions. I did not interrupt you a moment ago, you made a speech. There is nothing wrong with it if it is in a question, but there is a lot wrong with it if it is a speech. Please let us try to stay in line with what we are doing here. Let us put our questions and get our answers and leave the rest for another place. You have the floor, Sir.

**Bishop Edghill:** Yes, Sir. The cost savings per year with this remodified roof, without the capital cost of the solar panel, the Minister just indicated to us that it is \$492,000 per year. That means we must have the solar panels for 40 years. If it is \$500,000 per year, it would be 40 years, since we are talking about \$20 million. Could you tell me about the life of the PV system that will be placed on this roof?

**Mr. Patterson:** I would say again that the \$20 million is not entirely for the roof. It is for the other stuff as I did mention. Secondly, who am I to question the mathematical *genius-ness* of the Hon. Member? I do not know where he got the 40 years payback period. I have provided the information – the numbers - that we have. If the Hon. Member is questioning the payback period or the validity of the solar panels, with which the world is going. The world is going and putting solar panels. If the Hon. Member feels that the numbers that they have provided with are found to be incorrect, I



do not think that this is the avenue he should explore to get his point over on this supplementary provision.

**Bishop Edghill:** With the addition \$20 million that is being sought for a building that is 40 feet by 70 feet, we would be spending about \$42,000 per square foot. The average cost of a high-end building in Guyana, is about \$13,000 per square foot. Could the Minister, justify this expenditure and say if this is an experiment on the 'Green Initiative'?

**Mr. Patterson:** The Hon. Member erroneously assumed that it is a bungalow or a single flat building which we are building. He obviously did his mathematics based on 40 feet by 70 feet single-storey building. I am pleased to inform you, Sir, that it is a three-storey building. Therefore, you have to further sub-divide your numbers. It is actually 8400 square feet. If you do the mathematics, you would have a different computation, Sir.

### **Electrification programme**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, you will find that, immediately, below, without a number, there is Chart of Account 2606500, Electrification Programme, the voted provision \$200,000,000 and supplementary provision now sought, is specific \$54,787,589.

*Item 6 32-321 Ministry of Public Infrastructure - Policy Development and Administration - \$20,000,000 and \$ 54,787,589, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7 32-322 Ministry of Public Infrastructure - Public Works - \$42,174,174; \$408,239,131; \$60,000,000; \$44,485,503; \$86,750,000; \$239,488,397; \$570,000,000, \$10,387,600; and \$200,000,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, on the following page, you will find no new numbers with regards to agency codes or the agency itself. Those I am told relate to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. It is a continuation of the information provided on the previous page.

### **Road Improvement and Rehabilitation Programme**

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, if I would bring to your attention that there was no voted provision on this line item for 2018. That is also confirmed in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures 2018. The anticipation is that this money would have been expended by the end of 2017. Could

the Hon. Minister indicate why there was sloth in the implementation of this project, and why was it not completed by December, 2017?

**Mr. Patterson:** I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that there was no slothfulness, whatsoever, in this. He is absolutely correct, there was no provisions in the 2018 Budget. When the overpasses were completed, which they were in 2017, there was savings. There was nothing allocated, but there were savings in the loan of the amounts shown here. The Ministry of Finance and the lender, the International Development Bank (IDB), said that we could expend the loan on additional items and that was what was done. This was nothing slothful. It is an enhancement of expenditure of moneys not previously programmed.

**Bishop Edghill:** I would like to draw the Minister's attention to the *Legend*. Could he identify the new activities that would be undertaken that were not envisaged in the original programme for the loan?

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes, Mr. Chairman and Hon. Member, I would willingly do that. There was the relocation of the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) utilities, a supply of traffic signals and accessories - traffic control products and renewable energy resources. You would be pleased to know that there are solar panels on the five pedestrian overpasses.

*11.25 p.m.*

There are also surveying equipment, computer hardware and software and then a final evaluation report on the four-lane expansion East Bank Demerara Highway by a consultant. Those were the additional items which we included under the balance of the loan.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister confirm that he told the National Assembly, when he came for supplementary provisions for the overpasses, that there was an agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), there was an extension to facilitate this expenditure and all of it would have been expended by the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017?

**Mr. Patterson:** I can say that, at the end of 2017, I cannot recall [*inaudible*]. But, at the end of 2017, we were not completed. As you know, the elevators were not installed by the end of 2017. They are now installed, and, the installation of the elevators has brought the original loan, as we had envisaged it, to a completion. However, as I said, there was a balance of \$2,408,000 from

which we did the six items that I highlighted to the Hon. Gentleman just now. This is the excess on the loan which we reprogrammed.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this National Assembly what it cost us to keep this \$2 million opened to be expended up until now? Since it was not expended by the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017, what did it cost us to keep this \$2 million in the pipeline to be expended now?

**Mr. Patterson:** Unfortunately, I think that question should rightfully be directed to the Ministry of Finance. But I could say that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is very grateful for the additional sums which allowed us to do additional things for the benefit of all Guyanese. But the actual cost and financial implications, I think you can direct that to my Learned Colleague over there who has just returned.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, my final question: Is the Minister of Public Infrastructure aware that there is a cost to keep moneys available when there is sloth in the implementation and disbursement of a loan?

**Mr. Patterson:** Once again, I would like to highlight to the Hon. Gentleman that there was no slothfulness in the loan. The original concept and project, as I said before, were disbursed...that is why no money was programmed for it in 2018. Of course, if the loan was, for example, \$1 million dollars and when we went to bid the project cost \$800,000, there is an additional balance which the Government of Guyana and the Ministry of Finance could have returned or not. They decided not to return it, and we did additional work. So, I really do not want the word slothfulness to be attached to this project. And yes, like in any loan, I know that if moneys are not...there is a cost of financing, but I do not want the public to think anything is slothful in connection with loan.

### **Highway Improvement – East Coast Demerara**

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister indicate to us specifically what this \$60 million is expected to be spent on?

**Mr. Patterson:** This is the local counterpart financing to carry us towards the end of the year.

**Bishop Edghill:** The local counterpart financing for this project is \$3,180,000. When we put the \$60 million to what is there voted already, we will just have a very small balance remaining. Could

the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly what percentage of the work on the East Coast road has been completed and if the disbursement of the local counterpart funds is equivalent to that rate of expenditure or are there special circumstances that have required the acceleration of the local counterpart financing?

**Mr. Patterson:** Sir, the present progress of the works on that project is 40%. There are no special circumstances that required advancing or accelerating the local counterpart funding, but the Hon. Member would be pleased to know that we are moving as fast as possible, as one could see in coming here for this supplementary. We are doing everything as quickly as possible to ensure that, by the rainy season in December, we would have advanced tremendously.

**Bishop Edghill:** If there are no special circumstances, local counterpart financing on this project, with this provision that is being sought, would put us way above 70%. Could he say if that falls in the same line with the disbursement from China Exim Bank that is financing the specific?

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes. Mr. Chairman, I have been advised that the local counterpart financing is US\$300,000. So, the question the Hon. Gentleman put there is not absolutely correct.

### **Rehabilitation of Public and Main Access Roads**

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, for the purpose of clarity and so that we do not have any misunderstanding, could the Hon. Minister describe exactly which road he is talking about? Is it from the Timehri Police Station to the turnoff to the Airport? Which section of the road is he talking about?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, firstly, as the Hon. Member would know, there will be a roundabout there and I am sure the location of that he knows. Then, there is a new road being built. If one continues 180 degrees to the new arrival terminal, it is a new road being built and not an existing road.

