

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 3]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

13th Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 17th March, 1969

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. R.B. Gajraj, C.B.E., J.P.

Members of the Government – People's National Congress (35)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S Burnham, Q.C.,
Prime Minister

Ministers (14)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Minister of Finance

Cde. R.J. Jordan,
Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cde. M. Kasim
Minister of Communications

Cde. H.D. Hoyte
Minister of Home Affairs

Cde. N. J. Bissember,
Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs

Cde. C.M.L. John,
Minister of Local Government

Cde. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

Cde.S.M. Patterson,
Minister of Education

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

Cde. S.S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,
Attorney General and Minister of State

Cde. M.W. Carter,
Minister of Information

Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Works and Hydraulics

(Absent)

Cde. H.O Jack,
Minister of Portfolio

Cde. S.E. Talbot,
Minister of Health

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

Cde. P. Duncan,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government

Cde. J.G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Cde. W. Haynes,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics

Cde. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and
Natural Resources

Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Other Members (15)

Cde. J.N. Aaron
Cde. M.M. Ackman
Cde. K. Bancroft
Cde. J. Budhoo, J.P.
Cde. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Cde. O.E. Clarke, Deputy Speaker
Cde. E.F. Correia
Cde. M. Corrica
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler
Cde. P.A. Limerick
Cde. S.M. Saffee
Cde. D.A. Singh
Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman
Cde. C.E. Wrights
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

Members of the Opposition (23)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C.B. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition

Other Members(22)

Cde. Ram Karran
Cde. R. Chandisingh
Cde. F.H.W. Ramsahoye
Cde. D.C. Jagan
Cde. E. M.G. Wilson
Cde. A.M. Hamid, J.P.
Cde. G.H. Lall
Cde. M.Y. Ally
Cde. R.D. Persaud, J.P.
Cde. E.M. Stoby
Cde. R. Ally
Cde. E.L. Ambrose
Cde. L.M. Branco
Cde. Balchand Persaud
Cde. Bhola Persaud

(Absent)

Cde. I. Remington, J.P.

(Absent)

Cde. R.P. Sahoye

Cde. V. Teekah

Cde. R.E. Cheeks

(Absent)

Cde. E. DaSilva

Cde. M.F. Singh

Cde. J.A. Sutton

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain

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

PRAYERS**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON GUYANA
BECOMING A REPUBLIC IN 1970**

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Hon. Members are aware that Guyana's Independence Constitution foreshadows that in due course Guyana will become a Republic and provides the machinery by which the necessary constitutional changes will be effected.

The specific amendments to the Constitution that will inaugurate the Republic are precisely set out in a schedule to the Constitution and the machinery for bringing them into effect is a resolution passed by this honourable House on a Motion introduced by the Prime Minister not less than three months before it is debated. In thus establishing in our Independence Constitution a comprehensive scheme by which the State may become a Republic, we proceeded on the acknowledgement that it was a necessary fulfilment of the processes of national Independence that Guyana should become a Republic and should cease to be a part of Her Majesty's dominions.

The Constitutional scheme provides however that notice of the Motion which would initiate the process of constitutional Amendment shall not be given before 1st January, 1969. That date has now passed and, Mr. Speaker, in pursuance of the provisions of the Constitution and in keeping with the aspirations of our people, it is my intention to give shortly to this honourable House notice of a Motion that Guyana should become a Republic on the 23rd day of February, 1970, a date which commemorates the occasion on which the first major blow for freedom was struck in Guyana. That date, Mr. Speaker, is less than a year away. There will be much to do by way of preparation before then and as I have already said, the Motion itself cannot be debated until at least three months after notice of it has been given.

In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary that we begin these acts of preparation immediately. To this end, I have invited His Excellency the Governor-General to preside over a representative national committee which will plan for this important constitutional event. His Excellency has kindly accepted the invitation and details of the committee will be announced in due course. I am sure that hon. Members will agree that it is right that these preliminary steps be taken now in advance of the date, but, of course, without prejudice to the consideration of the Motion by this House. Finally, may I say that I have taken this step mindful of the fact that in initiating the processes of change to a republic as envisaged by the Constitution, I have the support of a majority of the Members of this House, of the major political parties in Guyana and the overwhelming majority of our people.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURES 1969

BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance on 28th February, 1969, for the approval of estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1969, totalling \$146, 698, 155 (excluding \$20, 567,751 which is chargeable by law).

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the debate on the Motion was concluded at the last sitting of the House and I now formally instruct that the Assembly should resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 1969.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Hon. Members, as Chairman of the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply, I wish to report in accordance with paragraph (2) of Standing Order 65,

Business sub-committee, that the Business Sub-Committee met on three occasions and passed a Resolution in terms of the matter set out in paragraph (1) of Standing Order 65, Copies of the

2.30 p.m.

Resolution and all the minutes of the proceedings of the Committee have been printed and circulated to Members.

The Minister of Finance (Dr. Reid): I beg to move the Motion that this Committee agree with the sub-Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Chairman: We shall now proceed to the consideration of the Estimates, Head by Head and Division by Division.

Dr. Reid: I would like to substitute a new page, page 45, it is already circulated. We have, also, a new page, page 153, to be inserted after page 152 and done subsequently.

The Chairman: These two will take the place of—

Dr. Reid: This letter will be an addition.

The Chairman: So this will be taken with what is already proposed. If hon. Members will take out their copies of the Estimates we can begin our work in this respect. Let us turn to page 14 where you will find that the first Head is Head 1 – Governor-General. For the benefit of hon. Members sitting in this Assembly for the first time, let me point out that when we come to a Head or Division – the Division is for Capital Expenditure whereas the Head is for Recurrent – I shall just put the question that the sum stand part of the Estimates. Hon. Members may then

indicate to the Chair their desire to discuss any particular item in the Head and we shall deal with it in order. We are not going to skip from item 1 to 20 and back; when we move along we shall not go back because time is precious.

HEAD 1 – GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): The hon. Prime Minister a moment ago indicated to the House that Guyana should become a Republic next year. He mentioned also that His Excellency the Governor-General will head a Committee. We are not certain what this Committee's functions will be, whether it will be to ascertain what kind of Republic Guyana should have. I say this because I have read in the papers that Guyana would be having the Indian form of Republic.

Let me stipulate that my party has not given any consideration as to what form the Republic should take, but I think that, on this occasion when we are discussing the Head of Governor-General, I should make a few observations on this question.

One wonders whether, for a small country like ours, it is important to have the same form of Republic as that of India. We know that, in India, the President's status is merely ceremonial with limited functions set out in the Constitution; he is not the head of Government. We know that, in countries as large as India which has not only several States under a federal type of Constitution but which has diplomatic representatives of many countries, it may be necessary to have such a post distinct from that of Chief Executive; but it must be considered whether, in a country such as Guyana, where one does not have the same amount of work, it may not be economical to combine both positions in one person.

I know that in the United States and in many Latin American countries, the Chief Executive, that is the President, is also the ceremonial head. He meets all the new diplomats, he goes to all cocktail parties, et cetera, in addition to having the right to veto bills passed by the Parliament.

The Chairman: You are anticipating the question. You should wait until three and a half months' time when all these points can be made. At the moment we cannot do anything more with the expenditure for the Governor-General. What I mean is that the first reference to this has been made but we cannot deal now with this.

