

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

(VOLUME I)

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIRST LEGISLATURE CONSTITUTED UNDER THE
BRITISH GUIANA (CONSTITUTION)
ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1961

24th Sitting

Monday, 16th April, 1962.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present :

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. R. B. Gajraj.

*Members of the Government
People's Progressive Party
Ministers*

Dr. the Honourable C. B. Jagan	<i>—Premier and Minister of Development and Planning (Member for Corentyne—East)</i>
The Honourable B. H. Benn	<i>—Minister of Natural Resources (Member for Demerara Coast—West)</i>
The Honourable Ram Karran	<i>—Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Member for Mahaica)</i>
The Honourable B. S. Rai	<i>—Minister of Home Affairs (Member for Dem- erara Coast—East)</i>
The Honourable R. Chandisingh	<i>—Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Member for Lower Demerara River)</i>

Dr. the Honourable Charles Jacob, Jr. —*Minister of Finance (Member for Vreed-en-Hoop)*

Dr. the Honourable F. H. W. Ramsahoye—*Attorney-General (Member for Can't Polder)*

The Honourable E. M. G. Wilson —*Minister of Communications (Member for Boerasirie)*

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. L. E. M. Mann —*Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics (Member for Mahaicony)*

Other Members

Mr. S. M. Saffee —*(Member for Berbice—West)*

Mr. G. L. Robertson —*(Member for Leonora)*

Mr. J. B. Caldeira —*(Member for Pomeroon)*

Mr. V. Downer —*(Member for Berbice—East)*

Mr. M. Hamid —*(Member for Demerara—Central)*

Mr. D. C. Jagan —*(Member for Suddie)*

Mr. H. Lall —*(Member for Corentyne—West)*

Mr. M. Shakoor —*(Member for Corentyne River)*

Members Constituting the Minority

(i) *People's National Congress*

Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C. —*(Member for Ruimveldt)*

Mr. W. O. R. Kendall, Deputy Speaker —*(Member for New Amsterdam)*

Mr. J. Carter —*(Member for Werk-en-Rust)*

Mr. E. F. Correia —*(Member for Mazaruni-Potaro)*

Mr. N. J. Bissember —*(Member for Campbellville)*

Mr. W. A. Blair —*(Member for Berbice River)*

Mr. R. S. S. Hugh —*(Member for Georgetown—South)*

Mr. J. G. Joaquín —*(Member for Kitty)*

Mr. R. J. Jordan —*(Member for Upper Demerara River)*

Mr. C. A. Merriman —*(Member for La Penitence-Lodge)*

Mr. H. M. S. Wharton —*(Member for Abary)*

(ii) *United Force*

Mr. P. S. d'Aguiar —*(Member for Georgetown—Central)*

Mr. R. E. Checks —*(Member for Georgetown—North)*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing—*Clerk of the Legislature*

Mr. E. V. Viapree—*Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.*

ABSENT:

Mr. G. Bowman, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources—*(Member for Corentyne Central)—on leave*

Mr. M. Bhagwan—*(Member for Essequibo Islands)*

Mr. S. Campbell — *(Member for North West) — on leave*

Mr. E. E. Melville — *(Member for Rupununi) — on leave.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE
SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker : Honourable Members, the hon. Member for North West (Mr. Campbell) has applied for and has been granted leave from the 16th to the 20th April.

The hon. Member for Rupununi (Mr. Melville) has been granted leave for today and tomorrow.

The hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge (Mr. Merriman) is in Esse-qui-bo, and has not been able, through lack of conveyance, to be here at the moment. He has telephoned to say that he expects to be with us this afternoon.

LETTERS OF APOLOGY FROM THE
DAILY CHRONICLE

I am in receipt of a letter from the General Manager of the *Daily Chronicle* conveying an apology for the article appearing in the newspaper on Friday, 13th April, challenging the Speaker's ruling. Hon. Members will recall that I had called upon that newspaper to make an apology in the next issue. The apology was duly published in the issue of Saturday, 14th April, and the following letter has been addressed to the Speaker:

"14th April, 1962.

Dear Sir,

We should like to refer to an article published on page 4 of the Chronicle on April 13, entitled "Budget Debate".

We understand now that the motives for publishing this article are capable of being misconstrued.

We wish to say that we have the highest regard for the manner in which you have carried out the onerous duty of Speaker of the House of Assembly, with absolute impartiality and the maximum of dignity. We wish to express therefore, our sincere apology for any offence which

we may have given and regret any embarrassment which we may have caused.

We should appreciate it if you would convey to the Honourable Members of the House our apologies and assure them that we had no intention of infringing their rights and privileges or the rights and privileges of the House.

Yours sincerely,

THE DAILY CHRONICLE LTD.

(sgd.) C. A. Nascimento

General Manager (actg.)"

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS
PURCHASE AND SALE OF LAND
BY D'AGUIAR BROS. LTD.

Mr. d'Aguiar (Georgetown Central): Mr. Speaker, at last sitting of the Assembly on the 13th April, the hon. Minister of Finance said that—

Mr. Speaker: The first step is to seek the permission of the Chair.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I thought I had been granted that permission. May I have the permission of the Chair to make a personal explanation regarding the statement made by the hon. Minister of Finance concerning me at the last sitting of the Assembly?

Mr. Speaker : Permission is granted.

Mr. d'Aguiar: The hon. Minister of Finance made the following statement on the 13th April, 1962, and I will quote from an extract from the *Hansard* report:

"... I have here an extract from the records at the Deeds Registry. It refers to the purchase, on the 14th April, 1956, by Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers, Ltd. of 6.9 acres of land on Lots A and B, Ruimveldt for the sum of \$27,500, that is \$4,515 per acre. On the same day, not 6.9 acres but 4.3 acres of that land were sold to a Company called Bank Breweries, Ltd., for not \$27,500, the purchase price of the much larger area, but \$40,000" for.

The implication behind this is obvious, and I would like to make a full ex-

[MR. d'AGUIAR]

planation of what took place. First of all, d'Aguiar Brothers, Ltd. had been endeavouring to purchase land in order to construct a rum bond since 1950. They had made a deal to purchase a site in High Street. This was sold for \$120,000. In 1955, in January or February, an agreement was made with Messrs. Sandbach Parker & Co. Ltd. to sell to Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers, Ltd. for the purpose of establishing a rum bond, having regard to the fact that they buy exclusively from Messrs. Sandbach Parker & Co. Ltd. the land at Ruimveldt at the cost of \$5,000 per acre. It was agreed that about 1½ acres would be sold at that price.

Later in the same year, that is, in 1955, the Bank Breweries Company was beginning to be formulated and the prospectus was not issued until September, 1955. Before it was issued, Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers & Co. Ltd. went to Messrs. Sandbach Parker & Co., Ltd. and asked them to be good enough to sell a larger piece of land at the same price of \$5,000 an acre in order to include the Bank Breweries. They agreed to do so, and Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers, Ltd. made the initial deposits as early as May, 1955, and acquired a piece of land which had not yet been surveyed, but was estimated to be 6 acres and would cost \$30,000. When Bank Breweries, Ltd. was formed, Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers, Ltd. had already started levelling and preparing the land. The land was crisscrossed with ponds and trenches, and it was estimated that it would take 5,000 loads of earth to fill them at a cost of \$20,000. When the prospectus was issued, the agreement had already been made with Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers, Ltd.

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Jagan (Suddie): On a point order. Your Honour, I do not see how the hon. Member can raise, as a personal explanation, something that refers

to d'Aguiar Brothers Limited—a company. “Personal explanation”, I take it, would refer to an individual as something that affects him himself, but not to a company of which he may be a Director.

Mr. Speaker: Let us not be splitting hairs over a matter like this. Hon. Members of the House know fully well that whenever they speak about “d'Aguiar Brothers Limited”, the hand is always pointed to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central. How are you now going to divide the responsibility of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central from the actions of d'Aguiar Brothers Limited, of which, as you all know, he is the principal shareholder?

As Speaker, I rule that the hon. Member is making a personal explanation. The day that hon. Members would wish to rule this House themselves, the position is simple. I am here because you want me. The day that Members do not wish me, I will not foist myself upon them.

Mr. Jagan: My contention is——

Mr. Speaker: I have ruled, and the position now is for the hon. Member for Georgetown Central to continue. I am not permitting any further interruption.

Mr. d'Aguiar: For the benefit of the House, I am the Chairman and Managing Director of d'Aguiar Brothers Limited, and the hon. Minister of Finance referred to “Messrs. d'Aguiar Brothers” while looking at me.

Then, if I may continue, on the 5th May, d'Aguiar Brothers made a deposit, and it was agreed that when the company was formed they would sell three-quarters of the land, amounting to 4½ acres, for \$40,000; that they would undertake to do all the filling which had already started, and

that they would hand it over to the Brewery in a condition ready for building. That was done and, in fact, the total amount of land when it was surveyed—and the survey was made on the 10th August, 1955—turned out to be 5½ acres costing \$27,500.

Although 4.22 acres were earmarked for the Brewery, and 1.5 retained by d'Aguiar Brothers Limited, the total cost of the filling came up to \$9,971. So in fact, when the transaction was completed, d'Aguiar Brothers did make a profit of \$3,028.14 and they did retain 1.5 acres. That was explained to the Directors of the company at a meeting held as early as possible after its formation. In fact, it was at the very second meeting of the Directors held on 16th September, 1955, and it is stated, if I may quote from the Minutes of that meeting, as follows:

“The Directors thanked the Chairman for his thorough explanations and were fully satisfied that the contract made for the purchase of the land for \$40,000 levelled and filled in, was in the best interest of Bank Breweries Limited.”

If I may further state, the company, Bank Breweries Limited, has just recently bought the adjoining piece of land and it paid Sandbach Parker Limited \$21,000 per acre, whereas when it was acquired by d'Aguiar Brothers Limited and sold to the Brewery, levelled, it cost only \$9,000 per acre. Recently, the company paid \$21,000 per acre for the adjoining land which is unprepared.

Mr. Speaker: But that has nothing to do with the question in point.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

APPROPRIATION BILL — BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: The House now goes into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the 1962 Estimates

which were presented to the Legislature. Hon. Members, may I report that the Business Sub-Committee, which had its meeting here on the 31st January, 1962, resolved to recommend —

“that a maximum of seven days should be allotted for discussion of the Bill in Committee of Supply but that if the question on the second reading of the Bill is determined before the last day allotted (February 16), the day or days thus saved should be added to the days allotted for consideration of the Bill in Committee of Supply.”

As you know, we took the full five days in the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill. Therefore, we have no time left for adding to the seven days. So, starting today, we have seven sitting days as the maximum allotted for consideration of the Estimates in Committee of Supply. Hon. Members, I am sure, have checked their Standing Orders to see the procedure which we shall follow in the Committee of Supply. It is laid down in Standing Orders 66 and 67, so we shall bear these in mind as we proceed.

Hon. Members will have received a cyclostyled document in four pages and a little more which are proposals by the hon. Minister of Finance for “move-ins” to the Recurrent Estimates. In accordance with the Standing Orders, any proposals of this nature have to stand on the Table of the House for at least one day, so that if we reach any of the Heads concerned, they cannot be considered today but will be deferred to tomorrow.

Mr. Burnham (Ruimveldt): On a point of order. As I understand Standing Order 67(1), we cannot look at them until Wednesday. “One clear day” means excluding the day on which you start and the day on which you end. Therefore, it would be Wednesday. I think the hon. the Attorney-General (Dr. Ramsahoye) will agree with me that one clear day from today will be Wednesday.

The Attorney-General (Dr. Ram-sahoye): The day they were presented cannot be counted, so my hon. and learned Friend would be right. They cannot be considered until Wednesday.

Mr. Burnham: I was about to move the suspension of Standing Order 67(1) to allow us to proceed with them and also to allow the Opposition to move amendments to Subheads. [Laughter.] I was offering a *quid pro quo*.

Mr. Speaker: I think we should rather stick to what is in the Standing Order. I do not think there will be any tremendous delay having one clear day, because we have so many other Heads we can deal with instead of dealing with those particular ones. So we will move on.

If hon. Members will get out their Estimates—

Mr. Burnham: On a point of order. The Mace is still on the Table. [Laughter.]

Mr. Speaker: Yes. Thank you. [The Marshal removed the Mace from the Table.] We are in Committee.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

DRAFT ESTIMATES 1962

Head 1 — Governor — deferred.

Head 2 — Governor's Office — \$52,492 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 3 — Volunteer Force — \$117,306 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 4 — Supreme Court & Deeds Registry — deferred.

MAGISTRATES

Head 5 — Magistrates — \$437,470.

Mr. Burnham: For a number of years, as far back as 1957/1958, the attention of the Government has been drawn to the fact that the accommodation of the Magistrates Office in Georgetown is inadequate, palpably inadequate, what with the Magistrates' Clerks being housed in part of that building; then the Collecting Officer and his staff and the Head Bailiff and his staff. But, in spite of these observations that have been made since 1958, there has been no obvious improvement.

Apart from the question of accommodation there, the housing of some of these Magistrates Courts leaves a great deal to be desired. I remember, in 1958, I directed the attention of the Government to the Sisters Court on the West Bank Demerara River where, very frequently during court, flies from the Pounds tormented the Magistrate, the litigants and counsel. Apart from that, it is a task similar to that performed by those who fit sardines into tins to get a witness into the witness box at that particular court.

The whole thing, I submit, is not conducive to the proper administration of justice. It must tell on the temper of the Magistrate and the temper of all concerned, and apart from that, there is the question of that absence of dignity without which I feel it is impossible to administer justice properly. We have had this brought to the attention of this Government over and over again and up to now, we have not had any improvement. The only thing that has happened since we first raised this question in 1958, if I am correct, is the building of a new Magistrates Court at New Amsterdam. Apart from that, the conditions of accommodation remain most disgusting.

2.30 p.m.

The Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Ram Karran): Government cannot agree with the hon.

Member more. I was in the Magistrate's Court this morning and I saw the conditions under which the Magistrates work. Very shortly Government will be in a position to build a Magistrate's Court, a building to accommodate seven courts in Georgetown. There will also be an extension of the Victoria Law Courts which will provide added accommodation for the Courts, and for the Department of Lands and Mines, and I think that will bring about an easing of the congestion in Georgetown.

Mr. Burnham : I appreciate the answer of the Minister so far as the Georgetown courts are concerned, but I am still to hear from him about the other courts to which I have referred, especially the Sister's court, which is a most wretched place. I think it is not many months ago when the Attorney-General, as a member of the legal profession, visited that court, and I am sure he will agree with me. I do not think there is any difference between our aesthetic sense. I would ask the Minister to be a little fuller so that we can hear of the general policy with respect to the accommodation of Magistrates' courts and their staffs.

I would also hope that the Minister of Finance will be in a position to explain to us how it is that we still have the posts of bailiff-interpreters when I think there had been a recommendation which was accepted by the Government, to assimilate those posts into the normal Clerical Service.

The Minister of Finance (Dr. Jacob): Three of the bailiff-interpreters have become clerk-interpreters.

Mr. Burnham: What is the meaning of the statement that three of the six bailiff-interpreters have become clerk-interpreters? I recall a statement made in this Chamber early in 1961 by the then Financial Secretary, to the effect that there had been a recommendation,

which was accepted by the Government, that the bailiff-interpreters be assimilated into the Clerical Service—not put into the special category of clerk-interpreters. It was admitted at that time that there was no need for interpreters *per se*, and that these bailiff-interpreters who for years have been acting as members of the established Clerical Service, would be assimilated into the Clerical Service at the appropriate points. It was not a question of creating a new category of clerk-interpreters, but of bringing the bailiff-interpreters into the established Clerical Service. On that point I have the support of the then Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan) whose absence from the House robs it of feminine adornment.

Dr. Jacob : My information is that the bailiff-interpreters have been reclassified as clerk-interpreters on the recommendation of the Magistrates.

Mr. Burnham: I will not be too harsh with the Minister of Finance who is newer to this House than I am, and he is very new to his post, but I would like to say that the recommendation of the Magistrates on this question, which was accepted by the Financial Secretary at that time, was to the effect that the bailiff-interpreters should be assimilated into the Clerical Service, and not made clerk-interpreters. So I am pretty sure that the Finance Minister's information is inaccurate.

Mr. Ram Karna : I propose to find out in detail what is the position with respect to the Sisters court and other courts outside of Georgetown, and will inform the hon. Member at a later stage.

Mr. Burnham : My mother used to say that "the soft word turneth away wrath." But the Minister is not going to turn away my wrath on this question because he is not new to the House or to his Ministry, and he knows that this question of the Magistrates' courts has

[MR BURNHAM]

been raised consistently from 1958. When we accuse this Government of being incompetent we are accused of being insulting to Government, but isn't it incompetence or callousness when a Minister, after four years, cannot discover what is the true position with regard to Sisters Court and other Courts? If he cannot discover it by now, then there is incompetence in high places.

Head 5. Magistrates—\$437,470—agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

LEGISLATURE

Head 6. Legislature—\$59,442.

Sub-head 6 — Remuneration for Ministerial Private Secretaries, \$12,984.

Mr. Correia (Mazaruni-Potaro): Who are these Ministerial Private Secretaries?

Dr. Jacob: They are persons employed in the Ministerial Building as Private Secretaries to the Ministers. Another is Private Secretary to the Premier.

Mr. Bissember (Campbellville): I would like to know how many Ministerial Private Secretaries there are, and what Ministries they serve.

Dr. Jacob: The Premier has one Private Secretary. In the Ministerial Building there are two other Private Secretaries who serve all of the other Ministries.