**Bishop Edghill:** Part of the \$86,750,000 that is being sought, is to deal with the removal of utilities – Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) and the Guyana Telephone Telegraph Company (GTT). Could the Minister indicate if any of these utilities that are to be removed lie between the section from the Timehri Police Station to the head of the current turnoff to the Airport?

11.40 p.m.

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes. A small amount of utility had to be removed because the roundabout was widened. The diameter was widened and so a very small amount had to be removed at the head.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this National Assembly if any of the sums that are being sought for the removal of utilities would be to pay for the removal of utilities that should have already been removed by both the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) financed section of the road and the Government's financed section of the road, or is it all new works?

**Mr. Patterson:** It is completely new works.

### **Hinterland Roads**

**Bishop Edghill:** I know the hour is late, so I will ask the Hon. Minister to layover the answer to this question. Could he give us the breakdown of how the \$1.5 billion was expended? Could he, also, layover how he expects to spend the \$239,488,397, on which specific roads and the contract sums? Could he tell us how soon we will get that document laid over? I suspect that he has it with him tonight. To save him from reading it out, if he could pass it through the Clerk of the National Assembly, we would be happy to have it, Sir.

**Mr. Patterson:** The Hon. Member is absolutely correct. I do have it here with me. I will lay it over, but I am learning that you *do not look a gift horse in the mouth* and not take the opportunity. Would you allow me to quickly state for the records the critical hinterland transport links? We have, in Port Kaituma, Catwalk Road in Oronoque; there is rehabilitation of Wanaina to Yarakita Landing in Barabina; Karau to Buck Hall Phase 2; rehabilitation of the Linden/Lethem roadway, Wisroc - stockpiling to start the roadway. We are going to do that link to upgrade it to asphalt paved road. There would be additional concrete work in Mahdia and four timber bridges along the Mabura to Kurupukari Corridor. This would bring up the total. I will lay it over to the Hon. Gentleman. I do have how the \$1.5 billion was expended. I would not read it but say that there were six projects in Region 1, about 10 in Region 7, six in Region 8, four in Region 9 and one in Region 10. I will lay it over immediately.

### **Sea and River Defence Works**

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister confirm if the \$900 million that has been voted has already been expended? Could he state the areas where works have been undertaken for the \$900 million that has been voted?

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, \$740 million has been expended to date, which represents 82% of the \$900 million. The Hon. Member would be pleased to know that we have about 60 or more projects under which the \$900 million was spent. I do not know if, at this late hour, he wants me to read them out, which I am quite happy to do if he insists. Mr. Chairman, I will be guided by you, but we are at 82% of expenditure.

**Bishop Edghill:** I have read the legend and I have noticed the areas in which the Minister wants to work. If in 10 months the Minister was only able to expend 82% of \$900 million, could the Minister explain how he plans to spend \$570 million in two months?

**Mr. Patterson:** Allow me, Mr. Chairman, a couple of minutes to tell you the genesis of this. Sir, as you would remember, Phagwah this year or thereabout, in Region 3 and other regions, we had extremely high spring tide. There was overtopping in several areas, the most badly affected being the constituency of the Hon. Member, Ali – Region 3. That necessitated the emergency works listed there to be done.

The Hon. Member would be pleased to know that we have already gone out to tender. We have not awarded any contracts and, obviously, we would wait to do this. The Hon. Member, as a result of his time in the Ministry of Finance, would also know that one of the big issues with these projects is the stock piling of boulders. We have 22 projects here. Obviously, when we pay the mobilisation, if approved, as well as the first instalment, we will expend the entire amount in 2018. Between Diwali and Phagwah is the seasonal spring tide period. Obviously, we would like to get ahead of the curb and that is why we are doing preparatory works for all the vulnerable areas.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much of the \$570 million has already been expended?

**Mr. Patterson:** Nothing has been expended so far. Hopefully, if approved, we will proceed with the procurement process.

## **Equipment**

**Bishop Edghill:** The remarks column indicates the intention of the Minister. Could he say, specifically, where the actual increase cost is? Is it on the canter trucks or the weigh-in motion system? There is a 50% increase that is being sought.

**Mr. Patterson:** I think the misunderstanding is with the approved budget which was \$20 million for laboratory equipment, if we go back to the profile. This is to pay Value-Added Tax (VAT) for a small canter truck for the Special Projects Unit, two canter trucks for \$1.48 million and a weigh-in motion scale for \$8.9 million. This gives you the \$10.387 million.

**Bishop Edghill:** I just need to be assured. Did you say that this sum is to pay VAT?

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes.

**Bishop Edghill:** So, it is \$10 million dollars' worth of VAT?

**Mr. Patterson:** Yes, Sir.

**Bishop Edghill:** At the time of the presentation of your budget and request for appropriation, were you aware of the Government's VAT policy on equipment?

*11.55 p.m.*

**Mr. Patterson:** At the time of *Budget 2018*, we had made no allowances. These were procured prior to *Budget 2018*. So, we obviously owe the VAT man, the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), and we are paying him now.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister state if these two trucks and this scale are in the possession and use of the Ministry and they are now seeking the money to pay the VAT on these items?

**Mr. Patterson:** I am informed that there were cleared prior to process and we still owe. We have to clear our debt and so that is what we have come here to do.

### **Reconditioning of Ferry Vessels**

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Minister, on the reconditioning of ferry vessels, the voted provision was half of a billion dollars. Could you say how much of that has been utilised as of today and which ferries

were reconditioned as a result? For the \$200 million being sought now, could you say which ferries would benefit from the acquisition of these spare parts, *et cetera*?

**Mr. Patterson:** Hon. Member, \$373.8 million has been expended to date. The expenditures were on three vessels which are the Makouria, Sobanto and Kanawan, which are the new Chinese vessels, and the additional sums are for the Malali and Makouria.

**Ms. Teixeira:** What was the third one?

**Mr. Patterson:** The third one is Sobanto.

*Item 7 32-322 Ministry of Public Infrastructure – Public Works - \$42,174,174; \$408,239,131; \$60,000,000; \$44,485,503; \$86,750,000; \$239,488,397; \$570,000,000, \$10,387,600; and \$200,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 8 32-333- Ministry of Public Infrastructure – Transport – CJIA Modernisation Project - \$280,052,230**

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister state the total contract sum for the supervision of this project?

**Mr. Patterson:** The total contract sum for supervision is US\$8,644,774.53.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister state, as of the current date, how much of this money have already been paid out?

**Mr. Patterson:** Some US\$5,973,752 have already paid out.

**Bishop Edghill:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate if this sum of US\$1.3 million, which is being requested, represents the final payment or is this an interim payment?

**Mr. Patterson:** Hon. Member, this represent an interim payment because the consultants would have to be here during the defects liability period. When that is expired the final payment would be made.

**Mr. Ali:** When we dealt with this issue during the budget, the Hon. Minister said, at that time, that the request was to take the airport to its final position, including final payment. The Hon. Minister



further said that provisions were made for the retention fees to be kept. What we are seeing now is a total reversal of that because the Hon. Minister is still seeking resources for actual works. Could the Hon. Minister say to us: what was the original contract sum? What is the contract sum today? What was the original completion date since three times the Hon. Minister has informed us of different dates for the completion? What is the new completion date? Would any liquidated damages be charged for the overrun of the contract?