Dr. Jagan: I do not want to go into detail. What I would like to know is if the Government has any intention of sounding out the people of this country – roughly \$54,000 is being spent and, while this is a small but significant amount for a country like Guyana, one wonders if such a sum could not be saved. I throw this out for consideration: will they sound out public opinion – not about the substance but the form the Republic should take?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Chairman, the provision for the Motion to be on the table for three and a half months assumes that the matter will be publicly canvassed before the debate.

Mr. Jagan: Subhead 5 – Telephones. I see that the proposal is twice that for last year when the amount to be spent was \$2,000 whereas they actually spent \$7,000. Could we be informed why we need this increase? Is it that new telephones are to be installed or has the cost of telephones gone up? Can the Government give us some indication as to what the revised estimate for this year might be?

The Chairman: The hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, it was in 1967 that the Guyana Telecommunications Corporation was established and, since that time, instead of Government offices having free telephones each Ministry and each Department was charged with the payment and the vote was put here. Between 1967 and 1968 we were not getting the exact figures and, furthermore, in some cases, some Ministries were not paying their bills promptly and so it became necessary to pay during the next year for services used in the previous year. That account for the amount of \$7,000 in 1968. We hope, however, that the sum of \$4,000 in 1969 is a realistic one; but with telephones, one cannot always be sure how much will be spent. This merely an enlightened guess.

Head 1 – Governor-General - \$54,786, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.40 p.m.

The Chairman: I think we should turn to page 18, Head 2 – Supreme Court of Judicature. If hon. Members will also refer to the appendix to the Report of the Business Subcommittee you will find that suggested times have been laid on.

Mr. Jagan: Head 1: Item 5. Mr. Chairman, it is our view that the salary of the Judges of the Supreme Court should be increased. The cost of living has been going up and it will not only affect the working class people but it will also affect the Judges. This is a very responsible post. When one takes into account the tax that these Judges have to pay and the amount they are left with to take home, it is a very small amount compared with the type of job they are called upon to do.

May I be permitted to deal with Item 7? The House allowance of \$200 is a very small amount when one takes into account that this amount is taxed together with his salary. In this country if a Judge has to rent a house it would be impossible for him to find a house for less than

\$250. I feel that the house allowance should be tax free. This Government does not provide houses for all the Judges – some are being provided for. Some of the Judges live in their own quarters or have to rent premises.

I urge that the house allowance be increased and that it should be tax free.

The Chairman: Any other Member wishes to speak?

Mr. Ram Karran: Subhead 1: Item 6 – Remuneration for Members, Judicial Service Commission. Even though this is a statutory provision, the Government has increased it by \$200 and the Explanatory Note says that it is to provide an additional member of the Commission. I wish to refer to a recent case where a Magistrate was holding a sitting of the Court on the passing of another Magistrate and one eminent Q.C. wept because this dead Magistrate was acting for a long period. I have been informed, and it is said, that this individual died because he was not appointed. Are we adding one more member to the Judicial Service Commission to ensure that people are appointed or that the correct people are selected to act so that when vacancies occur these people are appointed rather than putting persons to act for long periods and have them break their hearts when they are told that they cannot fit in and therefore cannot be appointed?

The Government ought to have indicated why an additional member of the Commission is required. Is this a new member? How many members are there on the Commission? I think there are three. Is this Commission being comprised of four, or acting member, or what? Will the hon. Attorney General please tell us?

Mr. Jagan: Items 9 and 10: Commissioner of Title Registrar.

Firstly, since there is a vacancy with respect to the post of Commissioner of Title some time now, since His Lordship Mr. Justice Morris has been appointed to act as puisne Judge, can I

enquire from the Government what is happening in respect of the filling of this post? I hope that the Government does not just tell us that the Judicial Service Commission is looking into it.

Secondly, I notice that the post of Registrar carries a salary of \$9,360. If I remember correctly, the duties of the Registrar, Supreme Court does not only include that of administration of the Supreme Court, but he is also in charge of the magistrates throughout the country. It is my view that since the duties of the post involves far more work than those carried out by some of the Permanent Secretaries in the various Ministries, I do not see why this post should not carry the same salary as that of a Permanent Secretary.

I wish also to refer to item 24.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak on this before we go on to item 24? [*Pause*] Well then proceed hon. Member.

Mr. Jagan: With respect to the librarian, before the Court of Appeal was established there were a librarian and a deputy librarian. Since the establishment of the Court of Appeal the deputy is now with the Court of Appeal and there is only one gentleman in the Supreme Court library and he is in charge of the whole library. He keeps the key and everything and if at any one time he is ill the library is closed and the practitioners who pay subscriptions for the use of the library are at a great disadvantage.

2.50 p.m.

I would therefore ask the Attorney-General whether he does not think that the Librarian in the Supreme Court should have an assistant as was the practice in the past.

The Chairman: Are there any other questions? [*After a pause.*]

Then we will turn to page 19 in order to deal with the other subheads before the hon. Attorney-General replies.

Mr. Jagan: I wish to speak on subhead 7 – Law Library. We see that the sum of \$4,500 is to be voted. In my view this amount is very inadequate for the stocking of the Library. If I am correct, it will have to be used not only for the Supreme Court Library but also for the purchase of books for the Library at the Court of Appeal. I think my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General would agree with me that with the cost of books today the sum of \$4,500 will be very inadequate for these two libraries. From time to time we have seen that Law Reports are given to the Court of Appeal Library and to the Supreme Court Library.

I hope that the hon. and learned Attorney-General will tell us whether he does not think the amount is too small.

The Chairman: Would any other Members like to speak on any of the other subheads?

Mr. R.D. Persuad: I notice that the amount for editing Law Reports has been reduced from \$2,800 to \$960. Can the hon. Attorney-General give the reason? Is it that the Government will not bother to edit the Law Reports so that they may be published and made available to members of the public, particularly legal practitioners?

The Chairman: if there are no other questions, the hon. Attorney-General will reply to the points.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: May I attempt to deal with the question in the order in which they have been raised.

The hon. and learned Member Mr. Jagan raised the question of the desirability of increasing the emoluments of members of the Judiciary, in particular the Puisne Judges. I can

only hope that this new solicitude that we have had this afternoon from the Members on the Opposition Front Bench for Guyana's Judiciary reflects a change of heart on their part. It is a welcome solicitude. We have had the spectacle in the past of members of the Opposition using the opportunity of the debate on the Estimates for the purpose of berating the Judiciary. I only hope that they now recognize what I have been saying all along, that the impartiality, dedication and service that has been rendered to Guyana are in the highest tradition of the Commonwealth. These are sentiments which members of the Opposition now echo. I hope, too, that we will find the same solicitude and the same recognition of the need to promote and advance the interests of the Judiciary and our jurisprudence when later on in the Session, we deal with such matters as the Privy Council.

So far as the salaries are concerned, may I say that this Government has made a positive and vigorous effort to advance the basic remuneration of members of the Judiciary. I think my hon. and learned Friend will give us credit for having, during the middle of the last term of the Government, brought forward to the House proposals which significantly and substantially increased the total level of remuneration both in terms of salaries and allowances. We are at the stage when the Government is awaiting the Report of the Collins Commission dealing with the whole question of reorganization of the Public Service. It seems to us that this is not the moment for us to tackle a matter of this kind, representing as it does, an increase in emoluments of the highest paid members of the Public Service taken in its generality.