Mr. Burnham I have no objection to the Premier having a Private Secretary to himself, because I agree that his duties are onerous. I agree that his position is one of dignity, and that he must have a little more kudos, but what

I object to is that while the Premier's Private Secretary, an importee, gets \$720, the two local Private Secretaries get a miserly salary of \$100 per month. What discrimination! Is this the sort of thing we are going to have from a nationalist and socialist Government? Government cannot tell me that because the Premier's Private Secretary is a solicitor he must get \$720 and extras to bring his emoluments up to \$882. He is not employed *qua* solicitor but *qua* Private Secretary, and if you are finding jobs for the boys you should not discriminate.

Dr. Jacob: The hon. Member said that the Premier was the most important Minister, and since the duties performed by the Private Secretary to the Premier are more onerous than those performed by the other Ministerial Private Secretaries, it does not seem to be wrong to pay the Premier's Private Secretary a higher salary than that paid to the other Private Secretaries.

Mr. Burnham: Never have I heard so spurious an argument. Let us consider it—one Private Secretary to one Premier, two Private Secretaries to eight Ministers. It means that one Private Secretary is worth 8.82 times one of the other Private Secretaries. What sort of socialism is this? The Premier's Private Secretary is actually getting more than the Attorney-General who gets \$840, while a little solicitor from Trinidad gets over \$882. The Attorney-General is the head of the legal profession.

Question put that Head 6—Legislature, \$59,442,—stand part of the Schedule.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 13, Noes 11 as follows:

<i>Ayes</i>	<i>Noes</i>
Mr. Lall	Mr. Cheeks
Mr. Jagan	Mr. d'Aguiar
Mr. Hamid	Mr. Wharton
Mr. Downer	Mr. Jordan
Mr. Robertson	Mr. Joaquin
Mr. Mann	Mr. Hugh
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Blair
Dr. Ramsahoye	Mr. Bissember
Dr. Jacob	Mr. Correia
Mr. Chandisingh	Mr. Kendall
Mr. Ram Karran	Mr. Burnham-11.
Mr. Benn	
Dr. Jagan-13.	

Head passed at \$59,442.

2.45 p.m.

Heads 7 and 8 deferred.

AGRICULTURE

Head 9. Agriculture— \$2,130,193

Mr. Burnham: This Head represents an increase of several thousand dollars over last year's expenditure. On a careful perusal of the Head I see that, in the majority of cases, this increase is due to increments. This increase is \$44,000.

The Chairman: If you look at page 18 you will see the comparison between 1961 and this year. Your figures are incorrect.

Mr. Burnham : I thank you for drawing my attention to that. A remark has been made this year on the Second Reading of the Bill—I did not hear the hon. Minister, under whose portfolio agriculture falls, deny the accuracy of it—that in many of the river-rain agricultural areas the services of agricultural instructors and officers are not available to the people.

As a matter of fact, I recall that, some time last year when I was in Berbice, the farmers complained that they had not seen an agricultural officer for eighteen months. It is not that the agricultural officers are lazy, but it seems to me that it a question of agricultural officers having areas that are too large for them to supervise pro-

perly and their assistance is thereby impaired. I wonder whether the Government will tell us what is proposed to be done in this matter? Is it proposed to increase the number of agricultural officers with a view to assisting more people in these areas?

Unless the Government is going to concentrate exclusively on the growing of rice—I have reason to believe that it will not undertake exclusively the growing of rice—the advice and service of our agricultural officers will be urgently needed in other areas. I wonder whether the Members of this Government will tell us what they propose to do to remedy this very difficult situation?

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): Subject to the availability of funds, this Government is doing its best to make available agricultural officers and instructors for all areas in this country. In the Berbice River, particularly, the agricultural officer, who is stationed at Mara, uses the dispenser's boat to make regular visits on the river. No funds have yet been made available to provide a boat for the agricultural officers on the Berbice River.

The agricultural officer on the Essequibo Islands District is using the District Commissioner's boat, because the boat used by the agricultural officer is undergoing repairs. The Government intends to build a house and station agricultural officers up the Berbice River. At present regular visits are made by the agricultural officers on the Berbice River. The Government is not concentrating exclusively on the growing of rice. The Government is presently paying bonuses to farmers who are prepared to plant cocoa, coconuts, other green vegetables and rear beef. The Government is giving planting material such as citrus to farmers in the various parts of the country. This Government is the only Government which has taken positive action on the diversification of agriculture.

Mr. Burnham: I do not propose to fight the hon. Minister of Natural Resources literally, if he says that this Government is "presently"—presently does not mean at the present time, but at some time in the future—paying bonuses to people who grow coconuts and other green vegetables. I presume he means that at the present moment Government is giving bonuses to people who grow coconuts and other green vegetables. It is not sufficient to say that Government is going to build a house in the Berbice River for agricultural officers so that regular visits may be made. The point is: Does the Government propose to have more agricultural officers so that their advice and assistance can be made available to the people?

As I see it, from my knowledge, the agricultural officer stationed at Mara can serve more people if he is given the necessary transport facilities, but one cannot expect him to cover the area effectively in the absence of proper transportation. I am not interested in knowing whether Government is going to build a house further up the Berbice River. I am interested in finding out whether Government is going to spend money in subsidizing other crops.

I am not going to accuse the Members of the Government of spending money exclusively on rice, because I have already said that they have learnt some wisdom in this matter. If they are going to subsidize crops and give bonuses, then they should have more agricultural officers available for giving advice. All we have heard from the hon. Minister is that Government proposes to build a house on the Berbice River and that the agricultural officer in the Essequibo Islands has to use the District Commissioner's boat. I did not expect to hear that.

If the hon. Minister of Natural Resources feels that more agricultural officers are necessary to do the work,

then he should have instructed his Permanent Secretary to provide for them in the Estimates. I wonder whether the hon. Minister will tell us what preparations this Government is making to prevent a serious recurrence of foot-and-mouth disease?

Mr. Benn: The Government has in training one dozen persons who hope to become agricultural instructors, or agricultural field assistants. These officers are to be stationed in various parts of the country. There has been a considerable expansion in agricultural development over the past few years, and the Government has tried to make available the services of as many agricultural officers and agricultural assistants as are at its disposal.

With regard to foot-and-mouth disease, the agricultural officers have been inoculating animals, but it is extremely difficult to fight this type of disease. The Government has had the assistance of experts from Argentine and Brazil in this matter. Investigations are now being undertaken to determine what can be done to prevent a recurrence of foot-and-mouth disease. In the meantime the Rupununi has been divided — North from South — in order to prevent the movement of animals from place to place and spreading the disease.

Mr. Kendall: (New Amsterdam): I heard the hon. Minister say that in his Government's attempt to diversify agriculture, it is giving a bonus to farmers to encourage the cultivation of cocoa. I do not know whether this Government is aware that the firm that introduced the expansion of cocoa cultivation in British Guiana in its attempt to make it a paying crop has discontinued its operation. [Interruption.] I do not know whether the Government will still continue to encourage the cultivation of cocoa by giving bonuses.

I would like to find out from the hon. Minister whether it is true that certain fully-trained agricultural officers

are somewhat frustrated, because they are not given an opportunity to make the fullest use of their agricultural knowledge with a view to helping the people of this country?

Mr. Benn : If the hon. Member knows about the frustration of agricultural officers—he has not been specific—he can pass on specific information to my Ministry, and we will be able to reply to his statement.

On the question of cocoa, the Government is aware that there will be opportunities for the sale of this product despite the market and world trends.

On the question of paying bonuses, the Government is quite satisfied that the bonuses now being paid to persons who are going in for cocoa production are satisfactory. The Agricultural Department is now undertaking a further examination of the bonus schemes.

Mr. Kendall : The hon. Minister has asked me to be more specific. I know that the Agricultural Officer in Berbice was trained in the United Kingdom, and from his discussion with me he seems to be somewhat frustrated because his knowledge is not being used as he expected it would have been used. He is merely doing things which an ordinary clerk should do.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member has given us no further information.

The Chairman: I do not think we should encourage specific statements of this nature when we are referring to civil servants. Civil servants have nobody in this House to reply on their behalf when charges are made against them. In the circumstances, civil servants must be protected by the Chair. If there are no more details to be given, then the Deputy Speaker can speak with the hon. Minister

outside of this Chamber and give him the necessary information, but not in the hearing of the public.

3 p.m.

Mr. Kendall : I agree with you, Mr. Chairman. I think the observation was made a few days ago and the Minister was present.

Subhead 19 — Artificial Insemination Service.

Mr. Jordan: I would like to ask why the Government is spending less on the Artificial Insemination Service than on the fishing industry.

Mr. Benn: I am advised that the services have been organized to give more production at less cost.

Mr. Hugh : (Georgetown South): While I appreciate the answer of the hon. Minister on the question of foot-and-mouth disease, I do not agree that the control of animal diseases in this country is going to be as effective as it should be by the mere enlargement of the staff.

The Chairman: I will permit the hon. Member, as he is new, to speak on this now, but we have already passed that. The position is this: in discussion in Committee of Supply, the general question is considered, and if a particular section of it is raised we must finish that before we go on to another section. If another hon. Member tries to pass on to another Subhead and a Member wishes to continue discussions on a Subhead raised he must draw the attention of the Chair to it. We cannot proceed backwards and forwards as though we are playing a game. When we have passed something, we have passed it; but I will permit the hon. Member to continue on this occasion.

Mr. Hugh: I notice an increase on Subhead 5: Laboratories and Equipment—Maintenance, and I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps

[MR. HUGH]

are being taken to set up proper laboratory facilities here to identify with some accuracy diseases in the poultry and livestock industries.

Mr. Benn: I am sorry the hon. Member does not know the country. If he pays a visit to the Mon Repos Agricultural Station, he will see a brand new laboratory there. All that remains to be done is for electricity to be installed. In the meanwhile, the laboratory and equipment have been housed in certain staff quarters at the Mon Repos Agricultural Station. If the hon. Member reads *Thunder* he will see what is being done.

The Chairman: Are the hon. Members given the opportunity of seeing what is done?

Mr. Hugh: That answer is not satisfactory, and, furthermore, there is no vote for staff.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I wish to refer to cattle farmers, if I am in order, Mr. Chairman. Cattle farmers in certain areas have been severely hit by the foot-and-mouth disease. It must be admitted, and I am sure the Government will admit, that they contribute just as much to the economy of the country in the supply of vital materials, such as protein, as any rice farmer.

It is easy for rice farmers to get loans, but the cattle farmers who have been hit by the foot-and-mouth disease to the point where they have had to close down sales, are now in the position where they cannot continue employing cattle-hands. They have, I believe, been promised loans by the Government, at least up to the amount of the sales they made through Government before the disease hit them. I would ask the hon. Minister if he would indicate whether or not these promises are being fulfilled,

and if so, when would the cattle farmers have the opportunity of getting the promised loans.

Mr. Benn: The Government has under consideration the question of providing, by way of loans, some relief to the cattle farmers in the Rupununi — as that is the only place affected — who have suffered as a result of the outbreak of the foot and mouth disease. As soon as a decision on this matter has been taken by the Government, the cattle farmers in the Rupununi will be told about it. They have written to me and the hon. Member for Rupununi (Mr. Melville) has taken up this matter, and I had undertaken to see that these loans are supplied as soon as the Government is able to come to a decision on the manner in which the loans are to be made, how they are to be repaid and other matters connected with them.

Mr. d'Aguiar: This a matter of extreme urgency. The foot-and-mouth disease hit the Rupununi some time ago — I cannot remember exactly when, but it was some months ago. Meanwhile, the farmers are in absolutely desperate straits, and the cattle-hands are unable to get employment. There is desperation up there because the only source of income was from the cattle. So I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he would expedite consideration of this question of granting loans.

Mr. Benn: The Government appreciates the urgency of the situation, and the matter will be expedited.

PRODUCTION OF PURE STRAIN SEED PADDY

Mr. Correia (Mazaruni-Potaro). Will the hon. Minister tell us why such a big increase on Subhead 9—Production of Pure Strain Seed Paddy? There is an increase of \$46,000 over 1961. I notice in the Estimates of Revenue, the Government expects to collect \$130,000, and in 1961, it collected

\$125,000 in revenue from seed padi. Is not \$130,000 an underestimate of the amount that will be collected in view of the increase of \$46,000 for producing padi?

Mr. Benn: The amount is not underestimated. It has been based on Government's experience in past years. A man may have over 200 acres of land under rice, but only 106 acres under pure line seed padi. That shows the great need for planting more land with pure line seed. We have to get about 190,000 acres of land put under proper padi. However, Government is working towards reducing the amount of assistance given. This is certainly a loan because it is repaid. This is sold for cash to the farmers, but there is the usual waste and all that that entails. The Government is encouraging farmers to put small portions of their own land under pure line seed so that they can supply themselves.

Mr. Correia: That is not so.

Mr. Benn: On a point of order. I do not know what the hon. Member means by "that is not so".

The Chairman: The hon. Minister has made a statement, and the hon. Member gets up and says "that is not so". In other words, the inference is clear that the hon. Minister has endeavoured to mislead the House. I do not think that that is the way in which it should be put. Perhaps, the hon. Member thinks that you may have something else to say.

Mr. Correia: The hon. Minister said that the money is a loan—

The Chairman: I think he corrected that. He said "loan" at first, but then he realized it was not a loan and said that while the amount is expended, it is recovered, in part, from sales.

Mr. Correia: In part! But what part? In 1961, \$210,000 was estimated for the same item and the Government

recovered revenue of \$125,000 — a difference of \$85,000 which went down the drain. Nobody paid for that.

Mr. Benn: The year overlaps with the distribution of the seed and sometimes there is the usual waste as a result of bad germination and so on, and it is necessary to give the farmers more seed for the money which they have paid.

Mr. Correia: Does that go on from year to year? If the hon. Minister would look back he would see it is the same proportion from year to year.

The Chairman: I am not defending the Government or anyone, but I would say this. I think all over the world, as hon. Members must know, where production for seed purposes obtains, it costs more than you recover from the farmers. If you are to recover everything from the farmers, then it will be said that the cost is very high.

Mr. Correia: I would accept that from the hon. Minister if he would tell us, and not try to beat about the bush.

Mr. Benn: I do not know what the hon. Member means by "beating about the bush". I do not know what he knows about pure line seed padi cultivation. The Government is endeavouring to encourage pure line seed padi cultivation. If the farmers do not plant pure line seed padi, then there will be a low standard of rice produced in the country.

Mr. Correia: I can now agree with the explanation given by the hon. Minister, but I challenge the difference of \$46,000 between 1961 and 1962. If the hon. Minister—

Mr. Benn: Padi is not planted in bush.

The Chairman: I thought you would have complimented the hon. Minister for removing the bush.

Mr. Kendall: For a long time we have been having pure line seed padi, and I understand it is producing very good rice. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if, in view of the advanced mechanization in the reaping of padi, the Government has gone into any research for improving the stalk of the plant so that there will not be so much padi remaining in the field after the machines have gone through.

Mr. Benn: This is being constantly done at the Mon Repos Agricultural Station, and the Government has an area of land at the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Development Scheme where this type of investigation is being carried out. A new strain of rice is also being produced to meet the standard of the new machines and would not shatter so easily.

Mr. Kendall: How soon will the farmers have the results of these investigations at Mon Repos so that they may benefit?

Mr. Benn: Investigation into new strains is a continuous process. Four new varieties will be made available to the farmers as a result of investigations. The Government continues all the time investigating new strains, so I cannot answer the question as to how soon because I do not know what the hon. Member wishes to be supplied to the farmers.

Mr. Kendall: What I am thinking about is this: within the last 15 years, we have changed three or four experts who have been trying to produce a type of padi to give good rice. I do not know whether the one employed on this particular exercise will be encouraged to remain and to continue, so that farmers will benefit from the amount spent on this investigation.

Mr. Burnham: I have a question to ask but it is not on rice or pure line seed.

The Chairman: Therefore, if there is no other question on rice or pure line seed, we may go on.

3.15 p.m.

Mr. Blair (Berbice River): I would like to go back to the Agricultural Assistants.

The Chairman: We should not go back, but I will extend the same courtesy to you as I did to the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Hugh).

Mr. Blair: Thank you, sir. I would like to ask the Minister when was the last time the agricultural officer visited the Berbice River. To my knowledge, and from information I received, the officer has not visited that district since 1959.

Mr. Benn: That is an atrocious statement. The Director of Agriculture himself has paid a visit.

The Chairman: Please let the hon. Member finish.

Mr. Blair: I repeat that since 1959 I do not think the Agricultural Officer has visited the Berbice River. I would like to know what the Minister meant when he said that the Agricultural Officer uses the dispenser's boat to visit the Berbice River. I think that an officer of that type should have his own boat so as to be able to visit one district after another, instead of confining his attention to one or two spots on the Berbice River. I know that no Agricultural Officer has visited the Berbice River within the last four years, going from place to place and giving advice to farmers.

Mr. Benn: I do not know what the hon. Member means. An Agricultural Officer visits the Berbice River

regularly. In addition to that, the Director of Agriculture paid a visit to the Berbice River in 1960. Regular visits are made to the Berbice River and the Agricultural Officer gives regular advice. At present there is a scheme at Maria Henrietta which the Agricultural Officer of the Berbice River put into operation. The hon. Member says he does not know. If he does not know he should find out.

Mr. Blair: I am thinking about regular visits to the Berbice River to give advice to the farmers. I am sure the Minister cannot say that the officer visited the Berbice River in that capacity within the past four years.