**Mr. Patterson:** Sir, this supplementary is for the supervision of the project. The expiration of the contract, which has not arrived as yet, is the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018. Obviously, at the expiration of the contract, there would be a defects liability period. We have come here for the cost for the supervision.

**Mr. Ali:** The fact that the supervision contract is being increased means that the actual contract is also extended. The supervision is only needed to go beyond a certain time if the contract has extended itself. As a result of the contract extending itself, the defects liability period has also extended itself and all of this has a cost to the treasury. So, the Hon. Minister must be aware of the original contract sum and the new contract sum to take us to the end of this year. All you are doing is adding and spending and there seems to be no end to this. So, I would like the Hon. Minister to say to us what the final contract sum of this airport would be?

**Mr. Patterson:** The \$138 million remains; that has not changed. The contract was extended, as you know, from 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 to the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018 at no cost. That is the contract for the civil works. What is being sought here is the supervision.

**Mr. Ali:** No.

**Mr. Patterson:** Well, I could only give you the facts. You could interpret them how you like.

**Mr. Ali:** If the contract for the supervision is being extended, it means that the contract for the construction is also being extended. You are going to add the two new air bridges, not new, because they were already included in the project. You dropped it off, so the contractor had to have it in his original work plan. You are adding it now and so that should not change the contract time. The question remains, Hon. Minister, as to whether liquidated damages would be charged on this contractor? Secondly, could the Hon. Minister say, definitively, now that this project would be

concluded on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018? Could the Hon, Minister say to this House and the people of this country, definitively, that this project is going to be completed 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018?

**Mr. Patterson:** The contract date remains the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018 and yes, I have said it before, that the contract was extended, at no cost, from the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> December this year. That was said, and I have written that. What was not extended and what this cost is for is supervising them during this extension period. Of course, the contract period remains the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018.

**Mr. Ali:** It is clear that the contract sum would be affected. The Hon. Minister is saying the project cost would not have been affected but the contract sum. The mere fact that the contract was extended and, as a result of that, we are seeking an extension of the supervision, which carries a cost to the treasury, it means that the project cost would have increased because the supervision time would have been extended and the supervision cost would have also increased. So, the Hon. Minister's position that the sum has not increased cannot be correct because we are seeking here additional resources for the supervision...

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Ali, is there a question lurking somewhere?

**Mr. Ali:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you bring it to the fore, so that we could move on with questions? The seminar is quite acceptable, but really, it is a little misplaced at this time of the night.

**Mr. Ali:** Would the Hon. Minister agree with me, therefore, that the additional resources being sought is as a result of the overrun on time on this contract and, indeed, the project cost has increased as a result of this.

*12.10 a.m.*

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, this contract, the civil works contract, remains at \$138 million, and that remains.

**Mr. Ali:** It was under foreign supervision.

**Mr. Patterson:** Supervision contracts were always separate, never outside of the \$138 million. That is what we are coming here to do. The civil works contract remains at \$138 million.

*Item 8 32-333 Ministry of Public Infrastructure – Transport - \$280,052,230 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 9 40-403 Ministry of Education – Nursery Education - \$4,882,922**

*Item 9 40-403 Ministry of Education – Nursery Education - \$4,882,922 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 12 54-541 Ministry of Public Security – Policy Development and Administration - \$103,469,420**

**Mr. Gill:** Could the Hon. Minister say whether the scanners referred to here are full body scanners? How many will the \$10.3 million purchase? Also, where will the scanners be installed? It is to which prisons, to be exact.

**Vice-President and Minister of Public Security [Mr. Ramjattan]:** This is for one full body scanner for the Lusignan Prison holding bay area.

**Mr. Gill:** Could the Hon. Minister say whether there are any plans to sensitise the public, so as to alleviate their concerns about the privacy matter that is being raised, internationally, about the use of these scanners which show body parts?

**Mr. Ramjattan:** I do not know of that peculiar problem in relation to this scanner. This one does not, as far as I know, suffer that problem.

**Mr. Gill:** Full body scanners do show body parts. I am not sure whether the Minister has fully researched this. It is not that I am against scanners. I encourage the use of scanners at all prisons, but I think there is a need to sensitise the public, for those people who are visiting relatives in the prison, to let them be aware of the nature of these scanners.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** That is an extraordinarily challenging one for me, but for our prisons and the peculiar problems we suffer there, we would need this full body scanner. That is what is going to go there.

*Item 12 54-541 Ministry of Public Security – Policy Development and Administration - \$103,469,420 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 13 54-545 Ministry of Public Security – Fire Service - \$29,343,300**

**Ms. Teixeira:** Minister, could you advise on the cost of the fire boat that we purchased, when it was purchased and if it is in the country as yet, so that we can have an idea of this \$29 million you are asking to cover that? Is the boat in the country? Is it being made here or have you purchased it? How much was it and when was it delivered?

**Mr. Ramjattan:** The cost of the boat is US\$1.43 million, the equivalent of \$309,595,000. The 14% VAT will be in the vicinity of about \$39 million. This was not, however, budgeted for by the Guyana Fire Service in Budget 2018. It will be in before the end of the year, sometime on 20<sup>th</sup> December, or thereabout. We would have to pay the VAT on it before we can get delivery. We did make some savings, I understand, of some \$9.7 million, and so the additional sum, to take of the 14% VAT that comes up to \$39 million, will only be \$29,343,000.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I thank you, Minister. The voted provision under description “Land and Water Transport – Fire” was \$219,800,000, but you have just stated that the contract for the fire boat was US\$1.43 million, or GY\$309,595,000. Could you say how we are able to buy a fire boat for more than what was in the allocation for fire under description “Land and Water Transport”? Where did the additional money come from, because you did not have a supplementary allocation prior to this?

**Mr. Ramjattan:** We understand it is a rollover project from the previous year of GY\$175,000,000. It is included, if I may say, with two ambulances and two water tenders.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you for the information. Have these other items, other than the fire boat, been delivered? The ambulance, you said, and what was the other thing? The water cannons. Are these the water cannons for rioters or the water cannons on the boat, which one?

**Mr. Ramjattan:** It is not for water cannons, water tenders.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I see. They were misleading

**Mr. Ramjattan:** They were delivered.

**Ms. Teixeira:** How does one buy a fire boat in two parts? How do you buy a part of it in 2017 and a part of it in 2018? I am not sure how you do that, because you usually do not do rollover projects for capital equipment such as vehicles, or things such as that.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** The entire package was awarded in 2017 for the two ambulances, the two water tenders and the fire boat.

**Ms. Teixeira:** What was the money used for this year, the \$219,800,000?

**Mr. Ramjattan:** It is to pay the balance for the fire boat, especially.

**Ms. Teixeira:** That is the point I am making. We are paying for the boat using two years' budgets, 2017 and 2018. I have never heard of a rollover project to do with buying equipment – a fire boat.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** It took a while to be constructed in England. The fire boat is being constructed in England. It is a big boat.

**Ms. Teixeira:** It was tendered for.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Yes. It was tendered for.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Has it been designed to deal with our kinds of challenges?

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Yes. It has been designed for the challenges here in the tropics and for the specialised requirements we wanted it for. We have it here.

**Mr. Ali:** Lay it over.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** I can lay it over. It is no problem.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you.