While I share fully with my hon. and learned Friend the need for us to continue to look at this matter with the greatest care, I would have thought it was manifest that this is not an opportune time for him to seek to urge us to take action.

The question of house allowances comes within much the same category, except that when you are dealing with house allowances you enter an area which is important to the entire community and not to the Public Service and its equivalents alone. House allowances have been used consistently by the commercial community as part of remuneration with the object of

rendering them tax free. On an occasion such as this it could lead to a very considerable area of uncertainty. I think it would be better for this issue to be tackled as part of the overall question of remuneration of members of the Judiciary.

The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran asked a question about provision for an additional member of the Judicial Service Commission. It is precisely to meet the need for avoiding long acting appointments and to ensure that the work of the Judicial Service Commission would be done with expedition that this step is being taken. I would hope that instead of the criticism he has directed to the Government he would say a word to our credit and recognize what we have done to meet the goal he has in mind.

So far as the vacancy in the posts of Commissioners of Title is concerned, the position is that there is no vacancy. The Commissioner of Title is acting as Puisne Judge and there is a vacancy for an acting Commissioner of Title. The necessary processes towards this end are being implemented. I will not say that the matter is before the Judicial Service Commission - as the hon. and learned member asked me to - as the appropriate body that handles these appointments is the Public Service Commission.

The question of an increase of salary for the Registrar in relation to that of the Permanent Secretaries is – I am sure my hon. and learned Friend would agree – a matter that can only be considered in relation to the wider question of remuneration in the Public Service generally.

So far as the Librarian is concerned, I do not agree that there is need for an Assistant Librarian. The Estimates at the moment do provide for a Librarian in the Supreme Court and for an Assistant Librarian to function in the Court of Appeal.

The question of the Library in the Supreme Court has exercised our minds over a number of years and we have been giving particular attention to this recently. What would help most is if it were recognized that the Library in the Supreme Court ought to be supplemented by libraries

of members of the legal profession. It is not really the case that it is the Government's responsibility to provide the entire legal profession with libraries through the single Library in the Supreme Court. It is there initially for the use of the Court, the Judges and other officers. It is there, of course, to be used as a supplement to the libraries of legal practitioners. There are, I regret to say, only a few practitioners who have been prepared to establish libraries of their own. My hon. and learned Friend Dr. Ramsahoye is among those who have, and I would urge that he exhort his colleagues both on the other side of the House and within the profession – and I assure him I shall help him to do so – to establish libraries of their own following his example.

So far as funds for the purchase of books is concerned, this is an area in which, in my capacity as Attorney-General, I constantly urge on the Government to do better each year in order to keep pace with rising costs. I think that the Government has generally implemented these requests and while there is always the possibility of expanding the Library, if we had enough money, I suggest that what we have done does represent a reasonable effort. I think my hon. and learned Friend did us less than justice by suggesting there was only one provision for Library expenses. Subhead 13 on page 19 does in fact represent – although it does not say so specifically – a further sum of \$4,000, which is intended to be used on the purchase of books for the Library of the Court of Appeal.

3 p.m.

We are therefore now constructing two Libraries.

The question raised by the hon. Member Mr. R.D. Persaud with regard to Law Reports was, I think, answered in the annotation to the Estimates themselves where it was explained that the decrease in the amount sought to be appropriated reflected the fact that, on this occasion, we were editing only one year's Law Reports. This means not that we are paying less attention to producing Law Reports, but that our efforts over the previous years in bringing the Reports up to

date have met with such substantial success that we are now in a position of producing, we hope this year, Law Reports for 1966.

Head 2, Supreme Court of Judicature - \$514,032, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We shall now turn to pages 20 and 21.

HEAD 3 – MAGISTRATES

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 1, item 1, Magistrates – 2 Senior. First, I should like to know what is the yardstick being used for Magistrates to be appointed as Senior Magistrates. Is their length of service taken into account, the time they served as Magistrates, or their relationships?

Secondly, I should like to know whether Magistrates are entitled to make representation on behalf of themselves. Some time ago we saw that two Senior Magistrates attempted to make representation on their own behalf and on behalf of their colleagues and they were thrown out. We would like to know if this justice is being given to these people who are supposed to give justice in the execution of their duties. We would like the hon. Attorney-General to answer.

Provision is made for two Senior Magistrates on the salary scale F10 and 16 Magistrates on the salary scale A1. Just look at the steep rise! The Senior Magistrate is on the salary scale F10 - \$8,880, and the Magistrate is on the salary scale A1 - \$5,376. [**The Prime Minister:** “State the maximum.”] Do not worry with the maximum, take the starting point.

The Chairman: Please address the Chair.

Mr. Lall: I know the Prime Minister wants to interrupt.

The Chairman: Do not deviate from what you want to say; say it to me please.

The Lall: I should like the hon. Attorney-General to answer my questions.

The Chairman: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak?

Mr. M.F. Singh: Yes.

The Chairman: May I ask if you are speaking on the same item number?

Mr. M.F. Singh: I am speaking on subhead 1, item 1. I am sure it is generally accepted by the members of the legal profession that Magistrates are grossly underpaid. I should like to suggest to the Government that it consider increasing the salary of Magistrates. I know that the Attorney-General has indicated that the Government is awaiting the report of the Collins Commission.

What I should like to point out is that even though Judges enjoy a house allowance, Magistrates receive no house allowance whatsoever. I understand that they have been fighting for this house allowance for years but it has been denied them. For example, a Magistrate in the country district does not get any house allowance at all, yet an Assistant Superintendent of Police, a District Engineer, and a Government Medical Officer enjoy free housing facilities. A Magistrate is in the position where he must be considered a very important figure in the community upholding law and order in the final analysis. I would advocate that the Government give consideration to Magistrates being given a house allowance or free quarters.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I should like to know what is Government's policy with respect to the appointment of Judges. I should like the Attorney-General to tell us - - - .

The Chairman: I think we have passed the Judiciary.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I want the hon. Attorney-General to tell us whether Senior Magistrates who have served for long periods, who have experience in dealing with cases, and who have proved their quality, are going to be considered for appointment as Judges. I raise this question because I know that there is dissatisfaction among Magistrates at the moment. It is the feeling among Magistrates that persons from outside are being brought in and given senior positions and those who are senior are, in fact, bypassed.

There is provision here or two Senior Magistrates: One was promoted from within the magistracy and I think the other was brought in from outside the magistracy. This has resulted in great and grave dissatisfaction among Magistrates. It appears to them that while they have served and are serving during difficult periods of this country's history, they are going to remain as ordinary Magistrates without the hope of being appointed Senior Magistrates, they assume that there is no hope for them to be appointed as Judges of the Supreme Court.

I am not asking the Attorney-General to tell us who should be appointed, I am merely trying to find out Government's policy with respect to appointment to the Judiciary.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

3.10 p.m.