Mr. Benn: Yes, he has, and I say that more visits would be possible if an officer could be stationed higher up the river to encourage the people to plant new crops.

Mr. Burnham: However much I would like to accept the accuracy of the Minister I am not prepared to accept his *ipse dixit*. He says that the officer does visit regularly. On what date was his last visit?

Mr. Benn: I will tell you what day and what minute.

Mr. Burnham: When did he visit? Our information from people on the spot is that he has not visited since 1960. Do not say that he visits regularly.

The Chairman: Both statements have been made on information received. If there is some need for reconciliation that can be done outside the House. At the moment I do not think we can get any closer.

Mr. d'Aguiar: At an early stage the Minister referred to various agricultural products, but he did not mention bananas. I am informed that an expert

from the United Fruit Company tested the soil along the Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo Rivers, and found it suitable for banana cultivation. I am also informed that bananas yield a greater return per acre than any other crop, including sugar cane, and it would seem that the development of a banana industry here with a guaranteed market from the United Fruit Company would be the best means of diversifying our agriculture. I would like to ask the Minister what steps have been taken, if any, to develop a banana scheme along the banks of the rivers of British Guiana.

Mr. Benn: Schemes for banana cultivation on the Berbice River have been worked out, and the Government is awaiting the advice of Messrs. Elders and Fyffes. It would not be wise to undertake extensive cultivation of bananas until there is an assured market, and since Elders and Fyffes are interested they are the people who are trying to find markets. The Premier saw the principals of the Company in Boston when he was there last year, and further word is awaited. In the meanwhile he is examining the possibility of securing other markets for the export of bananas.

Mr. Carter (Werk-en-Rust) I assume that Government is also considering the question of the transportation of bananas, because I believe that ships with refrigeration facilities will be required. I read in the newspapers today a statement alleged to have come from Mr. Jack Alli, to the effect that Government was investigating the question of refrigeration space, and that there had been experimental shipments on Saguenay ships.

Mr. Blair: I would like to get some information from the Minister as to Government's intention in regard to the banana industry of which I have been hearing for some time, and about

[MR. BLAIR]

which I read in the newspapers this morning. It is very heartening to see that a banana industry is coming to realization, and I hope it will materialize in the near future.

There is also a question which I have been turning over in my mind for some time. I wonder whether the Government has any intention of allowing the owners of private land to share in this banana industry, or whether it will be restricted as a Government project. There are persons who own large areas of land and are hoping to hear about this industry, whether they will be given an opportunity to share in it, and I am wondering whether Government will carry out a soil survey on private lands so as to give the owners, who will grasp the opportunity to take part in the industry, the necessary advice as to the suitability of the soil.

Mr. Benn: Everybody will be asked to co-operate in this venture. Owners of private land will be asked to put their land under banana cultivation with the assistance and advice of people who know about it. The hon. Member for Werk-en-Rust (Mr. Carter) knows that Government officers have more wisdom than to consider the production and export of bananas unless there are refrigeration facilities. The Company which is interested in the production of bananas will provide its own bottoms.

Mr. Blair: I am glad for the answer from the Minister but I would like to go a step further by asking what is the form of assistance to the owners of land he referred to. Does he mean assistance in clearing their land and in carrying out soil surveys?

Mr. Benn: Soils have already been surveyed, and Government will give an idea of the assistance when the time comes. It is no use building up

too much hope. People have been told quite a lot about the project. If the hon. Member is in Berbice he should know about it.

The Chairman: The hon. Member has been spending a lot of time in this House.

Mr. Blair: I am well aware of what is going on in the Berbice River, but what I am not aware of is whether any private property has been surveyed. I know that Crown lands have been surveyed, but I am asking whether Government intends to give assistance in soil survey to the owners of private lands. Do I understand that private lands have been surveyed?

Mr. Benn: Surveys have been made of all the lands on the Berbice River.

Mr. Blair: Private property?

Mr. Benn: All the lands.

Mr. Burnham: I would like to direct the Minister's attention through you, Mr. Chairman, to a subject in which I am very much interested — fish. Of course I am a member of the *ad hoc* Fisheries Committee. I notice that the Fisheries (Inland) Officer is on secondment. It is my information that the Fisheries (Marine) Officer is carrying on the duties of the Inland Officer. It seems to me that if emphasis is to be placed on increasing our fish production we cannot have one officer responsible for duties previously carried out by two.

3.30 p.m.

Maybe I am wrong; maybe I am illogical, but I suspect that I am logical. The Government should certainly have taken steps to have the best Fisheries Officer possible to look after this matter — at least it could have taken a supernumerary officer to do the work on a temporary basis. At the same time we

find that a great deal of fish is produced in this country, and there are no proper facilities for storage and marketing. Let not the hon. Minister tell me no, because his Director of Agriculture will have to tell him that I am right. The Director of Agriculture is still on the Fisheries Committee.

At one time we read in the news papers about fish being thrown away, and at the same time people in the country cannot get fish to eat. It seems to me that this matter should be intelligently and urgently tackled by the Government. It is important that Government does something immediately in order to provide storage, distribution and proper refrigeration facilities. I would like to know what the Government is doing in this matter, because while all of this fish is being thrown away the poor people have to buy salmon and sardines.

Mr. Benn: The Government knows about the shortage of storage facilities for fish, and it has plans for improving the refrigeration facilities at the Marketing Centre. There is also a plan for placing ice-boxes all over the rural areas. One has been placed in New Amsterdam, I understand, and one at Bartica. The Government is proceeding with its plans. The great problem at the moment is to provide adequate refrigeration facilities at the Marketing Centre in Georgetown, and I can assure the hon. Member that the matter is being intelligently tackled.

Mr. Kendall: Since the refrigeration facilities have been improved in New Amsterdam, can the hon. Minister tell us what type of fish is being sent there?

Mr. Benn: I would not be able to say whether *Snapper*, *Banga Mary* and so on are being sent there. I do not keep these things in my head, but I am advised that fish is sent to New Amster-

dam. The hon. Member knows that, unless he gives me a written question, I will not be able to reply and give him details.

Mr. Kendall: The hon. Minister has advisers, and he is still unable to answer simple questions. *Banga Mary* can keep the people alive and strong, but if you send *Snapper* and other types of fish there it will be necessary to have proper refrigeration. There was a time when the hon. Minister would have eaten *Banga Mary*, but not now. [*Laughier.*]

Mr. Benn: There is no fish shortage in New Amsterdam. We are expanding the production of fish in that area. They can get *Hassar*, *Tilapia*, etc.

Mr. Burnham : It is a long time since I have not been able to get *Hassar* or curried-*Hassar*. I am very happy to hear the hon. Minister say that the Government has plans for proper storage and refrigeration facilities. I will be pardoned, if I play the same old tune with respect to another Department. Between 1957-1962 the Government still has plans! In 1957 the Government had this periodical glut and wastage of fish, and in 1962 the Government still has plans!

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member is making a hue and cry over a simple matter. He knows that this Government needs money. The Government has been trying to raise money to provide the necessary services for the country, and the hon. Member is merely talking with his tongue in his cheek when he refers to Government's plans. The plans cannot be carried out without money. When this Government tries to get money, hon. Members on the other side do not want to co-operate.

Mr. Kendall: We suggested how this Government could get \$3½ million. The Rice Producer's Association gets a

[MR. KENDALL]

considerable amount of support from the Government, and if Government were to put a cess on every bag of rice it would get a lot of money.

Mr. Benn: I have tried on a previous occasion to explain in my own way the economy of the rice industry to hon. Members. On another occasion the hon. Premier also explained it. I wish the hon. Member would make himself conversant with the economics of the rice industry before he gives his views in the future. Several experts have written about the rice industry in this country. Miss O'Loughlin wrote about it, and the hon. Member should have read the report. If he will endeavour to read the reports he will learn a lot.

Most of the land which has been put in rice over the last few years will be of some help to the country. Rice is a marginal crop, and it is true that the Government assists the farmers with drainage and irrigation. As a matter of fact, in the last three months 16,000 acres of land have been distributed by the Ministry of Natural Resources for rice production, and more than 15,000 acres of that land will be marginal land. The hon. Member for Abary knows about the Kabawer cattle pasture. When the Abary becomes flooded, the whole area would become a sea of water if the rice farmers failed to spend a lot of money to empolder the area.

Mr. Burnham: I understand it, and I have read Miss O'Loughlin's Report from page to page. But, when I told this House in 1960 of Miss O'Loughlin's statement that continued expenditure on the rice industry can only be justified on social and political but not economic grounds, I was laughed to scorn. Mr. Newman also pointed out that, apart from the money spent directly on rice, a lot of money was hidden in cadastral

surveys. We were also told that rice could not stand a cess. If it cannot stand a cess, then do something else with the money.

Mr. Benn: Hon. Members will recall that \$8 million was collected from rice. Hon. Members may also recall a Budget Statement by the hon. Financial Secretary some years ago when he referred to the ripples of the economy of this country when there is a good rice crop. If we do not have rice, we do not have a Budget.

Mr. Burnham: If you do not have rice, you do not have the P.P.P. Is the Government going to say that the rice producers are not prepared to make a contribution of 25c per bag? Perhaps the economic development of this country will show that they cannot afford it.

Mr. Benn: An investigation of one area in the country shows that the return on the holding of a rice farmer brings in less than \$3.04 per day, and that is the minimum wage a worker gets in the Government Services.

Mr. Burnham: What we have got from the hon. Minister of Natural Resources is that the Government is wasting money on rice, because the poor rice farmer get less than \$3.04 per day. Scrap the programme and do not increase rice production, if that is the position. Why does not the Government spend the money in a field where it will get better results, in so far as the poor man is concerned?

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Benn: The Government is diversifying agriculture. It is paying bonuses for coconuts, citrus and other new crops, so that the whole agricultural industry is not directed towards rice. The bonuses and the continued diversification of agriculture should be the answer to the question raised by the hon. Member, if he has not read his copy of the Budget Speech.

Mr. d'Aguiar: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has said, in fact, that he does not have enough money to invest in saving the wastage of fish. But it would seem to me that the prevention and elimination of waste of a vital part of the country's economy is something which should have A 1 priority, and I would like to ask the Minister if he does not agree that this is so.

Mr. Benn: There is no large waste as the hon. Members are trying to tell this House. There is some amount of waste, just as milk which comes from the rural areas sometimes spoils, but no large amounts of fish are thrown away.

Mr. Burnham: I speak, I know, of many things, but I do not belong to that category of persons who know not and know not that they know not. The Director of Agriculture is sitting behind the Minister or the information is available somewhere and the Minister can get it from the Director. There is a tremendous amount of waste. Thousands of tons of fish per annum are thrown away.

Mr. Benn: That is not true. The hon. Member is misleading the House.

Mr. Burnham: The hon. Minister has become an expert in euphemisms, but he has a *penchant* for inaccuracy when he says it is not true because I know that thousands of tons of fish are thrown away every year. I am not saying everyday.

Mr. Benn: We do not produce thousands of tons of fish.

The Chairman : If the hon. Member wishes to get the figures, then the correct procedure is to put a question to the Clerk and it will be answered in due course.

Mr. Carter: I would like to ask the Government whether it proposes taking any steps to encourage the Food

Manufacturers (B.G.) Ltd. by way of protective tariffs and things of that kind.

The Chairman: Would not that arise when we are dealing with Trade and Industry?

Mr. Carter: In view of the starvation in Cuba, I wonder whether the Government is taking steps to see whether any market is available for our rice.

The Premier: A Ministry official is likely to come here in a few days' time to discuss the question of the renewal of the rice agreement, and possibly, trade in other commodities.

Mr. Burnham: This Agriculture Department is a strange department. It is giving me great concern. I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Natural Resources can explain this fact. I see also that the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Ram Karran) is present. Do you know that in 1960 an officer in the Agriculture Department wasted \$80,000 of taxpayers' money building a storage bond in the Black Bush Polder, that has been examined by a contractor on my behalf — because I was very worried about this waste of money — and it was valued at no higher than \$50,000? There was no approval from the Finance Ministry, I understand, and the Public Works Department was not called in.

\$80,000 was wasted on a storage bond which is not, on the best of estimates, worth more than \$50,000. The columns are dangerous. The Director of Agriculture and his Minister ought to know that. How was it that \$80,000 of taxpayers' money was thrown away in the Agriculture Department to give one little man, a civil servant, the opportunity to build a storage bond for nearly twice the proper cost? I was reliably informed by a competent con-

[MR. BURNHAM]

tractor that even at the exorbitant public works rates, it would not have cost more than \$50,000.

Mr. Benn: The Department has no knowledge that anything is terribly wrong with this storage bond which was built departmentally as a matter of urgency. And it was built under the supervision of senior officers of the Department. The hon. Member said the Ministry of Finance did not give approval, but perhaps the Public Accounts Committee would have noticed this.

Mr. Burnham: Is the hon. Minister telling me that his Department knows nothing of this? Is he telling me that this building has not been examined by any other quantity surveyor? Is he telling me that? Is he telling me that no expert said that the columns are dangerous, that the floor is unsatisfactory? Is he telling me all that? If he tells me all that and he means it, I accept that he is saying this merely out of ignorance. When I say "ignorance", I use the word "ignorance" in its purest sense from the Latin *ignorus* — not knowing. So when I say "ignorance", you will understand what I mean. If he is telling me that, he is telling me from a fund of ignorance.

Mr. Benn: I do not know if the hon. Member is referring to a bond built by the co-operative society in the Black Bush Polder, but none of the departments has any knowledge of the matter of which he is speaking.

Mr. Burnham: Is he telling us that the Director of Agriculture has not had this brought to his attention and has not written a minute on it?

Mr. Benn: He has not.

Mr. Burnham: I know that the Director of Agriculture knows, and when I say the Director of Agriculture knows,

I do not mean the individual. But when a minute comes from a department signed "so and so for Director", it is the Director and he ought to know it. It is public knowledge on the Corentyne — \$80,000 for a bond which is not worth more than \$50,000, and the Director of Agriculture knows, and the Minister of Works and Hydraulics ought to know.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. Benn: The Director of Agriculture knows nothing about this, neither does the Minister of Works and Hydraulics, but I will promise to look into the statement made by the hon. Member.

Mr. Burnham: I could have been saved all this energy if the Minister had said that earlier.

Mr. Carter: There is one other well-publicised matter under this Head, the question of milk. I have been reading so many reports of putrid milk that I would like to know whether there is any truth in the statements which appear in the Press from time to time, that our milk supply is very bad and insanitary. I would also like to know whether Government has any plans for the manufacture of condensed milk, because quite a lot of such milk is used in this country.

Mr. Benn: I do not know under what Head the hon. Member is speaking. I think we have concluded the general debate.

The Chairman: We are dealing with the whole Head, Agriculture, and for this occasion I am being indulgent, because hon. Members are not too sure of the procedure.

Mr. Benn: We have never heard that the milk is putrid. The large crowds of intelligent Georgetown people who go every day to buy this milk must be regarded as evidence that the milk is not as bad as the newspapers report. The

question of a condensary is being looked into by the Ministry of Trade and Industry which is attempting to set up factories based on our agricultural products.

Mr. Burnham : In 1958 the then Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Edward Beharry, told the Legislature very much the same thing as his successor is now telling us—that Government is looking into the question of establishing factories, and that on high priority was a condensary. That was four years ago.

Mr. Benn: The fact that the former Minister had to leave the Government before it was accomplished is the reply to the hon. Member's statement.

Mr. Burnham : Let me confess my ignorance in its worst sense, and ask the Minister, through you, sir, to explain what Mr. Beharry's leaving the Government has to do with his repeating Mr. Beharry's words four years and three months after?

Mr. Benn: I know that I have personally made efforts to secure assistance from the East and West German Governments and the Japanese Government based on figures prepared by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. This has been reported to the Government on more than one occasion, and to this Legislature.

Mr. Burnham: I am not denying that the Minister went to East and West Germany and had discussions, but what I really want to know — and I am sure the House wants to know — is why should he four years after say that Government is looking into something which his predecessor said he was looking into? When a Minister makes a statement, even though it is a misguided statement, the Government is bound by it. When Mr. Beharry made that statement that

was what the Government was saying. Does it mean that not until last year, when the present Minister of Natural Resources went on tour of Germany, did the Government do anything, and that when Mr. Beharry made the statement he was misleading the public?

Mr. Benn: The then Minister spoke as a result of conversations he had with the Nestles Company regarding their desire to set up a condensary in this country.

Mr. Burnham : I am grateful to hear that this Government makes promises on the basis of conversations, but I hope very devoutly that that system will forever cease. I am sure that the present Minister will not fall into that error.

Mr. Correia: On page 17 of the Estimates I see sub-head 34 — Dairy Farming Expansion — Maintenance Expenses and Capital, \$120,754. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether we can look forward to this expansion?

Mr. Benn: This concerns the importation and breeding of heifers at Mon Repos for sale to farmers for milk production.

Head 9—Agriculture—\$2,130,193 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m. for half an hour.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption—

In Committee of Supply

The Chairman: We had concluded Head 9 at the suspension of the sitting. We will now turn to Head 10.

LANDS AND MINES

Head 10 — Lands and Mines — \$614,199.

Mr. Burnham: On the last occasion, which is over a year ago, when this Head came up for discussion, I pointed out that there should have been a closer integration between this Department and the immediate Ministerial Establishment Staff. While in law and in theory the Commissioner of Lands and Mines is responsible for recommending or granting certain leases, permissions, licences, etc., the distribution of the land is really a matter of policy for the Ministry concerned. I do not know what has been done since I raised the point. In fact, the type of integration I am thinking of between the Department and the Ministry is a physical integration, because a number of problems arise from time to time in which, I think, there should be some sort of conferring between the Commissioner of Lands and Mines and/or one of his officers and members of the Permanent Secretary's staff.