*Item 13 54-545 Ministry of Public Security – Fire Service - \$29,343,300 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

*12.25 p.m.*

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AGENCIES**

## **CURRENT ESTIMATES**

### **Item 1 55-551 Supreme Court – Supreme Court of Judicature - \$165,600,000**

**Ms. Teixeira:** The Minister is not here. Who is the Minister?

**Mr. Chairman:** This is a supplementary provision.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes. It is for two constitutional bodies.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes. It is part of the supplementary paper. Hon. Member, you want to speak.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Yes Sir. I do not know to whom I am posing these questions. I would like, Sir, to solicit an explanation in relation to the additional costs, in employment costs. I am reading the language here, and I want some explanation of that term, “To meet additional costs in Employment Costs...”

**Mr Jordan:** It means additional employment cost.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Where and what category of employees?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall, these issues are constitutional agencies. I believe that I will be correct in saying that we understand that no reference to line items should form part of consideration of constitutional agencies. If you are going to go there, you are going into a line item.

**Mr. Nandlall:** But Sir, I am referring to the remarks. The remarks inform me, “To meet additional costs in Employment Costs...” Then I am going to go on later once permitted.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, what I am saying is that that information being put there does not invite you to enquire into what the employees would be or what category. It does not invite you to do that, given where we are grounded in what our approach must be on constitutional agencies.

**Mr. Nandlall:** I cannot say, Sir, there is a request for an additional sum of money to meet an increase in employment cost. I cannot ask what the additional employment cost is and how did we accrue this increase. I cannot ask the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, if I join you and be choosing to ignore the obligations or the restrictions which we assume in relation to the constitutional agencies, then, of course, you could ask anything. I do not join you there. I would want us all to stick to what we understood to be the case and we should not try to get beyond or behind it by introducing semantic elements. We are doing that.

**Mr. Nandlall:** I do not know what we are doing here in a Committee of Supply. Why is this here then if we are not permitted to ask questions on it?

**Mr. Chairman:** What we do is to approve the document. That is what we do, Hon. Member.

**Ms. Teixeira:** We have before us the request of the Supreme Court as a constitutional body for \$202,256,609 and we have a recommended figure of \$165,600,000. I assume this is following the pattern, as before, that the Minister of Finance is recommending a cut. Could the Minister of Finance advise this Assembly, on the basis that a constitutional body needed this money, on what grounds did the Minister reduce the figure from \$202,256,609 to \$165,600,000 for additional employment cost for the agency? What were the factors that made him reduce the amount and on what categories of employment cost were reduced?

**Mr. Jordan:** Mr. Chairman, I respect your ruling on this and it is a ruling that I have wanted to hear put, that we cannot go into line items. This amount that I have here represents the allocation that the Government can afford at this time. We cannot go into line items. That is what the law states. This is what I can afford. Bearing in mind also this is a supplementary. There is no entitlement to a constitutional agency to a supplementary. This is at the discretion of the executive because bear in mind when we pass the budgets of constitutional agencies, these budgets cannot be altered subsequently, and it is only by an Act of the National Assembly. Technically, it can be altered by the executive.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, a constitutional body that is autonomous has requested \$202.2 million. The Minister has brought to the Assembly his recommendation and which should have been presented separately by the way of \$165. Million. [Mr. Jordan: It is presented

separately.] No. It is completely separate, as the constitutional bodies. The Minister is saying that he cannot go into line items, but it is only in the Minister's brain that he has cut, and we do not know what he has cut, and that is not the prerogative of the Minister. It is the prerogative

of this Assembly for any agency, country or other, to be able to be accountable. Now in this case, we are not challenging the Supreme Court's request for money, but we are challenging the Minister's discretion to reduce the constitutional bodies and hiding behind the façade that he does not have to answer why he cut and what he cut. What has been asked by me to do is if you could tell the Assembly what you have cut. You have given the reason why because you do not have money. What have you cut, Sir?

**Mr. Jordan:** I thought the Hon. Member was making a statement and I listened. I was not asked a question.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I asked: What did you cut?

**Mr. Ali:** The process as set out is one in which the agency puts forward its proposal and the proposal comes to the National Assembly. The amendment did not allow the interference by the Minister of Finance. Now, I agree that the Minister of Finance has an understanding of the overall number. However, Hon. Minister, in the document you submitted here, under "Remarks" went into line item, when the Hon. Minister said "To meet additional costs in Employment..."

[**Mr. Jordan:** That is what was requested.]

I am saying Hon. Minister that the column which states "Remarks", if it is that the Hon. Minister is saying that the remarks are not attributed to him, but the agency that is making the request, then can we make a counter proposal because the National Assembly approves this? Could we make a counter proposal that the full sum requested by the Supreme Court, as a constitutional agency, be approved by the National Assembly to meet the employment cost? In my humble opinion, the employment cost is critical if we are to solve the issues of backlog of cases and if we are to solve the issues of slow hearing in cases that the public as the Government talks about a lot. All I am saying is that, on this side of the Assembly, we would want to propose that the entire supplementary provision requested by the agency be approved tonight.

**Mr. Chairman:** After the incomplete discussion today, I am surprised that the Hon. Member Mr. Ali would speak as he did. I did indicate a view, which I hold, which is that we say things in a certain way and then we employ that to the end we wish to achieve. Without, all the while, denying that we want to achieve that end, the understanding that we have is that, or I learnt from Members



on both sides, there will be no question about line items on any constitutional agency. I understood that to mean that we would use no semantics to achieve that end.

I know there is something about sitting on a man's back and telling him that you really want to get this load off his back, but you are not moving from off his back. We are saying, and our conversation today, that we will not interfere with the constitutional agencies by getting into what is intended. What and whether we use that to get where we are going or whether we use another argument to get where we are going we are doing the same thing while we say we are clear. I am speaking about persons who were present today on either side of the room at the conversation which took place today. Some things were fixed. I want to see them to be immutable, but maybe I was mistaken. We agreed that there was a difficulty in trying to go around to the back door, so to speak, to challenge the recommendation of the Minister. This is the conversation which took place today. We all agree on that.

*12.40 a.m.*

Hon. Members, if we seek to go somewhere else, we will see. Mr. Ali, you have the floor.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, I am in no way asking any question in relation to a line item. I am reading from a document that the Minister of Finance presented to this Assembly. In the Minister of Finance's document attention is drawn to the line item, not my document. It is in the onus of the Minister of Finance's document attention is drawn to a line item. It is not any of us in the business of the Committee. That is all I did.

The second thing I sought to do was to do exactly what we are mandated to do in the FMAA and the Constitution, and that is to approve the request by the constitutional agency. The Government may say that it is not in agreement with the request, but, we have the right also in the National Assembly to say we are supporting the request of the agency. If we are proposing to support that, then I guess, Mr. Chairman, we have to vote on the proposal of the Opposition. It is for the agency to be allowed the resources to execute their work. What we are saying is that we are in full support of the agency getting the required amount of \$202 million that is required to execute its work. That is all we are asking, for the full sum. Hon. Minister, we are not saying we could give them. The National Assembly will give them, your colleagues, by support. Let us put it to the vote. We are supporting the request made by the agency.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, is it the case that in dealing with the supplementary requests for the constitutional agencies that we be guided by the recommendation which the Minister of Finance has made? I think that is the first question I should know from us. Is it the case that we would be guided by the recommendation of the Minister of Finance as has been the case in the last three considerations of the constitutional agencies?