Dr. Ramsahoye: When the two magistrates, Gunraj and deSouza were removed from office, they had in some cases already given judgment in which people had brought their causes before them. Some of those matters were subsequently made subject to notices of appeal and no provision as far as I am aware has been made for those persons to write their judgments, so that those appeals could go on. I have had cases where the thing is working considerable hardship to litigants and while the Chief Justice is sympathetic, there needs to be more than sympathy. I am

wondering whether the Government is aware of this and whether something can be done to solve this.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: Your honour, again if I may deal with the questions in order in which they have been raised. My hon. Friend, Mr. Harry Lall, I think it was raised certain questions about appointments to the Judiciary and the salaries of magistrates. So far as appointments are concerned, he was talking specifically about the qualifications for appointment as Senior Magistrates. The position is within the ambit of the qualifications which apply to other legal officers in the Public Service, such as Crown Counsel, Senior Legal Adviser, and Parliamentary Counsel; it is within the competence of the Judicial Service Commission to make magisterial appointments. I am sure the hon. Member would not wish the Government to attempt to enter into the field of appointments through the back door, as it were, by manipulating the conditions of service. We know that this is something that can be done but it is something against which the Government has consistently set its face.

As regards the question of discipline, I should remind the hon. Member that this is a matter that is entirely within the province of the Judicial Service Commission. I wish to remind him that the cases to which he has referred were dealt with exclusively by the Judicial Service Commission. What is more, in both of these cases, the issues having now been made the subject of litigation in the Courts, any matter which would affect these issues must be regarded as *subjudice*. Therefore, it would be improper for any Member of this House to enter into a public debate on them.

So far as salaries are concerned, I really was horrified at the proposals made from the front bench of the Opposition that we should reduce the salaries of Senior Magistrates so as to bridge the gap between Magistrates and Senior Magistrates. This is not a matter which the Government can or would contemplate.

With regard to the rental of premises occupied by Magistrates, particularly Magistrates resident in the country, the position is that these rentals are calculated on a basis which is one of parity with other Government officers serving in districts. Magistrates, engineers, doctors, all pay rental for quarters on a common basis, and I think hon. Members would agree that it would not be proper to make an exception in the case of magistrates.

Before I sit down, may I deal with the question raised by the hon. member, Dr. Ramsahoye. This matter is in fact a very real one but it is one that has been dealt with. I think my hon. and learned Friend ought to know that the Chief Justice has, in fact, after consultation, written to provide two magistrates in question and invited them to provide reasons in all cases of appeal. It is our information that reasons are now in the process of being furnished by the gentlemen and there is nothing that now lies in the competence of the Government.

Mr. Ram Karran: I merely wanted to raise the question of the transfer of \$50,000 from the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources to Magistrates and to ask first of all what is Government's reason for this transfer. In view of the efforts to effect the destruction of the Rice Producers' Association, which body, I understand, used to provide an assessor to this Tribunal, I am wondering whether it is no longer a statutory body, whether the Government proposes under this transfer to make a change of policy in the Rice Assessment Tribunal.

If the R.P.A. is removed – and I think the Government has that in mind, because if no provision has been made in the Estimates, rather if no grant has been awarded to it, it is natural that that body is bound to go into dissolution – I wonder what changes the Government proposes to make to get this Tribunal working. If there are no changes, it will only be an amount on paper.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: It was difficult to follow some of what went before when my hon. Friend began to wander into the area of Rice Producers' Association and its future. So far as the item on page 20 of the Estimates is concerned, the reason for the

transfer of this subhead from Head 27, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, is that it was considered that the Ministry of Agriculture, is quite an inappropriate place in which to put this subhead.

The amount of \$50,000 provides the emoluments and remuneration and allowances of persons discharging the duties of Chairman of the Rice Assessment Tribunal and the officers who work with them. These persons are all magistrates. They have first to be appointed as magistrates and then as Chairmen and the system is such that were we to leave the office under the jurisdiction, as it were, of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, we would have a situation of dual control which, as Members opposite know, sometimes leads to undesirable consequences. It is in an attempt to rationalise the procedures and simplify the administrative machinery for the functioning of the Rice Assessment Tribunal that this change is made. The future of this institution is an entirely different matter which does not now arise.

Mr. Ram Karran: It does not matter where the subhead is put, whether it is put under Magistrates or the Ministry of Agriculture. It was in the Ministry of Agriculture all these years, for as long as I remember. The Attorney-General tells us that the future of the Tribunal does not matter – [**The Attorney-General:** “Does not arise.”] – does not arise. It certainly arises if it is going to be put here and not spent.

The Chairman: Should that not come under the Head, Ministry of Agriculture?

Mr. Ram Karran: I want to crave your indulgence –

The Chairman: You have given notice, perhaps you can get the answer when we come to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Head 3, Magistrates - \$654,557, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 4 – PARLIAMENT OFFICE

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr Hamid: Item 4, subhead 1. I was wondering if this amount is adequate. It seems difficult to receive our *Hansard* on time. Since 1965 we have not received any *Hansard*. I do not know what is the reason for this because one would expect that the Government would like to expedite the work. If necessary, provide more staff so that *Hansard* will be produced in a matter of a month. We are not getting our regular *Hansard* so that we can look into them for reference. I would be glad if the Minister would check on this point. It is very important. I wish to speak on item 8 but I do not know if I may go on, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Do any other hon. Members wish to speak on items 5, 6, or 7?

Dr. Jagan: I would like to speak on item 4. The Government now has an off-set printer and it should be possible for the Government to get out the *Hansard* much more expeditiously.

I do not know what prompted the Government to include in the Estimates last year the post of Hansard Editor. What is he doing? I do not know why that is necessary to edit *Hansard*. This is a matter of merely typing the *Hansard*. It is written by the Official Reporters, and getting, getting it to the Printery to get it printed is all that must be done; if we are talking of proof-reading that is a different matter and that should be done at the Printery. As I said, I do not know what the Government conceives of this person. The editor of a newspaper writes an editorial; what does the *Hansard* Editor do?

We find that the bottleneck is not here. If there is a question of a shortage of Official Reporters we should get more, but I do not think that the shortage is here; the shortage is in the

Printery. That is why we cannot get the *Hansard*, and, if there is a shortage there, I do not think there is a shortage of machinery. The Government should consider employing a second shift because machinery must be put to the best use; if we cannot get the work out in time then Government must consider the second shift. If more people are employed we can get the *Hansard* out in time and it seems to me that money will be better spent in the Printery than to employ more people here.

I do not know if the hon. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Mr. Bissember) who is dealing with this matter will give us some answer. What is the function of the Editor of *Hansard*? What does he edit? [**The Prime Minister:** “*Hansard*.”] As I understand it, whenever *Hansard* speeches are made here, they are typed by the Official Reporters and sent for correction to each Member and, after these are returned, I presume it is then re-typed and sent to the Printery to be printed.

When we had the hon. Member Mr. Eleazer speaking in here in the old days, I do not know if it was the function of the editorial department to put what he said into first-class grammatical English. Is that the function of the *Hansard* Editor? What is he editing? [**The Prime Minister:** “*Hansard*.”]

Mr. Hamid *rose*

Mr. Wilson *rose*

The Chairman: Is Mr. Wilson speaking on item 8?

Mr. Wilson: No, sir. Subhead 9.

The Chairman: Let Mr. Hamid finish then.

Mr. Hamid: I see that there is an increase. Will the Minister now use this as an excuse that this is a type of fillip to improve production or editing the Hansard? I hope he will not use this as a means of saying this either this year or for the future. I would like the Minister to say for what purpose he will use three typists.

Mr. Jagan *rose—*

The Chairman: No. It is Mr. Wilson's turn to speak.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak on item 12, page 22.