I think the policy with respect to the distribution of land is most unsatisfactory. It seems to me that the Ministry which is responsible for the policy either does not care about or is unaware of certain practices, traditions and customs in the rural areas in which British Guiana's Crown Lands are found in the second, third and fourth depths. For instance, those who have had anything to do with those areas know that, it is a tradition where licenses or leases are granted, the lands of the second and third depths are granted, all things being equal, to those who are the occupiers of the front lands or the first depth.

There is a contention by the farmers of the first depth that it is impossible to pay rates and taxes on their house lots in the first depth unless they have available agricultural lands which can be used in the second, third and sometimes fourth depths. In recent times there has been a great deal of litigation arising out of this failure to recognize what has happened in the past, or lack of interest in whether it happened or not;

whether people who have occupied or owned the first depth should have the land at the back. What will happen is that some morning people will get up and find that the leases have been granted to another group of people who do not own the first depth—people who may be landless and who have been given permission to occupy Crown lands in preference to the people who have licences for the first depth, and many of whom themselves are landless so far as agricultural land is concerned.

In fact, there are some areas in this country, especially in West Coast Berbice and some sections of the Corentyne, where one finds that the people have no Government permission, licence or lease, and the owners and their licensees, who are all from the first depth, have been farming the second and third depths without let or hindrance. It may well be that in a court of law, because of the strictness of certain legal principles where one seeks to prescribe, these people may not be able to establish their prescriptive titles for the land which has been used by the village sometimes for nearly a century. Some of these communities in the first depth are not organisations and, consequently, since they have no legal personality, they cannot prescribe as a group title to the land behind. This is the result of the strictness or letter of the law, and it is certainly not good enough for any individual who has land in the first depth to see people taking over the land in the second, third and fourth depths. In some cases the first depth occupiers have applied for the land in the back, but were unsuccessful.

I have known individuals in the first depth who have applied for land in the second and third depths, and they have seen people coming from other areas to occupy the land. I do not think that should be allowed. There seems to be some unsophisticated slant in this matter. In some cases the people know

that their fathers and grandfathers have been using the land at the back and have been shifting from one spot to another over the years, and they believe that the reallocation of the Crown Lands in the second and third depths really concerns them. They only realize the extent of their holdings when the lands are distributed to someone else, and new lessees, licensees, or permittees move in and possess the lands which they had occupied for a lifetime.

It seems to me, therefore, that it is desirable that the policy of the Government with respect to these lands should be to give priority and preference, all things being equal, to the people who are in possession of the land in the first depth. I know that in some cases it will be found that the people who own the first depth have about 40 to 60 acres of land somewhere else, and they can be dealt with differently. This Government should be realistic enough to recognize the hardship imposed on the people who have occupied Crown lands without let or hindrance for a number of years, when people from outside of the area are permitted to come in and occupy the land. **[Mr. Ram Karan: "What is he talking about?"]**

The hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics is competent to understand what I am saying. Let him look at Standing Orders 66 and 67. I repeat that this Government should realize the hardship imposed on certain people, and make allowances for the people who have been occupying land without let or hindrance for a number of years. As a matter of policy this Government should accept their claims. There has been, in the courts, a number of cases in connection with this land policy. I would like the Government to believe that I am sincere about this, because if it adopts my suggestion it means that I

should lose a lot of briefs. However, the most important thing is the convenience of the citizen.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member says that a lot of cases have been before the courts in connection with this matter. The hon. Member knows that the Government has made known its policy on this matter several years ago. What this Government has done is to say that it agrees with the Sessional Paper presented by a former Minister of Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines (Sir Frank McDavid). The Government, however, has always given consideration to the rightful claims of those persons who live on the first depth.

My hon. Friend must have been unsuccessful in several cases, but that is no reflection on his ability. Several cases have come up on this matter, and on every occasion the Government's policy has been restated. The Government has said that the people who live on the first depth have no inalienable right to the second and third depths of the land. Whenever people make applications for land, their applications are investigated, and land is allocated to them. I have heard of several controversial cases, and the Government has always gone into the matter carefully. I am sure that there is no hardship or oppression, as the hon. Member alleges.

It is true that some people have held land for some time and have tried to flout the wishes of Government. Several people have occupied land illegally and worked it, and this Government has had to take action against them. In no case has the Government refused to give people in the first depth land in the second and third depths without investigating the matter carefully.

[MR. BENN]

I should like the hon. Member to realize that in certain areas people live on the first depth, but there are no second or third depths. Take Leeds on the Corentyne, for example, where there are no second and third depths. It took my Ministry together with the assistance of the residents of Leeds more than two years to find land for them in the Corentyne. In the circumstances, they could not be told that the people who occupied the first depth could get the land in the second and third depths whether they wanted the land or not. That is an excellent example, because there are second and third depths there.

4.45 p.m.

It will be recalled that many years ago one person in another area applied for all of the land in the back, and the people in the first depth could not get the land because it was beneficially occupied. Eventually the man rented some of the land to some of the people in the first depth. The Government has had to put lands under the control of co-operative societies in the Corentyne and other areas. So, we are trying, wherever possible, to apply this rule so that it should not cause any problem. But in any case, the people who live on the front lands are not refused lands in the second and third depths if they are in need of land.

On the question of the integration of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Lands and Mines Department, what is being done now is that when there are lands for distribution, the people are investigated by the Land Development section of the Ministry of Natural Resources. When this is done, they are put on the land by the Co-operative Officer or the Land Development section. This has eased up the pressure on the Lands and Mines Department as the shortage

of surveyors and the absence of one or two other things have led to some delay. I am happy to say, however, that this year there has been considerable progress in this Department.

I had told hon. Members some time last year that I proposed to carry out a reorganization of the Lands and Mines Department. An officer, Mr. Macnic, who was head of the Land Development Department, was asked to do this. He had undertaken to do the job, but before he could start, he took up a position with the Guillebaud Commission and, subsequently, he left this colony. It has not yet been possible to release an officer to do this work. But I am happy to say that lands are being given out and I think I mentioned earlier this afternoon that 16,000 acres have been distributed for this year alone. This was due to the considerable improvement in the Lands and Mines Department.

Mr. Burnham: I heard the Minister say that it would be wrong for the people in the first depth to be entitled to the second depth in any event. I agree with that. What I was saying was not that the people in the first depth should be entitled to the second and third depths, but that all other things being equal, they should get priority.

It has come to my knowledge, for instance, that there is a certain gentleman who had applied for and got lands somewhere in Mahaica. This same gentleman in another group—and this gentleman, on his admission, was born and has spent a large part of his life on the West Bank, and is not a farmer actually—applied for and got land on the Corentyne. And there were people there on the Corentyne on the first depth of this particular area who did not get land even though it was shown that they were landless. And this I know further: there were certain people who were

given allocations, and, under our questioning in a court, admitted that they started off with a big tractor. They were people of considerable means as against others who have not got.

This may be the fault of the investigation, and the observation I want to make about the situation is this—and I am saying this without fear of contradiction: I know there will be a denial of it because a Government is supposed to deny such things—there is too much political influence where the investigations are concerned. One young man, when he was being investigated, had the temerity to say—and I was most hurt and embarrassed—“Don’t worry, I got the Minister of Natural Resources in my pocket. What I say he has to do.”

I am going to tell you why I believe it. This young man is, I know, a party activist of the People’s Progressive Party. When one decision was made in February of the year with respect to a certain number of persons, after this gentleman had visited the Minister, as he claimed, he got more persons added to the original list of selectees. That may be fortuitous. It may be coincidence. But it is difficult for an outsider to believe that this world is so full of coincidences as witnessed in this case. I feel certain that every attempt should be made by the Government in setting up these investigating committees to see to it that there is no suggestion of political influence.

In one case, I know one of the members of the committee who was a P.P.P. man represented to people that unless they joined the P.P.P. they did not stand a chance. He may have been wrong, but what can you tell people when he has said that if you don’t join the P.P.P. you cannot get land and on other grounds, some of these people do not get land? It is difficult to tell these people that what this man had said was not true. If I am not a P.P.P. man and

I do not get land, what is easier than for me to say, “You know, what so and so said must be true because I have not got land and ‘X’ who is a P.P.P. man has got land”? And in the context of our country at the moment you cannot afford that.

Mr. Benn: It is unfortunate that the hon. Member who is representing people in a matter in the court is trying to win his case here. He refers to some silly statement of someone’s saying that he has the Minister in his pocket. As a result of this, he has shown that he has got more people put on the land. The hon. Member has referred to a specific matter which is now before the court, and I think he should know better than to mention it here.

There has been no effort on the part of the Ministry to get people off lands which they should properly have. The hon. Member mentioned people on the West Coast Demerara. Does the hon. Member know that there is very little rice land on the West Coast Demerara? If all the people in one area were to take up the land which is there, then people from other areas would not get rice land. A man from Wakenaam may apply for land in the Black Bush Polder. As a Guianese, he is entitled to land and it is not for us, if the man qualifies and likes being in another place, to say that he should not be given land at Black Bush. The Ministry is giving people land and unless there is very good reason for it, it does not give land to only the people in the area.

I would like to draw the attention of hon. Members to an area on the West Coast of Berbice called Catherine’s Lust and Onderneeming. Land in the third and fourth depths of that estate has been given to people who have lived in the first depth of Catherine’s Lust because the land was not enough and there were so many people on the front of the estate who did not get enough

[Mr. BENN]

land. But there are other cases. In this case which the hon. Member mentioned, the people who live on the first depth are rum shop owners and landlords. They have land and were properly investigated. When the investigation was concluded, some other people, not the persons to whom the hon. Member referred, came and said, "We did not get a chance and we have children". One man said, "Look my son has four children. I may be a proprietor and may have land somewhere else, but I have children who are living with me in the area". We had decided that the size of the land should be 15 acres. As a result of there being more people wanting land, we have had to reduce it to 10 acres, and they have been put in that area in the rear of Catherine's Lust and the Kabawer cattle ranches.

It is unfortunate that the hon. Member tries to make these allegations. It is very easy to get land as long as the land is available. When persons are to be investigated, they will be investigated and given land in accordance with their application and their needs. This is always published in the newspapers; the people are always called. Investigators are sent around, and now we have taken a decision that any person who is to take land must take an oath that the information put on the form is true and correct.

It is difficult to get everything perfect, but the Ministry and the Department have been trying their best to improve the system of land distribution. I am not saying that persons might not have indulged in improper practices, but I know that the case the hon. Member mentioned is being misrepresented here, and he should try to win it in court.

The Ministry is doing everything to have land properly distributed and even some prominent members of parties who

wish land sometimes apply. They have it on the East Bank Demerara right up towards the Base. They have applied for it and got it and have put up anti-Communist signs on it. Everybody can get land.

Mr. Burnham : Whoever the Minister is referring to can take care of himself, but it seems to me that you cannot make anything of this. I am accused of seeking to win my case here. The points I have raised here do not affect the legal issues in the case. I have not brought these facts to this Assembly to win any case because this Assembly cannot decide the case and as someone skilled in law will know, what I have said about the unfairness sometimes of the allocation of land has nothing to do with the type of case that is in court at the moment.

But the hon. Minister knows that this man who says it is no use applying for land if you are not a P.P.P. member is a man who is diminutive, a man who cannot farm, a man of means, a man whose name appeared in the *Thunder* in a notice telling people not to give him any more money when they apply for lands. He knows that, and the basis on which this man was given land is far from the policy laid down by Government. He has no wife and children, and he has other than independent means. He was given land for other reasons. We do not know what reasons, but, on advice, he was given for other reasons. These things are bad; they reflect on the Government. The hon. Attorney-General and the Ministers know this man because he is a character when next you meet him, you can never miss.

I am attempting to be kind. I have even suggested in my remarks I have not said that you have to be a P.P.P. member to get land. I am not saying this. What I said, and I chose my words carefully, was that there are

some P.P.P. activists who fortuitously are appointed occasionally on the selection committees and represent to persons in the area that it is necessary to join the P.P.P. to get land. I do not believe it. I would never believe that, Mr. Chairman—Forsooth!

5 p.m.

But I am saying that the Government should be so careful in its choice of membership of Selection Committees that that situation should not arise. I am saying further, that to give this particular individual land when he does not qualify under the policy adumbrated by the Government, and to have this man, who has admitted these facts, given land at Mahaica and have his name published in *Thunder*, with the suggestion that nobody should give him any more money to get land, still being given land on the Corentyne is bad. That does not affect the case which has nothing to do with whether the individual got land rightly or wrongly.

I bring these things to Government's attention so that it may be above suspicion, but no matter how one tries to help this Government by advising it how to conduct its affairs so as to ensure an impression of impartiality, it thinks you are suggesting something wrong. I do not have to come here to win my cases or to make a living. I am interested in proper relations between the people who live in these areas. Until this Government tries to control the Courts or to change the complexion of the Courts I will not depend on the Legislative Assembly for winning cases or losing them. I will depend on the Courts of first instance and then on the appellate Courts. I am trying to be very peaceful, but the Minister seems intent on breaking this resolution of mine to be peaceful this afternoon.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member is only misleading this House with the statement he has been making this afternoon. He and some of his colleagues have been coming to my Ministry and asking me to make up the case.

Mr. Burnham: I never went to the Ministry.

Mr. Benn: I will not give way.

Mr. Burnham: I rise to make a personal explanation.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member has been bringing these accusations against the Government. I have said, and I repeat, that everybody who wants land and qualifies for land will get land. The hon. Member has his own private matter, but he must not try to influence this House by saying that the Ministry is doing improper things or is incompetent, because he is in great danger of losing his case.

Mr. Burnham: I have not to persuade this House of the incompetence of the Minister and his Ministry; a blind man can see it. I will never be seen asking the Minister of Natural Resources about the settlement of any case. I discuss settlements with lawyers and not with incompetent laymen.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I am rather pleased to note the words of the Minister when in effect he admits that anti-communist slogans are in effect anti-Government slogans. It is an important admission on his part, but I would like to ask the Minister what steps are being taken by his Government to expedite the work of the Department of Lands and Mines in the granting of leases, because I am informed that many years elapse sometimes between an application and the final granting of a lease.

Mr. Benn: I have already referred to this, but perhaps the hon. Member was listening to anti-Communism and could

[MR BENN]

not hear when I spoke of the problems and the need for more land surveyors in order to expedite the granting of leases.

Mr. d'Aguiar: What steps are being taken to have more surveyors?

Mr. Benn: In training them. That is how we get them.

Mr. Cheeks (Georgetown North): I would like to know what is the Government's policy in respect of the granting of lands to individuals. I have in mind a case on the West Coast of Berbice in which a man who, apparently, did qualify for land applied for land some time ago, and after considerable correspondence he was told in writing that he should apply jointly with others, and that a certain piece of land would be allocated. I would like to know if that is the policy of the Government, that land will be awarded to persons on a joint basis.

Mr. Benn: The land to which the hon. Member refers was held by a family for years, and it appears after the parents died the sons quarrelled over the land. One son applied for the land, and we decided that as six children have an interest in the land it would be unfair to give one child all the land and leave the others out. He was therefore told that he must apply for the land jointly with the others. That is a special case.

Mr. Cheeks: I do not question the accuracy of the Minister's explanation, but the case I have in mind is not one involving brothers. At least one of the persons who could share in the use of the land is not a relative. That is my information, but if the Minister has other information I will not question his accuracy.

Mr. Benn: There are several cases of that kind which involve relatives and families—sons and grandsons. They all have an interest in the land and

want individual portions of it. In addition to that, when lands are in close proximity to the coast we try to allocate them in 10, 15 and up to 25 acre lots, depending on the size of the groups that apply. An individual can get 25 acres of land in the second or third depth of Crown lands, and up to 500 acres of land if it is far up a river or creek.

Mr. Cheeks: I know of a case at Pln. Brand, West Coast, Berbice, in which individuals applying for land were officially instructed to apply as a group, and the persons whose names were mentioned in the letter are not relatives. I am informed. I would like to hear from the Minister whether Government would consider granting a portion of the land in that area to an individual.

The Chairman: I do not think we can have the Minister giving assurances on specific cases in this House. I thought the hon. Member would have pursued the question whether it is Government's policy to grant land to people individually or in groups, but I think the Minister answered that by saying that it depends on the area where it is sought.

Mr. Burnham: In reply to the question by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. d'Aguiar) the Minister said the reason for the delay in granting leases is the fact that there is a shortage of surveyors. In Finance Committee in December, 1957, the then Minister of Natural Resources recognized that there was a shortage of surveyors: that surveyors were necessary for several of the Development Schemes as well as for the surveying of Crown lands which were to be issued on permissions, licences and leases. It does seem to me strange that there is still that shortage of surveyors, but there may be a logical explanation, and that is why I rise to ask the Minister why this shortage is as acute in 1962 as it was in

1957 when his predecessor in office had actually undertaken to have allocated a sum of money for the training of surveyors?

Mr. Benn: Unfortunately, there has been difficulty with the training of land surveyors. As a result of the shortage Government did undertake a crash programme like teacher training, and it was undertaken with the assistance of I.C.A. at the Technical Institute. Quite a few young men were absorbed into study for the course, but we found that a considerable number of those who were undergoing training were failing the examination. Of the 56 who took the examination in September last year only 12 passed, and this has been going on in much the same way. We have set up a committee to go into the whys and wherefores with the Director of Agriculture and the principals of secondary schools, to see whether the candidates could be brought up to a higher standard. But we have not been able to produce very many more surveyors.