I am asking for all Hon. Members to take an instance in this because that is what I am asking.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, we are just going by law. The amendment that was brought in 2015 makes it clear. The constitutional bodies sent to the Clerk, through the public officer, the recommendation for budget or supplementary. That is circulated in the House. The Minister of Finance, by law, brings his recommendations to this House. The body of this House questions the Minister on his judgement on what he is doing and that might lead to a debate. We are not talking about line item. We are talking about the Minister justifying why he wants to cut and increase or whatever and that the House decides whether it agrees with the Minister of Finance or not. In this case, two things have gone wrong in this, a Supplementary Financial Paper was presented, what this House should have had was the separate presentation by the Supreme Court and the Ethics Relations to do their supplementary, sent to the Clerk and we have a separate letter or document from the Minister of Finance making his recommendations. This would parallel what is done on the budgets on the constitutional bodies where we get their submissions and then we get separately the Minister's recommendations. They do not come together. We discussed that.

We, on this side of the Assembly, have not heard a justification from the Minister of why he is cutting the budget of the Supreme Court. Therefore I am moving, on behalf of this side of the Assembly, that this side of the Assembly is supporting the requested amount by the constitutional body which is \$202,256,609 we have a right to do that. Therefore we are putting a motion to the Assembly and asking that it be voted on, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member. The proposal of recommendations the Minister of Finance is before the Assembly and we also have a new proposal by the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira - I would personally prefer that we do not have a vote - we have a vote of that is what we are going to go to. There should be somewhere by which this particular treatment... Let me say that it would certainly have been more beneficial to have had consideration of the supplementary provision for

the constitutional agencies. It certainly would have beneficial if that was treated in the way you lay it out. Unfortunately, you have one block figure here and we must keep it here. What I am suggesting is if we have reached the point where we could do nothing more than vote, then that is what we will do. If I said that we have reached that point, would I be interpreting the views of everyone here in the right way?

I would suggest we take the recommendation of the Minister of Finance first and we get it out of the way one way or the other. Then we vote on the requested one way or the other.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I have brought the motion to House. The Minister has not brought a motion to the House. The Minister had brought a recommendation to the House. It is almost as if I am doing an amendment. If you are saying he has the motion, I have the amendment, therefore, the amendment goes first. I am amending.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is not an amendment.

*1.00 a.m.*

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Chairman, I heard the Hon. Member Gail Teixeira moving a motion. I wish to bring to Your Honour's attention that we are in the Committee of Supply. It is a violation of the Standing Orders of this House for a motion to be moved in the House during the sitting of the Committee of Supply without notice. I allude to Standing Order No. 76, which is what I raised. *[Interruption]* This Member has to be somehow taught the decency of Parliamentary decorum and behaviour. We cannot have an unbridle vulgarity in this House, if it is an honourable House.

I made the point last year that an attempt by way of a dilatory motion to delay the proceedings in the House, to frustrate the proceedings in this House, was made by the Opposition. It was held, and I will read, on that occasion, the point that was made, that Standing Order No. 76 states that if you were to move amendment, when a matter is before the Committee of Supply, it needs a notice to be given of the motion.

Here we have a proposal before the House. We are dealing with a constitutional agency and it is very clearly stated and it has been canvassed here by all sides, including the learned Member, Anil Nandlall, that the Constitution states very clearly in Article 222 that constitutional agencies come to the House by the procedures variously, and we are divided on that, how it comes before the

House, for a lump-sum and the Minister of Finance makes a recommendation. The House then proceeds to vote on the recommendation. You can vote “no”, or you can vote “yes”, but you cannot go and interrogate any of the line items in relation to that constitutional agency. It is unconstitutional to attempt to do so.

Secondly, if there is a motion before the House and an attempt is being made by way of submissions before the House with a recommendation, and an attempt is being made to move a motion, it states here that the recommendation that is made is the recommendation that ought to be put to the vote. To suggest that you approve the request that has been made by the constitutional agency, to suggest that it is a way by motion that you should go there to approve or not to approve, for me it is an amendment of the procedure that the Constitution and the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act suggest that we do, to vote on the recommendation and not to go by way of a motion to say “I put the original figure”. There is no such laxity that is available to the House by way of the Constitution or by the specific law that guides the treatment of constitutional agencies.

Mr. Chairman, what is most unfortunate is that the side, and I am trying to wrap it up in a way that this House can understand what is being played out here, is being told by a side that opposed the creation of some of these bodies as constitutional agencies. Opposed, resisted, stubbornly, to appear to be canvassing for the constitutional agency, because it seems to suit a political agenda in an opportunistic way that we are representing the judiciary and find themselves cursing judges and decisions of the judiciary on a routine and regular basis in the public. I believe that this is dilatory. Our rules do not provide for dilatory motions to frustrate the sittings of this House. You could hear their indecency with which they will greet what I have to say. *[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

I ask that the motion be thrown out as inadmissible and that the recommendation of the Hon. Minister of Finance be put to the House to be disposed of.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Mr. Chairman, it is the 1<sup>st</sup> November and it is late in the morning. We are in this House and we are in unchartered waters. It is important for us to be guided by the only thing which should be guiding us and that is the law. We have to be guided by Act No. 4/2015, Fiscal Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act 2015. I am reading it and I think that it is clear

as one could possibly ask for and I commend the drafters for it. I am reading section 3 (b), which amends sections 80(b) of the Principal Act: It states this:

“The public officer responsible for managing the affairs of an agency or such other person designated by the appropriate authority for that purpose, shall submit budget proposals to the Clerk of the National Assembly (copied to the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Minister of Finance) who shall ensure that those proposals are submitted as presented and in the case of the Audit Office, the budget shall be submitted to the Parliament through the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee.”

It tells us very clearly what must happen. The person who is in charge of the particular agency, let us use the Supreme Court in this instance, whoever that person is, I am assuming that it would be the Registrar of the Supreme Court, must bring the budget proposals. I am assuming that they would have meetings and decided which courts they needed to fix, which chairs they needed to fix, which judges they needed to robe, *et cetera*. They bring it to the Clerk of the National Assembly who is a public officer, and it is copied to the Speaker. It was never, we cannot possibly read this section to mean that the Clerk would keep that as a secret in his heart. This is because it states specifically that he must submit those as presented. Submit to whom or to who? It has to be to the people who he serves and that would be the people of this House. The elected Members of this House who represent the people of this country. It then goes on to state in subsection (2) that it would be:

“The Minister of Finance shall submit to the National Assembly the Minister’s Comments on the annual budget of a Constitutional Agency, including recommendations in sufficient time to enable consideration by the assembly and those recommendations shall be limited to the overall request rather than to line items.”

The Registrar must come to the Clerk of the National Assembly and give to him her budgetary proposals. She must copy it to the Speaker and to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance must then make recommendations and come here with his recommendations. All of us in this House must have both of what was submitted, as well as the Minister’s recommendations. We cannot ask questions on any line items, we must look at the Minister’s recommendations as a whole. That is what must happen.

What has happened here is that we have been denied, or at least this side of the House, the recommendations that were made by the officer in charge of the agencies. We have not seen those. Those are secrets to us; they have not been made available to us. That is not what was anticipated and that is not what is dictated in this piece of legislation. If we are to do what we are about to do here... So, it is not a matter Mr. Chairman, as you asked, of whether we are ready to vote and if we should vote. I think that that is, perhaps, us dealing with it lazily. It is not a matter of whether we are ready to vote. It is a matter of whether we have complied with the law that we have to comply with. The law that came about to tell us how to do this process in the first place.