The Chairman: I see. Page 22. The hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

Mr. Jagan: Item 12. I do not think that we need this item here at all. I remember that, previous to last year when we amended the salary for the Deputy Speaker, we needed such an item as the Deputy Speaker might have been acting for some time so that the House could have passed an allowance for him, but, at present, the Deputy Speaker is receiving a salary of \$4,200 a year and so I do not see that we need this item at all. [*Interruptions*] He is paid \$4,200 as Deputy Speaker whether he acts or not and, if he acts for two or three months, it covers the period when he is not acting at all. Will the Government tell us with respect to what period the Deputy Speaker will be receiving a salary, and whether at the same time he will be receiving an acting allowance?

3.30 p.m.

The Chairman: Are we through with page 22? [*Pauses*] All right we will turn now to page 23.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 8: Refreshments for National Assembly.

The Chairman: Would any other Member wish to speak on anything else before we go on to subhead 8?

Mr. Lall: I wish to make an appeal to the Government regarding the amount being given to our caterer. I wish that the Government would give her a fixed sum per month.

The Chairman: We haven't got a vote for that. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence. I would like to speak on subhead 2 because –

The Chairman: But I asked if any other member wishes to speak, before we go on.

Mr. Sutton: Yes, Mr. Chairman, but when I was getting up the hon. Member did not sit down, so I hadn't the chance at that time.

The Chairman: All right, I will grant you my indulgence. Which subhead are you going to speak on?

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 2: Provision for Travelling Expenses and Subsistence Allowances for the Speaker, Members of the Cabinet and Members of the National Assembly. I have observed that Members of the National Assembly are permitted to travel on the Transport Service free so as to enable them to get into the various parts of the country to see things for themselves. I am also aware that that provision has been with us for a number of years, starting from the time when the Government's only means of transport was with the Transport Services. Since then there are other methods of transport which are not controlled by the Transport and Harbours Department. If, in the light of modern requirements, Members of the National Assembly wish to travel to various parts of the country they should be allowed to use the Government transport; not entirely on some specialised basis because I would presume that

Members of the National Assembly would like to discharge their obligations effectively and examine the various operations of the Government throughout the country. I mention specifically the question of travelling on the road to Mackenzie and getting into the various parts of the interior by air.

A few years ago, the Transport Department had one particular system of travel to these areas. We all know that these systems do not operate, and if they operate they will not be suitable to serve the purpose that you would have in mind if members would wish to observe as they would wish to in various areas.

I would therefore invite the Government to examine and give consideration to these proposals so that Members of Parliament may be permitted to travel free on all the travel services and so would give some relaxation on the cost of travelling into the Interior and Members can discharge their duties.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with Subhead 9: Telephone Allowances. When the amount of \$12 was fixed – [**The Prime Minister:** “By you.”] – for telephone allowances, at that time each Member represented one constituency. Now members, constituency cover the whole country. At present, the PNC has thirty members and I am sure one must be in charge of more than one. [**An hon. Member (Government):** “Are you organising this side too?”] We on this side have nineteen and there are thirty eight districts each of us have two. I brought my telephone account for January and February: January \$26 and February \$24. One has to send telegrams to constituents in various districts who may not have telephones. I feel that it would be feasible for this amount in the telephone bills to be reduced.

The Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs: (Mr. Bissember): Mr Chairman, I will deal with the last question first. I am happy that the hon. member Mr. Wilson has brought it up because it was he who quite rightly made provision for this allowance and it was necessary. It was done on a request when I was a member of the Opposition at that time. I would certainly

look into the points raised and see what could be done. I would also mention that there are two telephones for use by hon. Members – one in the Lobby and another in the Committee Room. These telephones are being paid for by Parliament Office. We all have the right to use these telephones.

The point that was made by the hon. Member Mr. Sutton will also be looked into.

Another question was raised regarding the allowance for the Deputy Speaker. It is just a nominal sum put there so that whenever His Honour the Speaker is out of the country and it is necessary to provide additional allowances to the Deputy Speaker, who will then be acting for the Speaker, there will be no difficulty. It is different when the Office of Speaker is vacant at which time provision has already been made for the Deputy Speaker who would then be acting as Speaker.

As regards the question of the three typists, it is the intention of the Government to expedite the production of Hansard. This is a matter which is now engaging the attention of a department of the Public Service Ministry. The post of Hansard Editor is also a new post. If I may mention, before the creation of this post, the Senior Official Reporter, apart from her main functions of taking notes of speeches and supervising the other official reporters, had to assist in the editing which was solely done by the Clerk of the National Assembly.

3.40 p.m.

After an investigation was carried out in Parliament Office by the Public Service Ministry it was felt that we should try to relieve the Clerk of the National Assembly of some of these duties that fell to him as Head of the Department. He has other functions apart from this one and it was felt that he should not be editing the Hansard to see whether the transcripts, as corrected, are in order before they are sent to the Printery.

I may mention that when a transcript is sent to the Printry a proof has to be sent back by the Printery to Parliament Office. The Clerk of the National Assembly then has to do his own proof reading to see whether it is in order before it is sent for final printing. All this will be done by the person who will hold this post so that, because of the many functions which the Clerk of the National Assembly has at the moment – which to my mind are many – he would get some kind of relief by the creation of this new post. Right now I think the Senior Official Reporter is trying to get the transcripts in order so that we can get the printing started and so that the Hansard may be brought up to date.

When we came into office in 1965 there was a back log of two years' work. I think it was for 1963 and 1964. Transcripts for those two years had to be checked and corrected and proof reading had to be done. Then the actual printing was done. I give the assurance that the Government will do everything to see that Hansard is brought up to date. You Mr. Chairman, have had many discussions with the Government on this matter and you can bear me out that we are very concerned. We are trying to see how soon we can arrange for the printing of hon. Members' speeches so that they can have them available at all times.

I may mention also that when transcripts are sent to hon. members they should not keep them for any length of time. They should try to send them in early so that the Senior Official Reporter can get on with the work. The Clerk will then be able to see that the transcripts are in order before they are sent to the printers.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs told us that “when Government feels like it”, or words to that effect, the Deputy Speaker will be provided with an acting allowance from this Head. Surely this House should not leave it in that position, namely, that “when Government feels like it” this will be done. We should make the rules. [Hon. Member: “What about Mr. Kendall?”]

The hon. Member is referring to the pre-1961 period. What I am saying is that rules must be made. If the Deputy Speaker, after acting for three months becomes entitled to this allowance, let us say so. These are Government funds; this is from the contribution made by members of the public and the Government cannot – [**The Prime Minister:** “What did you do?”] – say “when it feels like it” it will pay the Deputy Speaker an allowance. Surely it is not done in any Parliament like that. The Government has been belly-aching all these years and asking, “What did you do?” The members of the Government must do better, that is why they were elected even though they rigged the Elections. They cannot come here and tell us that this is done “Because you did the same.” In the days when Mr. Kendall was acting Deputy, the post did not have the same status. Even the Speaker’s salary was not what it is today.

The Chairman: There has been no increase in those emoluments.

Mr. Ram Karran: Surely the Speaker today wears additional paraphernalia which carries status.