In the meanwhile we have had established a Commissioner of Title who has been going around the country helping people to secure proper titles to their lands. People have been calling on us for surveyors, so we have to share the few we have between the Drainage and Irrigation, the Public Works, the Lands and Mines, and the Geological Survey Departments, and the Commissioner of Title, but there are not sufficient surveyors to go around. We have also had quite a few surveyors leaving the country for the Bahamas where salaries are more attractive. I think it was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that in one year we had to do 1,000 surveys. For years people have been settled at Cane Grove, Hague and La Jalousie without any leases, and Government is trying to give leases to people who have been living at Cane Grove since 1939.

5.15 p.m.

It is getting more serious, but we are training more people to do the work.

Mr. Burnham: 'May I ask two questions which, perhaps, the hon. Minister has overlooked? First, when did this crash programme start? The point I am making is that the necessity for more surveyors was obvious to this Government since 1957. Secondly, if there is this exodus of surveyors to the Bahamas because of better salaries over there, has the Government not thought it desirable to make the salaries paid to surveyors more attractive so that they will be encouraged to remain in this country and work?

Before the hon. Minister answers my two questions, I want to observe that it has been my experience that a normal person will not leave his home to go outside for another job where there is just a difference of between \$50 to \$100. He will only go away if he has great domestic worries, and wants to get away from his home. That type of officer will only go to another country to take up employment if there is a difference in salary of between \$150 to \$300. If there is a need for surveyors, then this Government should make some attempt to make their salaries more attractive.

Mr. Benn: Hon. Members know that the salaries of surveyors have been improved recently. For instance, a girl in the drawing office in the Lands and Mines Department was working for \$130 per month, and she secured a similar job in the Bahamas for \$400 per month. There is a big disparity between the salaries paid to surveyors in the Bahamas and those paid to surveyors in British Guiana, I am advised. If we make the salaries of surveyors more attractive, we will also have to give consideration to the question of improving the salaries of other officers in the Public Service.

[MR. BENN]

This Government is making an attempt to increase the number of surveyors. In 1957 the Government did not get the training staff—I think it got the training staff in 1959. The accelerated training of surveyors started in 1960 in the Lands and Mines Department. Perhaps the hon. Member knows that the Technical Institute has been experiencing some difficulty also in getting adequate staff.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I ask whether the hon. Minister is aware of the extremely high cost of living in the Bahamas *vis-a-vis* British Guiana? That is why the Bahamas has to pay its officers higher salaries than British Guiana. I would like to ask the hon. Minister how many surveyors were in the Departments in 1961 as compared with 1960? I would like to know whether it is true that the contributory factor leading to excessive delays in the Lands and Mines Department is due to the inadequate and inefficient system of book-keeping or accounting that is being practised there? I would also like to know if and when this system will be modernized?

Mr. Benn: To answer the last question first, the system is now being modernized. It is quite true that the system of book-keeping in the Lands and Mines Department is extremely inadequate. Government is now giving consideration to the question of the integration of certain Departments. As soon as the Ministry of Natural Resources moves up to the Agricultural Department's building in Brickdam, there will be greater opportunity for moving the staff around in order to improve efficiency.

The Government now has to face a problem where thousands of people have made applications for land in the Lands and Mines Department. The hon. Member must realize the difference between what has taken place in 1957

and what is taking place today. In 1957 there was a small amount of drained land available for distribution, but the interest that has been awakened in agricultural development subsequent to 1957 as well as the large number of applications is putting pressure on the Lands and Mines Department. The Department and the Ministry have been trying to take up the slack wherever possible.

There are 32 Surveyor-Apprentices in the Estimates. There are 8 vacancies; 9 apprentices, and 15 surveyors.

Mr. Correia: What about the 6 Senior Surveyors? Are you not going to acknowledge them?

Mr. Benn: Yes, they are acknowledged as surveyors.

Mr. d'Aguiar: My question still remains unanswered. I asked the hon. Minister how many surveyors were available in 1961 as compared with 1960?

Mr. Benn: I do not have the figures of the number of surveyors employed by the Government at my fingertips for those two periods. However, the figures in the Lands and Mines Department will be approximately the same, because we had not been able to fill the vacancies as quickly as we had hoped. We have divided the surveyors between the Lands and Mines Department and the Drainage and Irrigation Department. Sometimes some of them are sent over to the Local Government.

Mr. d'Aguiar: The hon. Minister seems to be unable to give proper answers. We find that this situation keeps cropping up again and again, and the Government cannot find an answer to it. We are now told that things are being done. That was the answer given in regard to the modernization of the accounting system in the Lands and Mines Department. When will this modernization be completed?

Mr. Benn: I have already told the hon. Member that we are now improving and modernizing the system; that the Ministry will be moving over to the Agricultural Department's building and, unfortunately, I cannot give him any specified time. It is no use my trying to mislead this House by giving information which will be proved inaccurate in the very near future.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Assuming that we will be here next year, it is logical to assume that the same questions and answers will be given. I would like to have, at least, the assurance that it will be completed during the present year 1962.

Mr. Benn: As a result of what took place on February 16, there has been a lag.

Mr. Burnham : May I inquire what has lagged as a result of what took place on Friday, 16th February?

Mr. Benn: It has been considerable. The events of February 16 are well known to all of us.

Mr. Burnham: I am not satisfied with the answer "considerable". I want to know the extent and nature of what took place. Perhaps the difference is not obvious to the hon. Minister. He has given me the extent, and I would like to know the nature of it. I am pressing my question.

The Chairman: You may press, but I cannot make him answer. I do not think an answer is particularly necessary at this stage. We have discussed the Lands and Mines Department, and I shall put the question if no other Member wishes to speak.

Mr. Correia: I desire some information. I notice that in 1961 there was no allocation for the salary of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

Can the hon. Minister tell us under what Head he was paid? I refer to Head 10, Lands and Mines, subhead 1 (1), page 19. How was this officer paid in 1961?

Mr. Benn: His salary was provided for in the Civil List.

Mr. Carter: Can the hon. Minister tell us what has happened to the proposed partition of Buxton?

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member should address that question to the hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Head 10. Lands and Mines—\$614,199, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

FOREST

Head 11. Forest—\$681,653.

SILVICULTURE

Mr. Correia: I should like to refer to subhead 13. Silviculture, page 22, and to ask Government to give consideration to the question of making certain experiments in the Demerara River.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. Benn: We are actively considering the Berbice River. There are no funds for doing more in the Demerara River, but perhaps this will be done when funds are in sight.

Mr. Correia: Cultivation of pine should be expanded on one of the rivers so that we can determine whether pine can be successfully grown in other parts of the Country.

Mr. Carter: I would like to ask the hon. Minister on whose recommendation was the 4 per cent export tax on greenheart imposed.

Mr. Benn: I would say that the Conservator of Forests was consulted.

Mr. Carter: Is the Government aware that greenheart will not now be as competitive with this additional taxation?

Mr. Benn: The Government is not convinced of this.

Mr. Correia: Does the Government realize the difference in the freight rates on timber from British Guiana and on timber from other timber-producing countries which causes great competition, and does the Government realize that it will be killing the export of greenheart timber to other countries?

Mr. Benn: No. The Government has considered this carefully. It has considered the representations from the Forest Products Association.

Mr. Correia: The question was whether the Government realized the difference in the freight rates on timber from British Guiana and the freight rates on timber from other countries that are shipping timber.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister said that all these things were gone into very carefully, so I take it that was considered.

Mr. Burnham: I would like to find out what this Subhead 1(4) "Utilisation Officer" is all about. Who is he? What does he do? Is he not over 60? What does he utilize?

Mr. Benn: I am informed that he is in charge of the experiments in wood. He looks after the Department's boats—the making of them and the maintenance of their fabric. I am also informed that he is not over 60 years old.

Subhead 1(9)—Forest Rangers

Mr. Burnham: I am very grateful to the hon. Minister. I did not understand what that officer was doing. But I notice under the Head "Forest", there is provision for 25 Forest Rangers, which is the same complement as was provided for last year. It seems to me, from information that has come to me, that this number is rather inadequate and, as a result of its inadequacy, a lot of revenue is lost. If there were to be a greater number of Forest Rangers doing their work actively, the Government is likely to increase its revenue from this Department. I do not know whether that is the point of view of the Government or whether any point of view has been put to the Government and whether, like everything else, it is considered in detail.

Mr. Benn: The Government recognizes the need for greater inspection and the like in the Forest Department, and, possibly, there may be need for more Forest Rangers. This, of course, has to be considered in relation to Government's financial resources and also what is likely to come in. There are many areas, like on the Essequibo River, where it has been suggested an officer should be placed because some timbers are taken out of the area. The Department then had someone stationed there to test the amount of timber coming out, and it has been proved that one Ranger from another area can supervise that area.

One has to look at the large amount of waste we have and the fact that we have to maintain so many boats. But the matter is always under review and it is possible the Government will increase the staff. However, it has not been conclusively proved that a larger number of Forest Rangers will be necessary to bring in much more revenue. There are many more problems connected with the utilization of forests.

Mr. Burnham: It seems to me that the hon. Minister has given a reasonable reply. I wonder whether, in the circumstances, the Government would not contemplate seeking approval for a bigger establishment so that if it was conclusively proved that more Forest Rangers would bring in more revenue, it would not have to come back to us. You need not fill your whole establishment. There are sometimes “movements” of a dollar. We just want to be sure that you have the establishment. I wonder, in the circumstances, if this would not be a better course of action.

Mr. Benn: This would be very difficult. I will have to say “give us 6 or 10 or 12 more — increase the number”, but we will have to bear in mind what number and one does not do it like that. I am advised.

Mr. Burnham: I am glad to see that the Minister is being advised and it seems that he has accepted the advice. I will take the advice of his adviser.

CENTRAL TIMBER MANUFACTURING PLANT

Mr. Correia: I notice that \$258,000 has been allocated for the purchasing of timber. The same amount was allocated in 1961, and when I look at the revenue collected in 1961, there is a big gap between the amount allocated for purchasing timber and the revenue collected. As far as I understand this timber purchased was for seasoning and resale to furniture-makers, etc. Can the Minister explain why this big gap between purchase and sale?

Mr. Benn: You see it is not only pure line seed padi that is subsidized. Forest products sometimes are affected by this policy of subsidization. It appears that the revenue is somewhat less than the amount of money expended, but there is no loss. The sales have not been keeping up with the amount of

timber we are processing, curing and storing in the Department.

Mr. Correia: Does the Minister realize that it is \$150,000 going down the drain?

Mr. Benn: There is no drain. The stocks are not lost; they are there. We have reduced the drain since 1957.

Mr. Burnham : In 1958, the Minister's predecessor assured this House that with the new policy being adopted by this Government, in a year or two, what with an undertaking he had from his officers, this particular item would show a profit. That was a categorical undertaking and I believe a certain legislator at that time who used to sit a few seats away from me on the left would remember that undertaking by the present Minister's predecessor. Can he tell us why this discourtesy? It is no use attempting to say that one Minister was wrong. We cannot have a separate government for every department and, therefore, when a Minister speaks, it is the Government speaking. What has happened to that undertaking given by his predecessor?

Mr. Benn: I have no such knowledge of the undertaking that was given by my predecessor, and I have shown hon. Members that I am unwilling to give certain specific undertakings on certain works to be done by Government because so many things can happen when a decision is taken. Wages and salaries go up, and certainly, wages have gone up in this Department since the previous Minister gave an undertaking, as the hon. Member says, that profit will be shown. Salaries also have gone up and possibly this is the reason.

If the Minister had given an undertaking that Black Bush Polder would have been completed by 1960, he would have been wrong because the drainage works were concluded before this on account of very good weather and a variety of other things. It would be un-

[MR BENN]

wise for me to give certain specific undertakings because so many things can arise.

5.45 p.m

Mr. Burnham: When you plan carefully you can give reasonably good estimates. I would like to remind the Minister that the same adviser he has now his predecessor had, and it was after consulting the same adviser that the undertaking was given. It seems a little short of ridiculous to suggest that an increase of salaries and wages can affect the situation, because if salaries and/or wages were increased the cost of production has increased, and therefore it means that if you are running it as a business concern you are going to increase your selling price accordingly. If in this case, the reason is that the cost of labour has gone up, therefore you are running at a loss, then all the privately owned sawmills should close down.

Mr. Benn: I said very clearly that I have no knowledge of any undertaking given, but I mentioned the increase in wages and salaries as one reason why this may have happened. I do not know about any undertaking given by the former Minister of Natural Resources. The Timber Manufacturing Plant was set up to popularize certain species of timber which were not being used. Government has to spend a lot of time to popularize the use of woods other than greenheart, crabwood and mora. I do not know how my predecessor could be accused of saying that he was going to make it a business concern. He is a businessman; I am not.

Mr. Correia: In 1961 the sum of \$258,000 was voted for the purchase of timber, while in 1960 the sum of \$168,000 was recovered in revenue. In 1961 Government collected only \$107,000 in revenue. Is that how the drainage occurred?

Mr. Benn: Drainage and Irrigation is not under my Ministry. There is no drain here. I said that the rest of the timber is in stock. The stocks are there for all to see.

The Chairman: I recall myself the discussion that took place in Finance Committee in the year referred to by the hon. Member for Ruimsveldt (Mr. Burnham). There is no doubt that in that year the House was very much concerned about what it considered would be the loss on the operation of the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant, and that is how the then Minister of Natural Resources indicated that he himself was worried about it, and that he would make every effort to see to it that if it were a business undertaking it must pay its way. I think it would help the House if the Minister would do as his predecessor did at that time, that is to supply Members subsequently with a statement showing the actual purchase of timber, the actual sales and the stock in hand, because the Minister speaks of stocks remaining on hand. If there was a considerable accumulation of stock Members may ask why that should be.

Mr. d'Aguiar: If I recollect correctly, the Minister said that the Department was unable to account for that stock, and that is probably the reason why there have been losses. I ask the same question I asked in relation to the Department of Lands and Mines; what steps, if any, are being taken to modernize the system of accounting, and particularly accounting for stocks, and when such modernization, if undertaken, will be completed? I know the answer will be that it is now being undertaken, but Members want to know when it will be completed. Will it be completed in 1962?

Mr. Benn: I am grateful to Your Honour for your suggestion that Members should be supplied with a statement showing the purchases, sales and stocks in hand. That will be done.

Head 11-Forest, \$681,653—agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 12-Ministry of Works and Hydraulics—\$44,359.

Mr. Kendall : I did not hear the broadcast on Sunday by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Mann) but I am told that, speaking on behalf of his Minister, he said that in order to build good highways in British Guiana certain tests have to be carried out, and his Government was carrying out those tests. He said that until those tests were completed we would not get the type of road we have in mind. I am wondering whether the Ministry has discarded the results of the tests carried out by an English firm of engineers, and also those made by Mr. Cheatam, a member of the International Co-operation Administration.

The Chairman: I am wondering whether the remarks of the hon. Member are correctly made under this Head. As I see it, this merely refers to the personnel of the Ministry. I therefore suggest that we leave that for the appropriate time.

Mr. Burnham: I would expect that this Government would not have given us items like Miscellaneous, \$800, and Transport and Travelling, \$2,900. What is this transport and travelling all about? As I understand it, the Minister gets a travelling allowance, but has he to travel and be transported for \$2,900 a year? This is unsatisfactory in these days of austerity.

Mr. Ram Karran: This item for Transport and Travelling has nothing to do with the Minister's commuted travelling allowance. If the Minister or his Ministerial staff have to go into the interior and other places the expenditure

comes from this vote. The item Miscellaneous, represents purchases of periodicals, stamps and various other things. It means what it says.

Mr. Burnham: As far as I can see the poor Minister of Natural Resources and his staff do not travel, and I think his is a more important Ministry, if I may say so with respect. Why should the Minister of Works and Hydraulics and his staff have to travel, and other Ministers do not have to travel? This is rank discrimination. [*Laughter.*]

Mr. Ram Karran: On page 13, under Ministry of Natural Resources, the hon. Member will see that the first item is Transport and Travelling, \$16,000.

Mr. Burnham: I admit I am wrong. I now want to know why the Minister of Natural Resources should get so much for Transport and Travelling? [*Laughter.*]

Mr. Ram Karran: For the information of the hon. Member for Ruimveldt who asked about the Sisters Magistrate's Court, I would like to state that the work was given out to tender in March and construction is now going on.

Head 12 — Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, \$44,359 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

PUBLIC WORKS—ESTABLISHMENT

Head 13 — Public Works — Establishment, \$1,960,405.

Mr. Burnham : I think it is now some time since the Director of Public Works, Mr. Farquharson, has retired. Do I understand that this post has not yet been filled? If my understanding is correct, will the Minister explain why?

The Chairman: Isn't that something within the purview of the Public Service Commission?

Mr. Burnham : No, sir. The Public Service Commission deals with matters referred to it. My information is that the question of the filling of this post has not been referred to the Commission.

Mr. Ram Karran: I cannot help the hon. Member.

Mr. Burnham: When we accuse the Government of being incompetent Members of the Government get hot around the collar and red in the eye. The Minister cannot explain why this most important Public Service post remains unfilled for such a long time.

6 p.m.

Mr. Burnham: I wonder whether the hon. Minister would undertake to get the information by tonight?

Mr. Ram Karran: I can say that efforts are being made to fill the post. Hon. Members will recall that some time ago a report was prepared by Mr. Graham Morgan who made certain recommendations which were brought to the attention of this House. I am under the impression that something is being done about this matter, the details of which I am not aware of at the moment.