This is only the second year; it is a 2015 law. If it is that we find in this House that we do not like these provisions, then we must change them, but while they exist, we must comply with them. That would mean that whatever was submitted to the Clerk of the National Assembly and copied to the Speaker and the Minister of Finance, must be submitted, as presented, to the Members of this House. That is what the law states. What I was reading were the direct words of the Fiscal Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act No. 4/ 2015. That is what I was reading.

My understanding and my recommendation to the House is that we do exactly what we were told. That we be given the recommendations that were made by the various agencies. The Minister has nothing else to do because he has seen it and he has already brought what he believes his Government is capable of paying at this time, and then we will vote on that. We cannot ask questions on it and we understand that. We understand that from this side of the House, we cannot make recommendations ourselves on any budgetary matter. We cannot increase budgetary matters, we understand that. What we do not understand is why the submissions are being kept from the House and the people of the country. We are asking that they be presented as they are mandated in this piece of legislation.

**Mr. Greenidge:** I do not know if the Members on the other side understanding of the process that we are required to undertake is the same as mine. The two complaints that are being made to justify an examination with regards the sequence of the figures that are to be examined, is that, first of all, the Members of the House are unaware of the request that is being made and they are only aware, the request that is being made by the agency that we are examining. I am not playing with English. There is a table, as far as I can see, which makes reference to a figure that is titled: *Supreme Court*.

Then it makes reference to the figure requested by the agency and as recommended by the Minister of Finance. Those are the figures in question. That is my understanding.

Therefore, the House is at liberty, I think, as you had suggested in the very beginning, to examine these figures because they are in accordance with what is captured in section 3 of the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, both at (B) and at subparagraph 2.

In other words, a figure has been delivered by the constitutional agency, whether it is called proposal or request, I think it is immaterial really.

*1.15 a.m.*

There is a recommendation from the Minister of Finance and, as a House, we can respond to that recommendation. If the lump sum requested by the Minister of Finance is not in keeping with what the Members on the other side believe is correct, they are at liberty to ask or to question that. I do not understand what is being said here. I am saying that we are dealing with this matter now, and right now it states that the Minister of Finance shall submit to the National Assembly, the Minister's comments on the annual Budget. That is where we are.

We discussed it this afternoon, that you had representatives. You cannot disown them now because it is inconvenient. **[Ms. Teixeira: [Inaudible]]** Well, in that case, in the future,

we should not use that mechanism. If you are going in one forum to argue for one process, and then later come back and deny that process... **[Mr. Ali: [Inaudible]]** We did not

agree on the time. We did not agree on the allocation at the time. **[Mr. Ali: We said that there must be a debate.]** But then you cannot say that we agreed. **[Mr. Ali:**

You are saying that there was a unanimous agreement.] I never mentioned unanimous.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mr. Chairman, on a Point of Order. There are a number of Members in this House, including your honourable self, who referred to a meeting held earlier today, which the majority of us have no idea of. We were not there; we were not in that Committee. There is a report before the House, which we have not reached yet. It is unfair to be discussing that report, which is not before the House, and is trying to hold people bound to that, when we have not reached that. We are dealing with what the issues are, according to the law.

The Hon. Member has said that we are free to question the Minister on his recommendations. That was what we were trying to do. The Minister does not feel that he has to answer. All that he has said was that it was in the public's interest and that he cannot give the money – that is it. Mr. Greenidge was not in the room when that happened. And so, we questioned the Minister of Finance, not the agency. We did not go into the line items with the agency.

The issue that Ms. Manickchand has raised and which we are raising, I believe in the best interest of this House, we get this right, in terms of procedure. The first time, when we dealt with the constitutional bodies, we had to learn, and this was a big issue which led to suspensions in the 2015 and 2016 Budget Debates. We went to the law and came up with, until every agency brings their things and the Minister comes separately. Supplementary budgets are part of budgets. Minister, you cannot pretend that a supplementary is not part of a budget. It is becoming part of the budget.

Therefore, an agency requesting money, as a constitutional agency, we should adopt the same process. They make their submission to the Clerk and it is circulated, the Minister makes his submission separate and we decide. This is a procedural issue. We do not know, to tell you the truth and Mr. Chairman, this is not the first time. I think it was the Order Paper or the Supplementary Financial Paper No.2, there was a constitutional body issue coming for supplementary. I think it was Public Service Appellate or one of those. We had a similar debate in this House on this issue, that the Minister could not bring the constitutional issues as he does the supplementary, it had to be separate. No one listened, and now, we have gone back to the same problem again.

Therefore, when the Minister comes, he must be prepared to justify his position to the House, to the electorate. He has a right to do that and so does the Government. It does not mean that we do not have a right to ask the Minister to justify that.

In the case of the constitutional bodies, we have two options here tonight. The Government seems to, as usual, want to push through, vote and done – let the \$165,600,000 go to the constitutional body and, therefore, they will not get what they ask for. You are happy with that and I am sure that the Supreme Court will listen to that. However, the alternative to this is to do it right. That is to defer the two items, let the Minister come back, as required by the law and by the Fiscal



Management and Accountability Act, according to the Act, which states that the agency sends to the Clerk, what is the \$202 million that they are asking for in whatever format. And that the Minister brings his recommendation with \$165 million. So, procedurally, we get it right.

As I said, the Minister is saying that we must, in all cases, agree. Just as Mr. Greenidge is saying, if we do not agree, we can vote against it. If the Government agrees or does not agree it can vote against it as well. It is an issue on the electoral. The final decision is made by the majority in the House. And so, you have two choices: Do things right and uphold the law or, as usual, *ramrod* through everything.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Specifically, in response to Hon. Vice-President, Mr. Greenidge, who said that the budget agency submitted to the Clerk, the Minister has put a figure in here and he has put his own figure in that he believes they can afford, therefore, we have complied with the law. In fact, I will say very clearly that my asking for the Clerk to present the budget of the agency as presented, is not me questioning the integrity of the Minister and whether the figure he has put here is accurate. I am just simply saying that is not the law.

The Minister of Finance must get a copy. When the Registrar brings it to the Clerk, she must send him a copy. It does not say then that he could put whatever they have put in there in one column and put his recommendations in another column. It states:

“The Clerk shall ensure that those proposals [given by the Registrar, for example] are submitted as presented.”

It does not allow the Minister of Finance the leeway to put it in a column because he feels that is convenient. I do not care how it comes. It could come written on a leaf, we must see what the agency asked for, as presented.

Mr. Chairman, I believe what was contemplated here too, is that we would be informed of what it is they wanted money for. I do not believe that agencies will just put up that it wants \$300 million. I believe they would have stated that they wanted so much for furniture, staff, training and that is why the law wants us to see it as presented. So that we and the nation, the people of this country, whose money we are about to spend, could follow the judiciary and could follow the agencies over the year to see if the things they said that they were doing with the money are some of the things

that are being done, so that they can see what impact this money will make on their lives. It does not allow the Minister of Finance the leeway to say to the Clerk, “Put this in your desk drawer and hide there, I am going to put a figure in a column here and call that the agency’s submission.” It states that the Clerk shall ensure that those proposals, as they were submitted, must be submitted as presented. So, if you give it to them like this, the Clerk must give it to us the same way. Nobody can now interpret what the people wrote there.

I am saying too, amidst the screams, we are trying to be calm at 1.30 a.m., that if we do not like this and we believe that it is okay for the Minister to just condense all of this and put it in a column, then we should come here and change this law. Presently, that is not what the laws states. I do not believe that any person reading this, even without a scintilla of a legal background, could possibly misinterpret what is said here. We are calling strongly for this amendment to be followed as is, which means that the Clerk will have to submit, must submit, must ensure that he submits, as they were presented, the budgets of the various agencies.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister of Finance, do you have a comment to present to this House in relation to all of the discussions that have been taking place?