I hope that the Government will attempt to do its work properly. During all these years the Government has just been making out payments to the boys. The hon. Deputy Speaker might be competent to carry out the duties of Speaker. He has a salary higher than that of any other Member and is silent. I have never heard him raise his voice. He is paid an additional sum of money for the post of Deputy Speaker. I have no objection if the Government and this House agree to pay this Deputy Speaker when he acts for the Speaker, but let us hear what the rules are. The Government cannot arbitrarily say that if the Deputy Speaker behaves himself he is to get an allowance and if he does not behave himself he gets \$1. Surely no one should be left in that position.

The hon. Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs told us that the Public Service Ministry was looking into the affairs of the officers of this House. It is on record, Mr. Chairman, that your predecessor said, at the time when somebody was being “hatched,” that the officers in

this House are officers of the House and that they have absolutely nothing to do with the Public Service Commission or anybody outside of this House.

The hon. Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs has told us that the Public Service Ministry has been pushing its nose into the affairs of this House. It is a matter, Mr. Chairman, for the senior officers of this House to decide on salaries and to make recommendations so that Parliament may consider them. The hon. Minister is reducing the status of the officers of this House when he brings in the Public Service Ministry, with which we will deal later.

The Chairman: Can I put the question?

Head 4, Parliament Office - \$90,858, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 5 – AUDIT

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Ram Karran: There is one Item which I should like to deal with in a general way and that is subhead 4, Telephones, \$1,500. This is not much different from what it was in 1967. When we look through these pages we see that the Magistrates Department has been allocated \$10,000 for Telephones, the Supreme Court, \$12,000, and the Governor-General, \$4,000, all very large sums. Is this a mistake? The actual amount spent on this subhead in 1967 was \$1,067 and this year we are giving the Department \$1,500. I thought that the Director of Audit and his officers would be engaged in a great deal of soliciting and obtaining of information from Departments and that he would spend a far greater sum on telephone charges. This would seem to fit in with the general pattern set by Government for telephone charges throughout the Estimates. This must be an oversight.

Dr. Reid: It is not an oversight. It is the correct figure. It was explained some minutes ago that in some Departments there were arrears of telephone charges. In this Department there are no arrears and this is the correct sum.

Head 5, Audit - \$249, 356, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 6 – OMBUDSMAN

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: It is my view that every year we are wasting \$14,000 of the taxpayers' money. Whatever may have led those who wanted the office of Ombudsman created in this country, I am sure that if they are honest they can come to no other conclusion than that this office has been a waste of taxpayers' money.

3.50 p.m.

Why do I say so? I have in my possession the Report of the Ombudsman for the year 1967. Out of a total of 163 cases brought to the attention of the Ombudsman, he declined jurisdiction in 122 cases, leaving him to deal with 41 cases. Out of the remaining 41 cases, 4 cases were withdrawn, and so he was left with 37 cases. At the end of the year 1967, according to the Report, the Ombudsman had fully investigated 31 cases and 4 cases were still under investigation.

We are using the talent of an individual who has served in various capacities in the legal system of this country. He served as Crown Counsel, as Magistrates, as Director of Public Prosecutions, and when this gentleman should have been using his talent in some other sector of the Judiciary, he in one whole year. What is more ridiculous is, when one goes through the Report of the Ombudsman, to see the type of cases he has been investigating.

If the office of the Ombudsman is given power, if the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman is extended to enable him to deal with matters that really affect the people of this country, any reasonable person would support the existence of the Office. In view of the fact that the Ombudsman's jurisdiction is restricted to deal with trivial matters only, I say that the Office of Ombudsman is serving absolutely no purpose in this country. It should be scrapped and \$14,000 would be saved each year.

In some of the cases referred to by the Ombudsman, he found that there were delays in various departments. What is very significant is that the Ombudsman himself experienced delay when he sent communications to departments. I should like to quote from page 7 of his Report:

“While I continued for the most part to receive willing co-operation from officers of the Ministries and Departments, as time went by there seemed to be a growing tendency in some cases to regard communications from my office as not so urgent in consequence of which my investigations were held up while officers took their time to reply or in a few cases even failed to reply to requests for information.”

What a ridiculous state! Here is the Ombudsman inquiring into cases of delays by Ministries. In one case, there was delay in the issuing of a lease and, as a result the complainant in that case suffered great hardship because it took him a long time to obtain a loan which he would have got if he was in possession of the lease to tender as a security and to ensure the lender that he had legal right to the land.

In his own words, the Ombudsman is saying that Government officers do not bother to reply in time and, in some cases, they do not bother to reply at all. As a result, he had to embody his complaint in this Report.

In view of all the circumstances of our country, I move that this amount of \$14, 275 be reduced to \$1. Under the Standing Orders, I cannot move the deletion but I can move that the

amount be reduced to \$1. If the Government finds favour with this proposal, it would get the support of the Opposition. I therefore move that the amount be reduced to \$1.

The Chairman: Did you say subhead 1, item 1?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I am speaking on the Head as a whole. The total amount is \$14, 275.

The Chairman: So the motion is to reduce the amount to \$1?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Yes.

Mr. Hamid: I beg to second the motion.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: It really is a little surprising to hear repeated this afternoon the sort of statements that we have heard from the hon. Member opposite. He has quoted elaborately, and with obvious enjoyment, from the Report of the Ombudsman for the year ended 31st December, 1967, which has been the subject of discussion during the debate on the last Estimates and which was the subject of discussion when the Ombudsman Bill was before the House. He has made no original contribution in the remarks which have fallen from his lips this afternoon. [**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** "Do not make fun."]

The Chairman: Order!

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: It is, in some respects, a compliment to the manner in which the Government has conducted the business of the administration of the country's affair, has held fairly the scales of administration, that the complaints that have reached the Ombudsman, legitimate complaints, complaints within his jurisdiction, have been as few as recorded in his Report. When hon. Members seek to denigrate the functions of the office of Ombudsman in which Guyana led the Hemisphere and for which we take legitimate pride, then I

think they would do well to acknowledge what is the true analysis of the figures that they have referred to this afternoon.

So far as the Motion is concerned, I would suggest, with every respect, that it is entirely outside the competence of the hon. Member to move it. The purpose of the motion must be, among other things, to reduce the statutory expenditure for which provision is made in Order No. 38 of 1966. It is provided in the Estimates that this is money otherwise appropriated. We cannot, even if we were to encounter the impropriety of the motion, by anything I say in this debate, affect the appropriation that has already been effected by Order No. 38 of 1966.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: With all due respect to the hon. Attorney-General – I am not speaking on the legal aspect; that is his province – I should like to say that the Office of Ombudsman has not been serving a useful purpose. The hon. Attorney-General has been unable to answer that question and he has evaded that question. Surely, if in 1967 I got up in this House and said that the Office of Ombudsman was not serving any purpose and the hon. Attorney-General said, “Give the Office an opportunity to work and we will look at the situation next year”, and when we receive another Report the Office is in a worse position, it is within the competence of an hon. member of this House to suggest the deletion of the amount.

I conclude that the hon. Attorney-General would agree that the office is not serving its purpose. The statement that the Government has been conducting the affairs of the country fairly and this is the reason why such a small number of cases are put before the Ombudsman, is ridiculous. The reason why such a small number of cases are put before the Ombudsman is because in major cases of complaints the Ombudsman is without jurisdiction to deal with them.