Head 13. Public Works Establishment — \$1,960,405, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SEA DEFENCES

Head 14. Public Works And Sea Defences — \$4,625,937.

WISMAR/CHRISTIANBURG

Mr. Jordan (Upper Demerara River): With reference to Subhead 21 (c) Wismar/Christianburg—\$3,000. I should like to know why such a paltry sum was provided for maintenance and river defences? There is heavy erosion there which is due to ships passing there

daily. This is a revenue-earning facility, and I think that the Government should pay more attention to this matter. At the moment some work is being done in the area, but for years it has been done in patches. It is high time for the Government to do a good job in this area. It is known that there has been an increase in the number of ships in that area during the last two years.

Under Subhead 15, \$96,000 is provided for Rivers, Creeks, Interior Trails, Stellings, etc. People are living at the mouth of Cara Cara Creek and about three miles up creek. At one time private operators used to clear this creek, and I would like this Government to give serious attention to this matter.

Mr. Ram Karran: The amount shown in the Estimates at Subhead 21(c) Wismar/C'burg \$3,000, is merely for maintenance work in that area. I am sure the hon. Member is aware that other work is being carried out under our Development Programme. I hope that my answer satisfies the hon. Member.

I have not been able to grasp what the hon. Member was saying about the Cara Cara creek, and I would like him to give me more details concerning the matter.

RIVERS, CREEKS, INTERIOR TRAILS, ETC.

Mr. Jordan: I am saying that so far as Subhead 15, Rivers, Creeks, Interior Trails, Stellings, etc., is concerned, the only place I have seen a lot of money spent is in the far interior. I know that people are going, in increasing numbers, to live on the Cara Cara creek, and if its banks were properly cleared more people would be attracted to the area. I hope that this Government will do everything possible to have the creek cleared.

Mr. Ram Karran: That creek is not on the Schedule. I am sure it would be very helpful to the Government, if

the hon. Member would make representations through the proper channels so that Government could go into the question. The information he has given this House is rather limited, and it will be necessary to have this matter investigated with a view to finding out whether this creek will fall into the category of those for which the Government provides assistance.

MAINTENANCE, RIVER DEFENCES,
BERBICE

Mr. Blair: I would like to find out from the hon. Minister whether the amount provided in the Estimates is to keep the rivers clean and navigable? I have recently made representation for the cleaning of the Berbice River so as to permit punts bringing timber from the interior to pass freely. I was told that the channel was blocked by fallen trees, and the loggers were forced to incur additional expenditure by having to transport the timber in small ballahoos. This type of transportation causes a great deal of delay and is very expensive. I appealed to the officer concerned, and he informed me that it was not the policy of the Government to keep the rivers cleared. I would like to know whether this is not something that has always been done by the Government, and whether the amount in the Estimates has been allocated for this purpose?

With reference to Subhead 21(c), Maintenance, River Defences, Berbice, \$6,000, I would like to see some work done in this area.

6.10 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: With respect to Subhead 15—Rivers, Creeks, Interior Trails, Stellings etc., we have allocated a sum of \$96,000, a very small sum in relation to the size of our country. I think the hon. Member will appreciate that this sum would hardly be enough for the clearing of every single river, creek and trail and for the maintenance

of stellings. The policy of the Government with respect to this sum is to use it in settled areas where hardship or severe hardship exists. In these areas about which the hon. Member is talking, the wood-cutters and timber-men remove timber. It is generally their responsibility to clear these creeks and trails for the removal of their timber.

I do not know what specific area the hon. Member refers to when he says "Berbice River". The Berbice River is a very long river with many tributaries and this \$96,000 has to be spent on works from the Corentyne all the way to the North West District, and on many trails and creeks in the interior.

I think you have yourself, Your Honour, explained the \$6,000 under Sub-head 21 (c)-Berbice, and perhaps it would be proper at this stage to inform hon. Members that the maintenance of river defences as well as river defence itself is the responsibility of the landlords or the Local Authorities in the areas. It is only in those areas where Government is satisfied that the proprietors or the Local Authorities cannot maintain the river defences that Government gives a grant for construction of these works and for their maintenance.

The hon. Member for Upper Demerara River (Mr. Jordan) pointed out that the amount in the Estimates for maintenance was meagre. He was, of course, under the impression that this was for construction works as well. In all those areas where hardship exists as far as the population is concerned, the Government goes in but, generally, the responsibility for the maintenance of river defences is that of the proprietors and/or the Local Authorities in the areas. I thought I would explain that point at this stage because if Government were to maintain the river defences all over the country, you can well imagine what sum will be required and hon. Members will probably think of introducing "Kaldor" in full to enable us to do it.

Mr. Blair: I am sorry if I did not make myself clear to the hon. Minister. What I meant to ask was what particular place on the Berbice River was this \$6,000 to be spent on.

With regard to the cleaning of the river, I am sorry to disagree with the hon. Minister, but I know that cleaning of the Berbice River and keeping it navigable to punts and rafts has always been done by Government. I refer especially to the source of the river above Kwakwani, and also the creeks. Naturally, Government receives quite a lot of revenue from the logs that are cut in these places. Such revenue comes in the form of royalty; and transportation of timber and various other products like charcoal, etc. ought to be facilitated. It has always been the policy of the Government to keep these creeks and rivers navigable to permit grant-holders to transport their logs and other products without hindrance.

I am referring now to the source of the river from Kwakwani to about 50 miles up where the river is blocked by fallen trees from both banks. The channel is blocked and it is impossible for punts to bring down timber from the grants. This is a matter which I took up with the Public Works Department. I was told in the first case that they had no more money to attempt to do such a thing at the moment. Then, afterwards, I was informed by another officer that it has never been the policy of the Government to undertake this.

I am appealing, therefore, that these things remain Government's responsibility. I do not see in what way a grant-holder can be made responsible for keeping the channel of the river clear. He has to do his work: he is paying his licence and his royalty. I feel that Government should afford him some help and, at least such facilities that he might be able to transport his timber and other products without all these extra expenses and delay.

Mr. Ram Karran: The answer to the hon. Member's first question is that this \$6,000 is to be spent mainly in Islington area on the Berbice River in the Canje River in the vicinity of its mouth.

I am sorry that I have to disagree with the hon. Member with respect to the clearing of rivers, creeks, etc. The policy of this Government and past Governments has been to provide communications rather than clear rivers for transportation of things like timber. I am advised and my information is, notwithstanding what the hon. Member said about his being told by some officer or the other that this part of the river above Kwakwani has never been the responsibility of the Government, that it is possible that, at some time in the past, some assistance may have been given to the people there, but it has never been on the schedule of the Department for its cleaning and clearing.

I want to point out to the hon. Member that the Berbice River is not unlike many other rivers in this country, and if Government were to take on the responsibility of providing for the clearing and cleaning of rivers, there are very few people living in the areas to bring down their produce. It is a good thought. It is something which any Government would like to do, but the cost of such an operation would be fantastic and I see no reason why the Berbice River should be treated any differently from the rivers in the North West, in the interior, in the Essequibo and other parts of the country. You simply cannot do it. We do not have the funds. If this House wishes to treat the Berbice River differently, it has to provide the money for that. It simply cannot be done with this limited amount of money at our disposal.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Blair: I am sorry I have to disagree with the Minister. I do not know if he is informed about this, or if his memory has failed, but I do know that the last time I had to deal with such a matter it was the clearing of the Ituni Creek, and it was done by the Government. I know also that just about a year before that, or four or five years ago, the source of the Berbice River was also cleared by Government on contract.

Mr. Ram Karran: The statement that it was done by the Government is not helpful to me. I am saying that it was not done under this Head. I do not know whether it was done by the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Department or the Lands and Mines Department. It is for the hon. Member to find out how it was done, but to labour the point that it was done by the Government and done under this Head is prolonging the matter.

Mr. Blair: I wish to correct the statement I have made. I understand that it is not correct to say it was done by Government, but when I said that it was done by Government I meant that it was paid for out of public funds. I understand now that it was done by another Department; not by the Public Works Department. I do hope the Minister will make inquiries to see whether —

The Chairman: I understood him to say very clearly that it is not within the province of the Government.

Mr. Blair: I thought the Minister said he would find out.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sorry the hon. Member has misunderstood me. I said that so far as I know this head has never been used for the clearing of the

Berbice River, and that if the hon. Member has information that it was done by Government, or with public funds I would suggest that he should find out what year it was done and how it was done, and approach us in the Ministry so that we may assist him. I say that the clearing of that part of the river would create a precedent which would be very difficult to avoid in other areas.

Subhead 4.— Burial Grounds, \$1,500.

Mr. Wharton: I would like to know what burial grounds are referred to in this item.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am advised that there are some historical tombs— one on the road somewhere on the Esse- quibo Coast. There is also a burial ground at Mahdia, the Military Cemetery in Kingston, Georgetown, and a few more.

Mr. Burnham: Why spend \$25,000 on the dead when we are in such financial difficulties?

The Chairman: No, the sum is \$1,500.

Mr. Burnham: Why spend any money at all?

Mr. Ram Karran: The burial ground at Mahdia is not historical; it is active.

Mr. Burnham: What is the value of the Military Cemetery in Kingston?

Mr. Ram Karran: It has the same value as the one in Bourda.

Mr. Burnham: As a matter of fact I see no value in that one, and I have always suggested the building of a road through it.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to remind the hon. Member that the majority of the members of the Town Council felt otherwise. The Military Cemetery in Kingston is being maintained under some arrangement. Most of the dead buried there were expatriates. We have to maintain it.

Mr. Burnham: The majority of the Town Council is in favour of removing the cemetery at Bourda.

Mr. Ram Karran: Some money is being paid to Government by the Imperial War Graves Commission for the maintenance of the Military Cemetery in Kingston.

Subhead 14.—Roads, \$1,971,000.

Mr. Kendall: What I said under Head 13 holds good under Head 14. I observe an increase of \$331,000 for the maintenance of roads in British Guiana, and a note below which says that it is to pay increased wages and to provide limited essential reconstruction work on the East Coast, West Coast and Esse-quinbo roads, and improvements to small buildings etc. But I see no mention of the Corentyne road, the only means of communication with that most important section of this country's economic source. Will the Minister say why there is no provision for improvement of that road? It might assist in Government's new tourism drive.

The Chairman: It is now 6.30 p.m. and time for suspension of the sitting. The answer to the hon. Member's question will be given on the resumption.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended until 8 p.m.

8.00 p.m.

On resumption —

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: On the suspension of the sitting we were dealing with Head 14 — Public Works And Sea Defences—

Annually Recurrent—\$4,625,937, and we had come to the end of the points made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam.

Mr. Ram Karran: The answer to the hon. Member's question may be an amendment to the Schedule to the Estimates to include the Corentyne. The hon. Member is laughing now. I hope to complete the work on the East Bank Road this year. As I have already explained to this House, it is proposed to transfer the men and equipment to the Corentyne in order to start on the job. As a result of the non-acceptance of the Kaldor Budget, this Government has had to reduce all of these works.

Mr. Kendall: The non-acceptance of the Kaldor Budget seems to be the excuse for everything nowadays. I have not seen any material change in the Estimates for 1962, and I do not know what Kaldor has to do with this matter.

Mr. Ram Karran: Reconstruction work on the Corentyne road would have been placed on the Recurrent Estimates, but it would have been provided for in the Development Estimates. I am sure the hon. Member appreciates that.

Mr. Kendall: Can the hon. Minister show me where he has made provision in the Development Estimates for the improvement of the Corentyne road?

The Chairman: We are not dealing with the Development Estimates at the moment, and that question has no relevance.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I have some details from the Minister? We have two types of roads here: One may be called a metal road, and the other a non-metal road which is constructed mostly of burnt earth. How much of this \$1,971,000 is to be spent in respect of

- (a) Transforming non-metal roads into metal roads, and how many miles?

- (b) Repairing metal roads, and how many miles?
- (c) Repairing non-metal roads, and how many miles?

Mr. Ram Karran: There are many varying factors to be examined in relation to the hon. Member's questions. For instance, distance is a very important factor. The roads on the East Coast of Demerara, within a certain distance, would cost between \$30,000 to \$40,000 per mile. To construct a modest road between Abary and Mahaicony would be a different matter, because the freight factor would increase the cost of construction considerably. I hope the hon. Member would appreciate that there is no single answer to the questions he has asked.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I appreciate that there are different factors, and it would take a different amount of money to construct a mile of road depending on how it was constructed. Surely the hon. Minister should know how many miles of road it is proposed to transform from burnt earth to metal roads. It may be 10 miles or 100 miles. I would like to know how many miles of metal roads, and how many miles of burnt earth roads will be maintained? I feel that the hon. Minister should have these figures at his fingertips.

Mr. Ram Karran: It would take me some time to explain this matter. This global sum of \$1,971,000 is for the maintenance of roads all over the country, and a part of this money is to be used for improving some of these roads. There is an increase of \$331,000 in this year's Estimates, and a part of this sum, after taking out the normal increments, will be used for improvement and not reconstruction of the roads in the country.

Now, the \$1,971,000 to be used on the maintenance of roads would give us different results if we were to have a

good or bad year in terms of rain and sun. The greater part of this money will be used for normal maintenance such as filling up holes and so on, after lorries, heavily laden with rice, have travelled on the roads. If there is good weather throughout the year the maintenance cost will be less, and the money saved can be used for improving the roads. Last year we did about seven miles of improvement and a lot of maintenance on the roads. This year we hope to do about seven or eight miles of improvement on the roads, and I hope that this answer satisfies the hon. Member.

8.15 p.m.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is asking this House to estimate and vote for what he considers to be a good year or a bad year? What has he estimated for?

Mr. Ram Karran: I do not know. We have priorities worked out. Estimates are put up by the District Engineers all over the country which the Director, the Permanent Secretary and I go through. But I do not think it is the purpose of this honourable House to go through these details. I do not know if the hon. Member wishes that these departmental estimates be brought here, but I cannot imagine that this House would go into all these details.

The Chairman: I do not think he meant that.

Mr. d'Aguiar: It is not a question of getting into the departmental estimates. It was just to get some indication as to what one might expect. How many miles of burnt earth road will be maintained as burnt earth road and how many miles will be transformed into metal road?

Mr. Ram Karran: Our estimates here is for an average year. In a bad year, we do less on this programme of

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

improvement and maintenance and in a good year we do more. I was saying we did about eight miles last year. In the previous year, we did some improvement in Wakenaam, and even though we have a perfect foundation we have been unable to seal it with bitumen. This is the sort of thing that happens, depending on weather conditions. I think it would be fair to say that on an average, we expect to seal about eight miles of road for the year.

Mr. Kendall: The hon. Minister said that freight charges would interfere to a great extent in carrying out this essential reconstruction.

The Chairman: I did not hear him say so. He said the additional freight charges would mean an increased cost per mile in the areas far away from Georgetown.

Mr. Kendall: I am wondering whether the advisers of the Minister are satisfied with the design and specification as we see demonstrated on that patch of road near Drill. Have they reached the stage where they are satisfied that it can be used? It would reduce the freight charges because most of the basic materials can be found on the reefs not very far from the place of reconstruction.

Mr. Ram Karran: If we were to follow the estimates put up by the Consultants — half a million dollars a mile for that type of road—it would cost the sum of \$32 million to complete the East Coast Road. This House is aware that this Government had been trying to get the East Coast road in the Development Programme, and it was unsuccessful. The Secretary of State for the Colonies and Mr. Berrill limited our Programme to \$110 million. We have repeated this in the House over and over again. We cannot tackle the East Coast road or the Georgetown Hospital

until we have more money, until we are permitted to spend more under the existing Development Programme, which goes to 1964. One would readily appreciate the fact that if the road were sealed and completed, freight charges would be reduced. We have got to build the road soon but we do not have the money at present.

Mr. Kendall: I do not know whether it cost the Consultants half a million dollars a mile, as suggested by them, to do that experimental patch. But I have seen where the Abary Bridge was done and the two sections leading to the bridge constructed. I do not know whether it cost the same half a million dollars a mile with the very type of design.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am told that the specifications for the approaches to the Abary Bridge are by no means as elaborate as those for the piece at Now-or-Never. In fact, there is no cement used for the stabilization of the sand on the approaches to the bridge.

Mr. Kendall: It only shows that the advisers to the Government, after receiving the report of the Consultants, were able to review it so that the approaches were less expensively constructed. In as much as the Members of the Government decided on that, it shows that they, if they are very serious, can do that type of construction without making the excuses they make with regard to half a million dollars a mile for the reconstruction of the East Coast road.

Mr. d'Aguiar: As far as I can judge, this sum of \$1,971,000 is the biggest single item, by a wide margin, that we have come to so far. It would seem that the Minister is extremely vague as to what is to be done with this sum. He has spoken about good years and bad years. We all know the roads are bad and, maybe, the Government is

bad, but we have to wait for a good Government to get good roads. I want to ask the Minister a specific question which ought to provide us with a specific answer. How much per mile has been the average spent on the East Bank road to re-metal it?

Mr. Ram Karran: One would readily appreciate that a question of this kind requires notice, but I would venture to say, and would ask the House not to hold me down to it, that the figure is about \$200,000 a mile. I would prefer if the hon. Member were to ask a specific question with a view to my getting my advisers to look up the information.

Mr. Kendall: The only observation I want to make is that the advisers of the Minister know very well we are coming here to discuss a particular Head and they should come anticipating questions from this side of the House. This is nothing new. The East Bank road has been with us for years and anybody who is in charge of that operation should know the cost.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Member will appreciate that we are doing the Recurrent and not the Development Estimates.