**Mr. Jordan:** No, Sir. I do not have much of a comment. This is because, for me, everything that is being said by the Hon. Member, I believe relates to the Annual Budget, for which we follow religiously. I believe that the last time we had this was in relation to the Public Procurement Commission (PPC). I believe that we had referred to a ruling by the former Hon. Speaker at that time, Mr. Raphael Trotman, that the Minister of Finance can determine the format in which he presents these supplementary budgets. It is there now as part of the Standing Orders.

Everything that has been read has been read in relation to the Annual Budget. Supplementary Budgets are a different story. When it comes to the constitutional agencies, that is why we have the procedure for the Annual Budget of constitutional agencies. That procedure which allows them to maintain their independence, that once the moneys have been voted, unless the National Assembly chooses to do so, it cannot be cut. It has to be given within 28 days and they proceed to do as they see fit. When it comes to Supplementary Budget, they cannot have two bites of the same cherry because they are given their budgets to do so. Once the National Assembly approves it, they are given their budgets in lump sum to do as they see fit.

If I had, during the year, a problem with revenues, I could have cut the Executive's budgets, calmly, and then come back to the House for a new appropriation. But I could not do it to the constitutional agencies. If I was so minded and the National Assembly approves, by that time, most of them might have used up or committed their expenditure simply because they had gotten it in a lump sum in the first place and they could spend it as they see fit. When it comes to supplementary budgets, it cannot be case that you are arguing for the same way that the Annual Budgets would have been approved.

My point to end this all is that the Government has chosen to give the Supreme Court a sum or any constitutional agency in that matter, in this case the Supreme Court, a supplementary sum of money for which we can afford within the space that we have and that is the end of the matter. That was put to us and you have rightly gone down the path which is, let us vote 'yay' or 'nay', and then the story is finished.

Thank you, Sir.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question. The supplementary budget, because there is no provision dealing with the supplementary budget, but the supplementary budget, was that, for this agency, presented to the Clerk of the National Assembly? If the answer is 'yes', then it is the same process. What they did was that they walked over from the High Court, they came, they gave it to the Clerk, they sent a copy to the Speaker and they sent a copy to the Minister, the Minister said that he could afford what is being asked for and he could only afford this amount and he puts it in his recommendation. That proposal that was submitted to the Clerk, is what we are being denied. Not 'we', but the people of this country are being denied and they are being denied in breach of a law that this House passed.

*1.30 a.m.*

I am asking for an answer. Did my Clerk get a supplementary budget delivered to him by the Head of this agency or someone duly authorised?

**Mr. Jordan:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that we have ventilated this matter and I think that we are coming back to the same place. Could I ask that the question be put for us to vote?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, there are two persons on the floor.

**Mr. Jordan:** I am sorry. I thought that the Member had finished.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am advised that the Clerk did receive...

**Ms. Manickchand:** The Clerk did receive a supplementary budget from the Head of the Agency, according to the Act that we are following. The Chairman, just said that the Clerk received a supplementary budget, could I then ask, in accordance with the Act that we are following here tonight, that we be presented with that submission as it was presented?

*[Mr. Chairman in aside with the Clerk.]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we have to decide how we proceed now with what we have. What we have is what is before us. The fact of the matter is, I think issues of violating the law, I could treat with that. What I am dealing with now is trying to solve the problem here that we have before us, without the need for voting.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Mr. Chairman, might I ask respectfully that Your Honour at least confirm what the law requires of us and then, perhaps, we could move to that position.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Nandlall, you will let me do this the way I am doing it. We have before us, supplementary provisions for constitutional agencies. I think that we are all agreed that there is no provision that we could specifically point to that would assist us in how we proceed with constitutional agencies seeking supplementary provisions. As I understand it, the law, as we have it, provides for regular budgets, but does not make a specific provision, a reference to constitutional agencies seeking supplementary provision. This is a request for supplementary provision.

We must, therefore, accept the practice which has evolved, that is, that the requested figure be put, and that the Minister of Finance makes his recommendation. I hope that everyone has a copy of this. *[Interruption]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members...

*[Mr. Chairman in aside with the Clerk.]*

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** If you would permit me one last attempt to help this honourable House. The law that was alluded to, states that the Clerk shall ensure that the proposals, are submitted, as presented... When we met on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, these estimates were submitted to the House, which was 13 days ago. I presume that they had been circulated under the hand of the Clerk. Therefore, the Clerk has fulfilled the requirement of the law, by ensuring the circulation of the budgetary proposal. There is no disputation that the budgetary proposal, as stated, is not the proposal as sent because it was circulated to the Speaker and to the Minister of Finance.

The budgetary proposal of the agencies in accordance with the law that was read, re-read and emphasised, was supposed to allow a copy to be sent to the Speaker of the National Assembly and to the Minister of Finance. The Clerk shall ensure that those proposals are submitted as presented. The budgetary proposal was before the National Assembly for the last 13 days, circulated under the hand of the Clerk of the National Assembly.

In the manner in which it was presented, it would appear as the Minister of Finance states the budgetary proposal and, also, states the recommendations, side by side, which is what we have before us. We have both the budgetary proposal and the Minister's recommendations before us. It has satisfied the requirements of the law.

I humbly ask and strenuously so, Sir, that we have discussed this matter at length. I cannot assume that I know the reason for the dilatory tactics being employed. I cannot say I know that. But, the question is, it was moved. The Hon. Minister of Finance moved that the question be put. I want to second that motion and ask that it be put to a vote.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Mr. Chairman, earlier I wanted to know, and I had asked, if the supplementary budget was submitted to the Clerk. I did not presume to speak for the Clerk, as the Hon. Prime Minister just did. I hate for this to sound as though we are cross-examining the Clerk, but I think that we have all put ourselves in this position now. The Prime Minister's argument is that because there is a column from the Minister of Finance which states that these are the figures that were submitted by the agencies and the Clerk has circulated those, it means that the Clerk has ensured that those budgetary provisions were submitted.

There are two things that are absent, one: We do not know if the Clerk actually verified the Minister's figures, verses, the submissions he got. We do not know that the Clerk ensured that

what was submitted as a total figure is actually what we have here. [Mr. Jordan: Are you imputing ulterior motives?] No, I absolutely not. We have placed ourselves here.

Secondly, it is not only the total figure that I think this Act intended for us to see. It intended for us to see [Mr. Nandlall: ...the proposals.] ...the proposals made. That is why it states, "As submitted." However, they give it to the Clerk, he must give it to us so that we could see it. I have two questions; did the Hon. Clerk, ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I must interrupt you. The questioning and answering with the Clerk, who is not allowed to speak in here but is asked questions, I do not think that we want to take this further. We must find our own method of dealing with the issue that confronts us.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Your Honour, you see there is a problem.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would not....

**Ms Manickchand:** I would not ask the Clerk questions if you Honour disallows me, but I am saying that, under this Act, the Clerk has a duty. This Act imposes upon our Clerk, this nation's Clerk, a duty. I can only know if the Clerk fulfilled his duty or carried out his duty, if I ask questions of someone. This is because what was supposed to happen, did not happen. We had to ask just now whether the Clerk received the budgetary provisions and we got an answer. I want to know now, did the Clerk verify that what the Minister has in his column representing the constitutional agencies' figure, if the Clerk went through all those constitutional agencies and verified them?