The Chairman: I think that the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud has had a fair opportunity of expressing his views but it must be realized that under this Head, as perhaps under every Head, there are two sections of expenditure, one of which refers to statutory provision which we are not called upon to discuss at this moment, then, of course, the other expenditure.

17.3.69

National Assembly

3.50 – 4.00 p.m.

Where other expenditure relates to statutory provision which is enshrined constitutionally, then one must understand that the reduction of it could hardly be moved.

4 p.m.

In addition to that, let me call the hon. Member's attention and the attention of the House to Standing Order 67 (1) which reads:

“No amendment shall be moved in the Committee of Supply under this Order until one clear day after that on which it was published in the Notice Paper.”

This indicates that hon. Members should have read their Estimates of Expenditure, prepared the points on which they would have wished a reduction and notice of such Motions given in advance. In the circumstances, the hon. Member's Amendment cannot be entertained and I shall now put the Question.

Head 6, Ombudsman - \$14, 275, agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.02 p.m.

4.35 p.m.

On resumption --

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 8 – PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: I understand that certain arrangements have been made in order to expedite matters so that we shall deal now with Head 8, Public Prosecutions.

Mr. Jagan: There is a bit about travelling expenses of the Director of Public Prosecutions. It rose from \$284 to \$1,920. Would the hon. Minister tell us whether the Government contemplates that the Director of Public Prosecutions would do all this travelling, that there would be such an increase in this vote?

The Chairman: Any other point to be raised?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Can the hon. Minister tell us whether there are any vacancies existing on the Fixed Establishment?

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: Your honour, the question that has been asked with regard to the travelling expenses of the Director of Public Prosecutions concerns the provision for the Director of Public Prosecutions of allowances.

In respect of travelling and the upkeep of his car, including the provision of a chauffeur, which corresponds with the provision made in respect of members of the Judiciary. The total of \$1,620 is in fact made up of the chauffeur allowance of \$120 per month plus what will accrue to other officers within the Department who have now been put on the new Scale "C" travelling allowance of \$40.

Head 8, Public Prosecution - \$98,877, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 12 – MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

The Attorney General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal): May we deal with that Head at a later stage?

The Chairman: I am sure that hon. Members will agree.

HEAD 15 – ATTORNEY GENERAL

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Not that I am opposed to item 3, but could the House be informed why the exact amount is not put on the Estimates? Here it only states \$1 for personal allowance to Mr. Shahabudeen.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: This is because it is absorbed in the salary for the Solicitor General. It is part of the overall system. Prior to this, the House adjusted the salaries so as to make the amount of Puisne Judge and this senior post the same. It is shown merely as a token provision.

Mr. Hamid: I ask that we postpone this Head as the hon. Dr. Ramsahoye is not here. He did not think that we would go this far. He might ask for more explanations and, as he did not see this paper nor study it, could we defer it to tomorrow?

The Chairman: Does this have any relevance to the Estimates? I do not have that paper. [*Pause*] Mr. Jagan, could you deal with the matter?

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, I refer to items 4, 5, 6 and 18 dealing with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and Senior Parliamentary Counsel. Now, the original salary for the Chief Parliamentary Counsel is \$10,560 and that of the Senior Parliamentary Counsel is \$9,360. The proposal is that there is to be a personal allowance to Mr. Pollard of \$2,640 which will bring his salary to \$12,000. We then come to item 18 – personal allowance to Mr. Delph, \$1,440. When one adds up that allowance with his original salary that, too, will be \$12,000. Is it the intention of Government that these two posts should carry the same salary? I should like to know, also, why Mr. Delph's allowance is under the Unfixed Establishment?

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: A perfectly legitimate question. These posts, in order to be established as non-promotional posts where officers are being held back from promotion to the Judiciary, have been placed at the level of Judges. When these circumstances arise, as my hon. and learned Friend has observed, the effect of the allowances is to bring the salary of the poor up to that of a Puisne Judge. The reason why it appears under the Unfixed Establishment is due solely to the fact that Mr. Delph is a contract officer.

Mr. Jagan: In view of what the Attorney General has said, should not Mr. Pollard be entitled to the chauffeur allowance which Judges are entitled to? Since Mr. Pollard is tied down to the Attorney General's Chambers when he could be promoted as a Judge – but I think his services are required here and since one wants to grant him the salary of a Puisne Judge – should he not have the same benefits as a Puisne Judge?

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: I accept the reasonableness of some of that. This is what we considered in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, and, while these conditions could be considered inferior in relation to this allowance, it would not be unreasonable for a chauffeur allowance to be withheld in view of the nature of the office. I can say, however, that consideration has been given in the case of Parliamentary Counsel with respect to travelling allowances and they will benefit, as all officers will benefit, from the new standard allowances which have been put into effect. We must keep this under review and I am

sure that, with goodwill, there will be no difficulty in bringing up all provisions that might be appropriate when we come to that stage.

Mr. Ram Karran: Earlier this afternoon the Attorney General and the Government were not very clear on this question of promoting Magistrates to the Judiciary. He has now told us that some of these senior posts are going to be compensated to the level of Judge; so that there will be no promotion after they have developed in this field. Where do we get our personnel for elevation to the Judiciary? Is there any government policy on this?

I remember, in the old days, that Senior Magistrates looked forward to promotion to the Judiciary; practising Barristers were also occasionally taken into the Judiciary. But has the Government any policy? This office used to provide material for elevation to the Judiciary but most of these senior posts will be created within the Judiciary. Will the Attorney General indicate to this House what the policy will be with respect to the filling of posts in this office?

The officers covered are people who will retire voluntarily at 50 and compulsorily at 55. Judges go at 60 or some age beyond 55. The Government should have some clear policy in its mind with respect to promotion. He is debarring them from promotion while giving them the same status as Judges. Let him tell us how he proposes to recruit new Judges.

4.50 p.m.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: Mr. Chairman, some of these matters have already been canvassed. I got the impression that some of the hon. Members opposite who spoke on the Judiciary were suggesting that sub Committees made up from members of the Magistracy be appointed. This is rather a different tune we are hearing from the one that used to be played.

What I understand the hon. Member as saying is that an officer in the grade of Senior Parliamentary Counsel, for whom these special considerations are provided, is thereby deprived

of the prospect of appointment to the Judiciary. Let me say two things. Firstly, the officer is not excluded from the appointment. It operates only when having been so offered the appointment; he declines, at the request of the administration, in the interest of the Service and then only in respect of these officers who are, as at least some hon. Members opposite know, the rarest species in the legal profession.

The second point is that the whole object of these new arrangements is to take account of the fact that our legal service is expanding. There is room for specialty in which men could pursue a career, irrespective of the attractions of the Judiciary. We are not unique in this. This is the way most legal services have developed. In addition the Solicitor-General, in most independent countries, is the *de facto* head of the legal department and the Crown Principal Advocate in the Courts. The Office of Parliamentary Counsel is in some countries, a separate department from that of Attorney General's Chambers. What we are doing is trying to proceed slowly benefiting from experience as we go along so that in the end we could produce an effective and efficient legal service.