Mr. Kendall: In spite of that, the East Bank road is a road that has been in operation for years, and the faces I see here as advisers to the Minister are faces that are conversant with that type of operation. I do not think the Minister should wait for days to give a reply to the hon. Member's question.

Mr. d'Aguiar: How much, if any, of this \$1,971,000 is earmarked for the completion of the East Bank road, and how many miles or yards are yet to be completed?

Mr. Ram Karran: This \$1,971,000 under this Subhead we are looking at is for the maintenance of roads. It has nothing to do with construction. As I

tried to explain to the hon. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Kendall), the East Bank road is being done out of Development funds, and very little, if any, of this sum is to be spent on the East Bank road.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Is the Government still a member of and getting advice from the Association to which the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Kendall) referred in his speech on the Budget? I think it is the International Road Federation.

The Chairman: The answer then was "Yes". I suppose it still is.

Mr. Ram Karran: This Government, and I personally, tried to get interest created in British Guiana among the business people with whom the International Road Federation would prefer to deal but, unfortunately — I would like to say this quietly — the businessmen let us down when we tried to resuscitate the organization by appointing another businessman. The first gentleman showed very little interest; the second one was transferred to Trinidad and the third — I think he is in the petroleum marketing business — is in it now. It is fair to say that the Government is interested in the activities of the Federation. In fact, I have an invitation from the organization to attend one of its meetings in Spain some time this year.

Subhead 16 — Unallocated Stores

Mr. Correia: There are a few things here which are confusing me. I wish to refer to Subhead 16 where there is an increase of \$274,999 for unallocated stores: purchases \$1,975,000, issues — \$1,700,000. I notice that in 1961, \$1 has been--

The Chairman: That was a token provision.

Mr. Correia: Apparently no stores were used in 1961.

The Chairman: We do not have a column of the actual expenditure in 1961.

Mr. Correia: It is still confusing. I would like some explanation of this. If stores purchases amount to \$1,975,000 and issues to \$1,700,000, there is a difference of \$275,000 which is shown in the 1962 Estimates.

The Chairman: These are the proposals. It is estimated that purchases will be to the tune of \$1,975,000, and out of that only \$1,700,000 will be issued.

Mr. Correia: The estimate for 1962 is \$275,000. I take it these are just "guesstimates".

Mr. Ram Karran: The point my hon. Friend is making is that the purchases amount to \$1,975,000 and the issues to \$1,700,000. He is questioning whether we are not issuing the total amount of \$1,975,000—

The Chairman: It seems as if the hon. Member is suggesting that from the information we have, there were no purchases or issues of stores in 1961. He is wondering why we are now to do this in 1962.

8.30 p.m.

Mr. Correia: That is quite correct.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sorry I cannot further elucidate the point.

Mr. Burnham: I am very simple and ignorant. Is this the accounting system by which the difference between purchase and issue is explained? I think that expenditure is what you pay out, but I may be wrong. This is not my fort; I cannot understand it.

The Chairman: The house is being asked to vote \$275,000 as the value of the stock. It would seem so.

Mr. Burnham: With all due respect to you, sir, we want to hear the Minister explaining.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sure the hon. Member understands. We have gone through this over and over again. We have a system known as a Suspense Account which shows about \$¼ million worth of stock in the store. In any case that amount must be shown on the Estimates. We have this stock at the beginning of the year and we propose to put in an additional amount which we will credit to the vote. This provision shows the situation as it will be at the end of the year.

Mr. Correia: The estimate for stand.

Mr. Burnham: Do I understand, therefore, that it is proposed to spend \$275,000 under this Head during 1962?

Mr. Ram Karran: Ordinarily, at the end of the year we would have nothing in the stores because we would have used all the stores put in. This year, as the result of the take-over of the stock from the Housing and Planning Department, we expect to have stock valued at \$275,000. That is how this will appear at the end of the year, in theory at least.

Mr. d'Aguiar: That is the most fantastic statement I have heard in my life. Does this \$1,975,000 represent any part of the stock left over from the previous year? If it does, what part is represented by stock, and what part is represented by the estimated purchases during the current year?

Mr. Ram Karran: I think the hon. Member conveniently did not hear when I said "in theory at least."

Mr. d'Aguiar: I did not understand that the Government was being run on theory. This may be the ideology of Marx, but I do not know what theory it is.

Mr. Correia: When the Minister cannot satisfy this House it is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. The Public Works Department took \$225,000 worth of stock from the Housing Department. Is that amount included in the sum of \$275,000? I cannot understand what system of book-keeping is used by the Government.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I suggest that we adjourn while the Minister takes a course in book-keeping?

Mr. Ram Karran: I think I have explained already that at the end of the year these estimates will show an increase of \$275,000 over and above the \$¼ million which is in the Estimate. The hon. Member for Mazaruni-Potaro (Mr. Correia) who raised the question is fully appreciative of the fact that having come from the Housing Head it must show an increase there. I cannot do anything about the Government's system of book-keeping. It is the system adopted in all Government Departments.

Mr. Kendall: Can the Minister tell us what was the approved estimate for 1961 under this Head?

The Chairman: Isn't the position this — that the Stores Department of the P.W.D. over the years has had moneys advanced by the Legislature for the purpose of maintaining stocks at a figure which, I understand, is in the vicinity of \$¾ million? This request for an additional \$275,000 seems to me to stem from a two-pronged need, (1) to provide for the take-over of \$225,000 worth of stores from the Housing Department, and (2) an additional sum of \$50,000 to increase the stock of

stores at the P.W.D. What I think has been wrong is that these figures relating to purchases and issues should never have been shown here, because these figures would indicate the total amount of purchases for the stores during the year as against the total amount of issues during the year. It has no relevance to the figure of \$275,000, which would only mean that there is \$50,000 worth of stock plus \$225,000. I do not know if what I have said will help Members to appreciate the position.

Mr. Ram Karran: I was looking at the Estimates for 1961. As I have said, we cannot alter the system of book-keeping required by the Accountant-General. That is the system which Government wishes to have, and nothing seems wrong with it. I can imagine that orthodox book-keepers, the double entry people, will see some objection to this arrangement. The sub-head in last year's Estimates showed a sum of \$1,270,001 for purchases, and issues \$1,270,000, a difference of \$1 between the two amounts.

Mr. Correia: This Government is asking us to provide \$275,000 in cash, yet it says that it has taken over stores worth \$225,000 from the Housing Department which the P.W.D. has to pay for. These are stores already bought by the Government, yet it is asking this House to vote \$275,000 to purchase stores.

The Chairman: That should appear on the revenue side.

Mr. Burnham: May I ask whether there is reflected in the Housing Department's estimate revenue of \$225,000?

Mr. Ram Karran: It is shown in the Development Estimates of the Housing Department.

Mr. Burnham: Do understand that under the Development Estimates revenue is shown? Over the years I have been here the Development Estimates have shown expenditure; not revenue. The sum of \$225,000 is credited to the Housing Department as revenue. If we are asked to vote \$275,000 when Government is taking over stock to the value of \$225,000, that sum of \$225,000 must be shown as revenue somewhere, otherwise we should only be asked to vote \$50,000.

8.45 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am advised that this \$275,000 will be shown under the Development Programme of the Housing Department. I am further advised that most of this money comes from the C.D. & W. Scheme, and any money from that Scheme must be credited to it. However, I would like to do some research work in connection with the matter before giving any further reply.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister must admit that, if the \$275,000 is passed in the Recurrent Estimates, the Government must show where it is credited to the Housing Department at a later stage. We cannot find it at the moment.

MAINTENANCE AND RECONDITIONING OF PUBLIC BUILDING

Mr. Burnham: There is a matter that causes me some concern in this Department. I notice that year after year there is an increase in Subhead 1, Maintenance and Reconditioning of Public Buildings. This seems to be an extraordinary sum, and I am led to believe, in the light of what happened to Colony House, New Amsterdam, that this large sum is made necessary because there is no proper and regular inspection of Public Buildings. If a more careful check were made, this Government would not have to spend such large sums, because something would be done before the buildings were allowed to deteriorate almost to a disgraceful state.

The Colony House at New Amsterdam not only provides accommodation for the court, but also for Government Officers who have to go there on official duties. This building was allowed to deteriorate year after year until the Central Government decided to scrap it. In the meantime Government Officers still go to New Amsterdam on official duties, and they have to pay a big bill for accommodation at the Aster Hotel or some other hotel.

I understand that the sum paid last year for hotel accommodation for Government Officers, who went to New Amsterdam on official duties after the scrapping of the accommodation at Colony House, was more than it would have taken to recondition the building properly and to provide the necessary accommodation. I am at a loss to understand how this Socialist Government can be so prodigal with the poor taxpayer's money.

Mr. Ram Karran: First of all, I would say that this increase of \$50,000 is for the maintenance of 1,700 buildings most of which are constructed of wood. These Estimates are passed at 2 per cent of the value of these buildings, and some years the Department hardly gets the 2 per cent in order to carry out the necessary work. The hon. Member has criticized the condition of Colony House, New Amsterdam. I am sure he appreciates that it is a very old building. I do not know the exact age of the building, but everybody can see that it has been there for a very long time. Very often it is cheaper to construct a new building than to repair a very old wooden building.

After having inspected the Colony House at New Amsterdam, this Government decided to remove the top portion of the building and to retain the bottom portion. I do not think that the criticism of this expenditure is fair, hav-

ing regard to the large number of buildings this Government has to maintain. It is proposed to continue building wooden structures, and this vote is likely to be considerably increased within the next ten or twelve years.

Mr. Burnham: The care with which the hon. Minister answered my criticism about the size of the sum provided for "Maintenance and Reconditioning of Public Buildings", and the suavity with which he ignored my remarks about Colony House, leads me to think that my remarks were justified. Rather than constructing a new building, or providing accommodation for Government Officers on official duties, the Government is paying the Aster Hotel and other hotels in New Amsterdam big bills for accommodating civil servants. I understand that the cost of the hotel bills is more than it would cost to build a new structure to accommodate the civil servants when they go to New Amsterdam on official duties.

The hon. Minister says that the continued maintenance of some of these old wooden buildings will be more costly than the erection of new ones, but I am sure that the hotel bills will be more than it would cost to construct buildings for accommodating civil servants. In any case, so far as the Colony House, New Amsterdam, is concerned, Government will have to come to a firm decision very quickly because the lower portion of the building still houses the court and what has been left there appears to be as treacherous as what has been taken away. Apart from the court, there is also the registry which is already crowded — it is a most despicable sight.

Mr. Ram Karran: I do not know whether the hon. Member is speaking with any authority when he says that the cost of hotel accommodation for civil servants, who go to New Amsterdam on official duties, is higher than that of

maintaining Colony House. I am advised that an investigation was made in connection with this matter, and it was found that the cost of maintaining the Rest House — maintenance, furniture, crockery, equipment, subsistence allowance, etc. — was much higher than paying hotel bills for accommodating civil servants. This is quite different from what the hon. Member told us this afternoon when he spoke about paying high bills at the Aster Hotel and other hotels in New Amsterdam.

I do not stay at Aster Hotel when I go to New Amsterdam. I have found out, from my limited experience of conditions at the Government Rest House, that it would probably be better, in areas where hotel accommodation can be obtained, to permit the hotel people to carry on their business. I know that in a little while the hon. Member for Georgetown Central will charge this Government with nationalizing the hotel industry and depriving people who are engaged in that type of business from getting trade. I feel that wherever accommodation facilities exist, the Government should utilize those services rather than provide parallel services at tremendous expense. My views are different from those of the hon. Member.

Mr. Burnham: Do I understand from the hon. Minister that when a civil servant is accommodated at an hotel he is paid no subsistence? Do I understand that when he is accommodated at the Rest House he is given fuel, meals and linen as well as subsistence?

Mr. Ram Karran: If the condition existed before where the civil servant had his hotel bill paid and was still permitted to draw his subsistence allowance, then that condition does not exist today. His hotel bill will be paid and nothing more.

Mr. Burnham: It seems as though a different principle has been applied in these days. I recall the Constitution Commission in 1960. I know that

members of the delegation had their hotel bills paid, and they received their subsistence allowances, although the rate of the subsistence allowance was a bit miserly.

Mr. Ram Karran: I think the hon. Member's statement is inaccurate.

Mr. Burnham: May we have the figures, if I am inaccurate? I know the hon. Minister does not have the figures, because he told us a moment ago that his experience in this matter was limited. Let us have the figures for hotel bills and subsistence for civil servants who went to New Amsterdam on official duties since the time the top flat of Colony House was taken off.

May I remind the hon. Minister that the building has deteriorated further, and it is still accommodating the court and the registry. I would like to know whether this Government intends to find proper accommodation for the court and the registry? There are two Supreme Courts sitting at New Amsterdam at the moment.

Mr. Ram Karran: Government is appreciative of the situation in New Amsterdam, as far as the building is concerned. It has done something to make the building safe; it is safe at the moment, and Government proposes to continue using the building until it is possible either to rebuild or construct a new building on the same site.

Mr. Burnham: It has just struck me that legislators, who go to New Amsterdam, should now be able to claim from Government their hotel expenses, because they were allowed to stay at the Rest House free of charge except for linen and meals. This will be a question of reducing the emoluments of the legislators, when one takes into consideration the question of increased

taxation, compulsory savings. Like any other category of worker, our welfare must be regarded by this Government.

9 p.m.

Mr. Merriman (La Penitence-Lodge): I would like to refer to Sub-head 1—Maintenance and Reconditioning of Public Buildings. I noticed that the hon. Member for Ruimveldt (Mr. Burnham) took his mind to New Amsterdam. I would like to ask the hon. Minister what amount has been earmarked for the outbuilding of this Legislature. It is one of the most disgraceful I have seen *vis-a-vis* the building. It is worse than the cemetery.

Mr. Ram Karran: I may say to the hon. Member that the Public Works Department had worked out an elaborate arrangement for facilities in this building. Only this afternoon the Clerk of the Legislature, the Director and I went down and had a look at it with a view to improving it as quickly as possible. I think that such a matter could be dealt with by a committee of the House.

Mr. Burnham: I am very happy to hear that. But would suggest to the hon. Minister that one extra facility would be necessary—a private and covered exit for special Members. [*Laughter.*]

Mr. Bissember (Campbellville): I wish to refer to the building which houses the Supreme Court in Georgetown, especially that part where Court 2 is. Up to June 1961, court had to be adjourned for 15 minutes when it was raining because the roof over where the jurors sat was like a basket. In the very court, the very judge again drew my attention to the fact that to that time the Public Works Department had done nothing about the matter. I wish to know if anything has been done to stop the leak in the roof of the Supreme Court.

Secondly, in the Magistrates Court building, there is an iron rail upstairs. Part of that rail broke down and nearly carried the Police Prosecutor with it. It was eventually patched, but the whole thing is still shaking. What I would like to know is what amount of this \$850,000 is going to be spent to have these most important buildings rectified as early as possible.

Mr. Ram Karran: I have heard of these specific complaints and I am sure they would have been dealt with at the District Engineer (Georgetown) level. I propose to find out and inform the hon. Member.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Under Subhead 13—

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, I had something, before Subhead 13, on the same question which is very important, even though I say so. Does the Minister know that there is one of the Supreme Courts which is known in the profession as the "toilet court"?—*[Laughter.]*—Right in the court there is a toilet for years—*[Interruption.]*—The hon. Attorney-General knows the court I am referring to. *[Laughter.]*

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sure it is longer than five years. I have not heard about it.

Mr. Burnham: Though it is for years, it is less than five years. I would be glad if the Minister would look into it.

ELECTRIC POWER AND LIGHTING OF BUILDINGS

Mr. d'Aguiar: Under Subhead 13—Electric power and lighting of buildings, the actual expenditure in 1960 was \$57,637. In 1961, the estimate approved was \$56,000 — a reduction. In 1962, there appears to be an increase.

According to my calculation it is 73 per cent more. I would like to inquire why the sharp increase.

The Chairman: There is an explanation on this Subhead at the bottom of the page.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Yes, but it says, "Installation of electrical appliances, air conditioning units, etc.", but this heading is, "Electric power and lighting of buildings". The electric power, I assume, is the bill for the power, not the installation of air-conditioning units. Those units were installed in the previous year and between 1960 and 1961, there was a drop. Now, there is a sharp increase. It does not seem to be the full explanation. *[Pause.]*

Mr. Burnham: While the Minister is consulting to get the explanations, I would like him to give us some idea of which offices are air-conditioned and which are not. It seems to me that under a Socialist Government, if you are going to air-condition one, you must air-condition all.

Mr. Benn: I do not know that offices are air-conditioned. I would not have air-conditioning in my room.

Mr. Ram Karran: In answer to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, this amount appears as big as it does because of the transfer of the electric bills for the Police Department to the Public Works Department. Formerly, the Police Department paid its own bills, but we now propose that the expenses should be shown under this Head. I think a reduction of \$20,000 would be seen on page 41, Subhead 6—Lighting, and the explanation under that refers.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Was the Minister not aware of the change at the time the notes were compiled? If so, why was it not mentioned in the notes?

Mr. Ram Karran: I apologize to the hon. Member for that. We will amend it now.

**STONE CRUSHING PLANT—RUIMVELDT
SUSPENSE ACCOUNT**

Mr. d'Aguiar: I would like to refer to Subhead 20—Stone Crushing Plant. I would like to enquire how much stores used and held in stock are accounted for under the Subhead. I would be honoured with the remarkable explanation that the stores melt to the point of zero to the end of the financial year.

Mr. Ram Karran: The answer is "yes", in theory.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Why has the profit for the previous year been transformed into a loss in the current year?