Thirdly, I do not believe that even if the Clerk verified those figures that we are complying with the Act because it is not being presented to us. The budgetary provisions that were submitted to the Clerk by the relevant constitutional agencies are not being presented to us as submitted. The constitutional agencies had what they wanted it for, they had columns, remarks and so on. We are the persons who must go out there. We are the people who are answering and speaking in this House for the people of Guyana who are funding these budgetary allocations. Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Prime Minister's response, theatrical as it may have been, does not answer the question that we have before us.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Member. Hon. Members, as much as I am reluctant for us to move to the question of voting, there is a motion before the House. If there is no suggestion to solve this another way, then I shall have to yield to the motion. It should be moved and seconded.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I had a regime put in motion that we support the request of the constitutional agencies. I was told that it was raised in the House and that I could not do that because it is a financial consequence for the Government. However, I then made a second set of recommendations and those were, in order to ensure that we are in compliance with the law, that these two items be deferred and that the Clerk and officer in charge of the constitutional agencies, the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) and the Supreme Court deliver their submission, as required by law.

*1.45 a.m.*

That is circulated in the House and the Minister brings his submission, as he has in relation to annual budgets, and then we do that. The Constitution also must be upheld and not just this law. Article 222A demands that these agencies... I just want to remind, Comrades, because then everyone would start chewing at the issue...Mr. Chairman, I am trying to speak above the din, and, at this hour, it is difficult to speak above the din. Article 222A states:

“In order to assure the independence of the entities listed in the Third Schedule...”

Which are all these constitutional bodies.

“...(a) The expenditure of each of the entities shall be financed as a direct charge on the Consolidated Fund, determined as a lump sum by way of an annual subvention approved by the National Assembly after a review and approval of the entity’s annual budget as part of the process of the determination of the national budget.

So, I am putting the proposal to you. One has been thrown out. The second proposal is that these two items be deferred. The Minister can then then go ahead and pass the Supplementary Provisions with all the other items and, for the next sitting, we do this correctly. As we do with the other constitutional agencies, we should uphold the law and the Constitution. That is my offer to you because you said that you did want to go to a vote. Obviously, on this side of the House, they are

*biting at the bit* to go to the vote. So, I am offering a peace solution. If that is not possible, then we go to the vote. But I have offered an option that allows us to deal with the law and the Constitution.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, it is probably polite for me to say good morning. We have had a very long break without leaving our Chamber. A number of matters have been talked about and there is an understanding as to how this evening's matter should be settled and, looking ahead, how we will treat the Constitutional agencies in the budget.

Today, at the budget sub-committee meeting, I did express a view, and I think Hon. Members who were there might say that it was expressed in a very committed way, that we would ensure that there is a meeting and that meeting should eventuate in a meeting of minds as to how constitutional agencies should be treated thenceforth. This meeting would take place and be concluded before our next sitting. Before the 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, we should meet and conclude this discussion so that it would become a reality by then.

For this evening, we will proceed to a determination which involves the vote. I understand that one side of the House would, no doubt, express that the vote be taken by voice and one side of the House will express its position on it. I believe on the other side there would be no comment or anything, to facilitate the matters as they are, and on the basis that there is going to be a discussion to solve the difficulties which we have been facing these last two or three years.

I am mindful that there has been a motion moved and seconded and resting on the House for a long time and I would, therefore, with your leave, put the motion. We will need to do this twice since there are two provisions we have to treat. The first one is in relation to chart of account 6323 – Constitutional Agencies. It contains the sum requested and the sum recommended, and we move that the sum recommended be accepted by this House.

*Item 55-551 Supreme Court -Supreme Court of Judicature – Constitutional Agencies - \$165,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Item 59-591 - ETHNIC RELATIONS COMMISSION - \$29,251,365**

*Item 59-591 Ethnic Relations Commission – Constitutional Agencies - \$29,251,365, agreed to and ordered to start part of the Estimates.*



*Question:*

“That this Committee of Supply approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 2018 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$ 7,584,274,488 for the period 1st January, 2018 to 31st December, 2018.”

*put, and agreed to.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in Financial No. 3 of 2018 – Schedule of supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$7,584,274,488, and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS NO. 13 (N) & 54**

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I move that Standing Orders No. 13(N) & 54 be suspended to enable the Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 3 of 2018 – Bill No. 12 of 2018 to be introduced at this stage.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Standing Orders suspended.*

**Mr. Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 171 of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended a Supplementary Appropriation (No. 3) Bill 2018 – Bill No. 12 of 2018 for consideration by the National Assembly and I now present the Bill to the Assembly and move that it be read the first time.

*2.18 a.m.*

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILL AND FIRST READING**

The following Bill was introduced and read the first time:

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 3 FOR 2018) BILL 2018 – BILL NO. 12 OF 2018**

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of the Cooperative Republic for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” [Minister of Finance]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read for the first time.*

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**GOVERNMENT’S BUSINESS**

**BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS**

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 3 FOR 2018) BILL 2018 – BILL NO. 12 OF 2018**

A BILL intituled:

“An Act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of the Cooperative Republic for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” [Minister of Finance]

**Mr. Jordan:** I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 3 for 2018) Bill 2018, Bill No. 12 of 2018 be read the second time.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Bill read for the second time.*

**Mr. Jordan:** I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 3 for 2018) Bill 2018, Bill No. 3 of 2018 be read the third time and passed as printed.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read a third time and passed as printed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this brings to an end our work for this evening. I thank you for your assistance throughout the evening. I ask the Prime Minister to move the adjournment.

**Dr. Persaud:** Mr. Speaker, one of the loveliest festivals is approaching on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. It is a festival with spiritual and social dimensions. Socially, it unifies all, bringing people together in an atmosphere of fraternity, camaraderie and with a spirit of joyousness. It is spiritual because we are urged to find divinity within and let the light within radiate externally so that it could influence people in a positive direction.

We are celebrating the festival of lights or Deepavali. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of this side of the House, to wish everyone gathered here tonight – yourself, the Clerk of the National Assembly and staff of the Parliament Office, members of the media, Members of the other side of the House and my Colleagues - a very happy Deepavali. Shub Deepavali to all of you. I hope that you could join us at the motorcade on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 because it is unique to Guyana and it is a very special activity as we prepare for Deepavali. To everyone tonight, happy Deepavali. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank you. You will allow me, on behalf of the House, to express the very sentiments – Shub Deepavali.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, I would like, on behalf of the Government of Guyana and my Colleagues in the National Assembly, to wish you, other Members of Staff of the Parliament Office and all Colleagues in this National Assembly, happy Deepavali or Diwali. I concur with my Hon. Colleague, Dr. Persaud, that it is an occasion of lights. It is an occasion, as we celebrate annually at the residence, of love and music as well. We hope that we will allow our lives to be illuminated by the symbols of this occasion.

Also, we would not be able to meet again here before the holding of Local Government Elections (LGE). While we wish that we enjoy the peace of the festive event on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, that should also pervade well into 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 when we will have Local Government Elections. We urge that these elections be peaceful, that they encourage all of our citizens to participate in the democratic process and that we do not descend to acts of hate speeches, threats, violence or arson against anyone who is involved as candidates, as supporters or backers of candidates. People should vote for whichever party or individuals they feel would best serve their interests.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

In saying these, I request that this House be adjourned to Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 at 2.00 p.m.

*Adjourned accordingly at 2.28 a.m.*