Mr. Ram Karran: This is similar to the suspense accounts we have dealt with. This Subhead—Stone Crushing Plant—Ruimveldt Suspense Account—has to be treated in the same way as we have treated the other two Subheads.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I ask if this is correct, why has the Director of Audit made the comment that the system of recording unallocated stores in the Stone Crushing Depot is incorrect?

Mr. Ram Karran: The reason, I understand, is that there is some difference of opinion between the Director of Audit and the Accountant General, who will have none of the recommendations of the Director of Audit.

Mr. d'Aguiar: The Director of Audit is the officer who is more responsible for the keeping of accounts, and this House should get the assurance of the Minister that the Director of Audit's recommendations will supersede the orders of the Director of Public Works to continue in the old-fashioned, negligent and inefficient system.

Mr. Ram Karran: It is the Accountant General who directs all these matters, and not the Director of Public Works.

Mr. Correia: I have been searching all over the Estimates for a reference to the Makouria Stone Crushing Plant.

Mr. Ram Karran: The Makouria plant is the one shown here under "Ruimveldt".

Mr. Correia: It is very deceiving.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Does not the Minister think that the stone crushing plant at Ruimveldt, with its guaranteed sale, if properly run should make a profit?

Mr. Ram Karran: It is never run at a profit because the hon. Member should appreciate that the Government does not quarry its own stone. It buys stone from the suppliers of stone and merely crushes for them. That was the policy laid down by my predecessor and that is the policy that is followed.

Mr. d'Aguiar: If it is not run at a profit why, in the previous year, was there a credit balance of \$6,650 as stated in the Estimates?

9.15 p.m.

Mr. Merriman: May I refer to item 2?

The Chairman: We cannot go back there; we cannot be jumping up and down.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I have an answer to the question I asked the Minister?

Mr. Ram Karran: The plant is not run for the purpose of making a profit, in the sense that we do not add 45 to 50 per cent to the cost of production in disposing of the stones to its

customers. The plant is run in such a way that the stone is sold to the purchaser, which is invariably a Government Department, at cost price. The Town Council purchased stone from the plant at one time and it was sold at the same price. If a large volume of crushing is done in one year a negligible amount of profit may be shown, but the plant is not designed to make profit as a private individual would run his business.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I would like to know what was the expenditure in 1961 and the estimated expenditure for 1962.

Mr. Ram Karran: I will get that information.

Mr. Correia: Item 9 — Water Transport Suspense Account. Can the Minister —

The Chairman: We cannot go back. If I want to be strictly correct I should follow the Standing Orders which provide that we do not deal with the sub head one at a time, but deal with the general policy of the Department under a particular Head. If I did that hon. Members may find some difficulty in making all the points they wish to make. I wish to give Members of the Opposition the fullest opportunity to question the Government under each Head. I have been giving every latitude to hon. Members, but we cannot go back to items we have already passed.

Mr. d'Aguiar: For general information may I ask if a new building is constructed by the Public Works Department, would the cost be shown under this Head, or under which Head?

Mr. Ram Karran: It would depend on the type of building. It could be shown either under Public Works-Non-Recurrent, or under the Development Programme.

Head 14.—Public Works and Sea Defences — Annually Recurrent \$4,625,937 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 15—Public Works—Non-Recurrent, \$550,000.

Subhead 2—Purchase of and alteration to property at lot 21, Brickdam G.T., \$81,000.

Mr. Burnham : I observe that for the purchase and alteration of a property at 21, Brickdam, there is an item of expenditure of \$81,000 which this House passed by way of a Motion a few weeks ago. May I inquire of the Minister what was the purchase price paid? That was not very clear.

Mr. Ram Karran: The price was \$65,000.

Mr. Burnham: Does the Minister really feel that \$65,000 was a proper price, or was it an exorbitant price to pay for that property?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Mann): One would have imagined that the hon. Member would have given the Government credit for acquiring the building at a cheaper price than originally offered. Negotiations have been going on for years. Government cannot produce buildings out of top hats, and it considers \$65,000 a very reasonable price to pay for that building, bearing in mind its location and market relationship to other buildings. Government is trying to acquire other buildings on that site, and that is why it feels that \$65,000 in this instance is reasonable. If he wishes, the hon. Member can examine the files relating to the purchase of the building, and also the figures put up by the Quantity Surveyor, whose competence I have

[MR MANN]

no reason to doubt. It may be that the hon. Member has in mind that the building should have been purchased at a higher price, and has information which I have every reason to suspect was given to him in the course of his correspondence with other members of the Bar by whom it was sold.

Mr. Burnham : I always use my language with niceness and accuracy. I asked the Minister (but someone said "Fools rush in . . .") whether he did not think the price was exorbitant? In the circumstances I do not think I could have been understood by anyone literate to have meant that the price was too low. My suggestion, if not by implication, by inference, was that the price was too high, because I know it is a half lot of land in Brickdam, and a two-flat building, and I know that another building in Brickdam, a greenheart building on a half lot of land, was purchased for \$50,000 quite recently. That is why it struck me that \$65,000 was exorbitant, but there may have been other considerations. That is why I asked the Minister whether he did not think it was exorbitant. I have no correspondence with members of my profession. I do not know which member of my profession is involved in this in respect of price. The Crown Solicitor probably drew up the purchaser's affidavit.

Mr. Mann: May I ask the hon. Member what price he would have considered reasonable, and based on what grounds?

The Chairman: I do not think that should be the style of debate.

Mr. Burnham : Twice for the day Government Members have referred to me as if I were the Government. Coming events cast their shadows. [*Laughter*].

Head 15.—*Public Works — Non-Recurrent, \$550,000 — agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION ESTABLISHMENT

Head 16—*Drainage and Irrigation — Establishment, \$668,401.*

Subhead 1 — *Director of Drainage and Irrigation, \$9,600.*

Mr. Burnham : I think I have read that the Director of Drainage and Irrigation has been appointed to some post in Aden, where there are disturbances periodically. It seems to me that Government has been dilatory in filling this important post. May I ask the Minister why this policy of not filling these posts promptly, and whether he does not think that the Government's dilatoriness can lead to a certain amount of inefficiency and unsatisfactory conduct of Government affairs?

Mr. Ram Karran: I am told that the post became vacant on the 8th of October. The Deputy Director, who is likely to be a candidate for the post, was away on vacation leave, and it was difficult to get through to him. He was in Canada. I understand also that steps are being taken to fill the post. The hon. Member should be aware of the fact that when we were discussing the Constitution he insisted that these things should be put in.

Mr. Burnham : I always appreciate the sense of humour of the Minister, but I do not remember on what occasion I have ever suggested any state of affairs which would leave the Minister so impotent on the question of the Directorship of a Department within his portfolio. It is not enough to tell us that the Deputy Director was away in Canada. There is no difficulty in contacting him, and since he has been

Deputy Director the Public Service Commission is seized of his record and his qualifications.

1.30 p.m.

I know, for instance, that the last Solicitor General was not here when he was appointed to the post of Solicitor General, and that is no excuse. I do not remember saying anything more about the Public Service Commission than did the Leader of the hon. Minister's Party, that is, that it should be executive. All I have said is that the Public Service Commission should be executive. I shall be grateful if the hon. Minister will not indulge in a sense of humour at the expense of accuracy. Let us be realistic. When anyone goes before the Public Service Commission in British Guiana, it is quite easy to see which Political Party was responsible for the majority of its members. It is a question of today for me and tomorrow for you. If that is the way Government wants to work things, it is all right with me.

Head 16. Drainage and Irrigation—Establishment—\$668,401 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION ANNUALLY RECURRENT

Head 17 Drainage and Irrigation—Annually Recurrent—\$725,250.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF MACHINERY FOR AGRICULTURE HIRE POOL

Mr. d'Aguiar: With regard to Sub-head 4—Maintenance and Operation of Machinery for Agriculture Hire Pool—\$260,000, there seems to be some revenue to be obtained from this. May I have some explanation as to the revenue in relation to the expenditure?

The Chairman: The revenue is set out at the front of the Estimates. At page iv, Head 1V, 11—Hire of Agricul-

tural Machinery, the sum of \$200,000 is estimated.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I ask what is the method of assessing expenditure and crediting revenue?

Mr. Ram Karran: The hire charges for the use of these machines are fixed by the Government, and the sum of \$200,000 has been estimated as the amount to be collected under the appropriate Head. The amount shown under Subhead 4 of Head 17 is the actual cost of the maintenance of the machines. If I anticipate the hon. Member correctly, I am sure he will ask the reason for this. In the first place, it is not intended to make a profit from the use of these machines, but reasonable charges are fixed for their use. These are very old and heavy machines, and the cost of maintaining them is very high when compared with the maintenance of new machines. The benefit which is about \$60,000 may be regarded as a subsidy to the people who have to clear their land.

Mr. d'Aguiar: May I ask whether the 1961 Accounts have been submitted to the Director of Audit?

Mr. Ram Karran : No.

Mr. d'Aguiar: If not, why not?

Mr. Ram Karran: I am told that the books are not yet ready to be audited, and it will take some time before they can be audited.

Head 17. Drainage and Irrigation—Annually Recurrent—\$725,250 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 18. Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Chairman : We will defer consideration of this Head.

Agreed to.

Head 19. Local Government

The Chairman: We will defer consideration of this Head.

Agreed to.

INTERIOR

Head 20. Interior—\$282,161.

ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSES

Mr. Jordan: I would like some explanation with regard to Subhead 12—Entertainment Expenses—\$960?

Mr. Rai: I see that my hon. Friend is evincing great interest in entertainments. This is a small amount allowed to District Commissioners who have to entertain V.I.P.'s from time to time.

9.40 p.m.

Mr. Jordan: May I ask if it is taxable?

Mr. Rai: No. It is not part of their emoluments as in certain other cases.

Head 20 Interior — \$282,161 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 21—Police—deferred.

Head 22—Prisons—\$603,296—agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Head 23—Fire Prevention—\$507,525 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

PRINTERY

Head 25—Printery—\$562,586.

Mr. Burnham: When I look at this Head, I notice that all of the posts are new posts. At least, there is nothing to indicate that there were any of these posts extant in 1961. In the circumstances, I

am wondering how the holders of the posts in this department have been paid up to now. When I get that answer, I have another question to ask. Under what legal authority have they been paid?

Dr. Jacob: In 1961, they were provided for under "Chief Secretary's Office" and in 1962, there were special resolutions passed to pay the salaries.

Mr. Burnham: In 1961, from the legend I see at the bottom, Subhead 1 was provided for, but I do not see that Subhead 2 was provided for. The footnote says item 1 of Subhead 1 was provided for in 1961 under Head 7—Chief Secretary's Office; item 2 provided for under Chief Secretary's Office. And then: "1 Secretary—provided in 1961 under Head 44—Public Works Department". Then: "1 Senior Clerical Assistant". Obviously, that was a new post and was not a question of transferring from one department to another. Again: "2 Clerical Assistants—provided in 1961 under Head 44—Public Works Department and Head 7—Chief Secretary's Office." But the one Senior Clerical Assistant, there seems to have been no prior provision for him or her whatever he or she is. So, I would like to know at least how the Senior Clerical Assistant was paid.

May I observe I do not recall—I am always subject to correction—any special Motion or Resolution in this House for these posts. I remember I pointed it out when there was a special Resolution for the Senior Legal Adviser to the Police. As I understand the law, the general Resolution can only refer to old posts. For new posts, there has to be a special Resolution and there has been no special Resolution for anything here under "Printery". Therefore, I would like to know—perhaps, it is too much to ask the hon. Minister of Finance unless he gets advice from his right, and that is where he ought to turn—under what legal authority the holders of the new posts have been paid up to now.

Mr. Rai: The post of Senior Clerical Assistant was attached to the Public Works Department last year and is merely being transferred to the Printery this year. Moneys for all these posts are being paid under the same authority as that under which all officers are being paid for this year.

Mr. Burnham : First of all, if that was so, the legend ought to have shown. The legend makes no reference to the fact that the Senior Clerical Assistant held a post under another Head last year. I expect my hon. Friend to appreciate that point, but I doubt whether he appreciates this point that it is a new post. The fact that you have reduced the establishment of an old Head and taken the body into a new Head does not make it an old Head. It is still a new Head.

I wonder whether the hon. Attorney-General has been consulted on this matter. I would like to hear the hon. Minister of Home Affairs answer as "Minister" and not as "lawyer". I prefer to take my law from the Government Minister who is paid to advise on legal questions, for there is an opinion abroad that the transfer of a post from an old Head to a new Head makes it a new post, for which a special Resolution would have been necessary. [*Interruption.*]

As I understand the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, he no doubt proposes to ask this House to defer this Head until he has consulted the hon. Attorney-General. This is a matter of great importance. We have been paying out moneys so far as Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Legislators are concerned without lawful authority for 4½ months and it seems to me, on advice that I have received — I have not advised myself — that a similar situation has arisen with respect to the holders of posts under this Head. [*Interruption.*] — I understand the hon. Minister of Home Affairs is saying that the civil servants will be surcharged. But I understand their emoluments are so

miserly that they cannot afford to be surcharged. Therefore, we have to protect taxpayers' money.

9.50 p.m.

Subhead 6 Advertisements,
\$23,000.

Mr. Cheeks: Will the Minister tell this House how much of this sum of \$23,000 has been saved by the cancellation of the recent contract, or whether Government intends to distribute the advertisements which have been withdrawn from the *Chronicle*, among the weekly newspapers?

Mr. Rai: The hon. Member has asked two questions. I do not know on which he is relying. I would like to know.

Mr. Cheeks: First of all I would like to know how much Government is saving, and when that question is answered I would like to know if Government intends to distribute its advertisements among the weekly newspapers.

Mr. Rai: I do not see how the first question arises. Government is not saving money; it proposes to spend money.

Mr. Cheeks: I am referring to the cancellation of the recent contracts.

Mr. Rai: I do not know what contracts the hon. Member is referring to.

Mr. Burnham : As far as I understand, the hon. Member is asking what saving will be effected as a result of the discontinuance of the practice of publishing Government advertisements in the *Chronicle*.

Mr. Rai: We do not anticipate any savings because Government notices will still be advertised, and I take it that the rates are about the same.

Mr. Burnham: Do I therefore understand that in the past there were certain Government notices and advertisements which appeared exclusively in the *Daily Chronicle*? The situation is surely un-

[**MR. BURNHAM**]

satisfactory. The Minister refuses to answer an embarrassing question; he refuses to give information on important matters of expenditure of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Cheeks: In other words, does the Minister intend not to spend that money which was being spent on advertisements in the *Chronicle*?

Mr. Rai: As I have stated before, Government anticipates an expenditure of \$23,000, whether it advertises in the *Chronicle* or not.

Mr. Cheeks: That brings us to the point that Government intends to advertise, possibly in weekly newspapers.

Mr. Burnham: I will not anticipate what the Government will do. I am asking the Minister, through you, sir, to say through what medium the money previously spent on advertising in the *Chronicle* will be directed? [**An hon. Member:** "The New Nation".]

Mr. Rai: There are other newspapers circulating in the country, and Government will advertise. Government does not anticipate any saving. It may be that savings may eventuate, in which case it will be very gratifying to myself and, I think, to other Members of the House.

Mr. Burnham : There is another matter that concerns me, and I hope I will have the courtesy of a reply from the charming Minister. When does Government really propose to make the Printery a printery, that is to establish a Government Printery for the printing and production of Government notices and publications? We have heard the Premier, since the days when he was not Premier, insisting that there should be a Government Printery in the fullest sense, and not merely a Head in the Estimates. Sub-head 4—Public Printing Regulated by Contract, \$375,000—has no right here. We should have had a Head—Printing.

You cannot bring into printing, expenditure on a printery. I would like to know when there is going to be established a real printery?

Mr. Rai: Government has the setting up of a Government Printery very much in mind, and is taking steps progressively to achieve this. Unfortunately, this year we have not been able to make an allocation, because of the civil disturbances, the looting and arson. Government anticipates loss of revenue, otherwise there should have been a figure on the Estimates for the progressive establishment of a printery.

The Chairman : You have purchased some equipment?

Mr. Rai: Yes, sir, The Government would have purchased more equipment had it not been for the looting and arson.

Mr. Burnham: The hon. Minister must not insult our intelligence. These Estimates were laid on the Table on the 31st January, before any strike or looting. A tinge of humour is always appreciated, but at three minutes to ten o'clock he must not carry it too far. I would wish the Minister to give a sensible reply, or I should have to withdraw the compliment I paid him, that he was one of three efficient Ministers of Government.

Mr. Rai: My hon. Friend would see that I am quite serious if he would examine item 8—Purchase of Offset Printing Equipment, \$10,000. Government was hoping that it would have been able to allocate more than \$10,000 towards the purchase of machinery, but circumstances have prevented it from doing so. We have this very much in mind, and Government will establish a printery in progressive stages.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Under what authority does the Government print party slogans on public documents?

Mr. Rai: The printing of slogans on Government stationery was authorized by the Council of Ministers.

Mr. d'Aguiar: Is it within the scope of the Council of Ministers to authorize such an expenditure without reference to the Legislature?

Mr. Rai: I was very careful in the reply I gave. I did not say "party slogans". I take it the hon. Member is referring to the words "Freedom Year". I see nothing wrong in putting those words on Government stationery, and I say that

the printing is on the authority of the Council of Ministers.

Head 24 — Printery, \$562,586 — agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Tuesday, 17th April, 1962, at 2.00 p.m."

Adjourned accordingly at 10.00 p.m.