With regard to the question of the retirement age, this is a matter which we have to consider. As the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran quite rightly said, there are special retirement ages provided in the Constitution for members of the Judiciary whereas, members of the Public Service have different retirement periods. The question I would like to pose in return, the answer to which seems in doubt from the way he framed the original question, is whether it is true to infer, as he has inferred, that it is in the officer's interest to be permitted or to be required to remain in the Service with the compulsory retiring age of 62, rather than be permitted to retire with consent at 50. I would like to suggest to the hon. Member that the officers concerned might take a very different view of this in that, in the society in which we are now living, the prospect of retiring at 50 or 55 is not worthless because there is the possibility of a new career and it is a very attractive one for him.

Mr. Ram Karran: The Attorney General is saying that the BOAC office is full of them.

Head 15, Attorney General - \$215, 894, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We shall turn to Head 16 – Official Receiver on page 46.

HEAD 16 – ATTORNEY GENERAL

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, for years now the post of Official Receiver, Public Trustee and Crown Solicitor has been vacant. We have had different persons acting for one reason or another. The problem, I think, is one of salary. The Government was unable to recruit someone who would be willing to accept this post with the salary offered. If I remember rightly, the Government, in order to obtain someone of ability, apart from paying the person a salary had to agree that the person be permitted to do part-time private practice also.

In my view, the volume of litigation that is being carried on in that department could reasonably be carried out by a barrister and the post of Official Receiver, Public Trustee, Crown Solicitor could therefore be divided and a Solicitor could carry out these duties which could be assigned to him. Since most of the work in this department is litigation, I think that a barrister with ability could fill this post.

I would therefore suggest to the Government, in view of the fact that there is difficulty in obtaining the services of a solicitor to carry out these duties in this office, that the office should be divided and a barrister and a solicitor be appointed and the work could be carried out efficiently. The post was advertised quite recently and I doubt whether anyone has applied again for it. This is mainly because of the poor salary and the volume of work this post involves. I would urge the Government to seriously consider this step.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak? [*Pause*] The hon. Attorney General will reply.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: Mr. Chairman, this is a matter we have canvassed a year ago. I must agree with my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Jagan) that we have not got very much further. We have been extremely fortunate to be able to obtain the services, on a temporary basis of an experienced and matured solicitor during the year. We have advertised the post and we must, I think, await the results of the advertisement, before we take any final decision. I must repeat what I said on the last occasion that I do not really think it is a complete or satisfactory answer merely to vary the qualifications; because the reason that we cannot get a senior solicitor to take this post on a full-time basis for these emoluments is that there is a scarcity of solicitors or of persons trained and experienced in the work of solicitors. It does not answer that need to put in the post a barrister not so trained and not so experienced.

5 p.m.

We have experimented by employing in the Crown Solicitor's Office barristers who can assist with the work. That has worked with reasonable efficiency, but to take the further step and appoint as Crown Solicitor someone trained as a barrister is one that I would hesitate a long time before bringing forward to the House.

What then is the answer? One proposal that has been made over the years – and it has been mentioned by my hon. and learned Friend – is to permit the person appointed to have the right of private practice, as it were, on a part-time basis. We have had this system in the past. I do not think I reflect the slightest slur on the manner in which the officers themselves carried out their responsibilities when I say that I do not believe – and those who were their contemporaries

did not believe – that this was the most satisfactory system.

I do not wish to pre-judge any decision that we might have to make on this matter. I welcome the comments that have been made by my hon. and learned Friend. I assure him that we are giving very deep consideration to this and very mindful of the difficulties which exist and which are professional. I look forward to the co-operation that is implied if it becomes necessary to come forward to the House at a later stage and ask for some other arrangement with regard to this post.

Mr. Wilson *rose*

Mr. R.D. Persaud: There are two items under Unfixed Establishment, item 10, Acting Allowances, totalling \$10 and Item 11, Temporary Clerical Assistance, \$10. No explanation appears in the margin. Can the hon. Minister tell us what these items relate to?

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: These are merely token provisions. This is done to provide a head in the Estimates from which payment may be made against sayings under other heads in the course of the year without the necessity to come to this House at a future date for provision unless, in the absence of savings, a Supplementary Estimate will be required.

The two subheads, Acting Allowances and Temporary Clerical Assistance, my hon. Friend will see appearing in most Ministries. It is normal procedure to take account of any obvious eventuality.

Mr. Wilson: I regret to have to go back to the item dealing with the Official Receiver.

The Chairman: I had said that you were not to be jumping about.

Mr. Wilson: I rose, sir.

The Chairman: I will have to ask the hon. Members to indicate the item numbers so that we may adjust the order.

Mr. Wilson: In view of what the hon. Attorney-General said in reply to the hon. Member Mr. Jagan, I would think that the answer would be to treat such an officer in the same way as the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, that is, to raise the stipend to that of a Judge. It would appear that this is a possible solution.

Mr. Ram Karran: I see the mischievous hand of the Public Service Ministry on every page.

The Chairman: I do not think that in this House we should refer to the “mischievous hand” of any Ministry.

Mr. Ram Karran: I apologize, sir. I see the note “Changes in holders of posts,” or “Change in holder of post” appearing on no less than three occasions on this page and all through the Estimates. I wonder if the Attorney-General can give us some indication as to whether there has been a complete change in the whole of the Public Service. Or shall we take this matter up when we are dealing with the Ministry of Public Service?

The Chairman: I think that would be the ideal place.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: The answer is very simple and it would save my hon. Friend a lot of suspicion if I explain it now.

This takes account of incremental scales. A post may be vacant in one office and someone may be appointed whose salary on the incremental scale is not the same. This is to provide for a situation when there is a change in the holder of a post and a person enters the Ministry who is at another point in the scale. He might well have moved up on the incremental

scale. If there are constant shifts of this kind these will be reflected in the estimates the Departments make each year as to what the actual requirements are going to be, having regard to reasonable forecasts.

Mr. Ram Karran: I thank the hon. Minister for his explanation, but in all my years in this House I have never seen so many changes. It may be that the Public Service Ministry is working overtime.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: It is making progress.

Head 16, Attorney-General – Official Receiver - \$90,156, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 17 – ATTORNEY-GENERAL

DEEDS REGISTRY

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Jagan: The comment I made in respect of the Registrar of the Supreme Court can also apply to the Registrar of the Deeds Registry. I think the hon. Attorney-General would agree with me that the holder of this post is a very hard-working gentleman and is a specialist in his field.

The Chairman: If he is listening he might blush.

Mr. Jagan: It cannot be denied that he is a specialist in his field and that Government would find it most difficult to find someone to replace him.

My submission is that the salary attached to this post should not be less – in fact, it might even be more than the salary of a Permanent Secretary, because this is a very specialised post and this is a specialist Department.

When one looks around to see who are the Permanent Secretaries - - - [*Interruption*] – I am not saying that they are not competent to hold their posts. Some of these persons, I am saying, are junior in the Service to some holders of posts in so-called “Closed Departments.” Officers in the Deeds Registry do not have the same opportunities for promotion that certain persons in other Departments have. Therefore, the Government should not just consider these persons with respect to the whole Service, but should consider them in isolation, because this is a Closed Department and this is a specialist field. This is especially in relation to the Head of the Department; I am not speaking about typists, clerks and so on.

I should like to ask my hon. and learned Friend to reconsider the question of remuneration for the Registrar at the Supreme Court and at the Deeds Registry. Do not tell us about having to consider the salaries of public servants as a whole. These are specialist posts and the holders should be given consideration just as consideration was given to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and to other gentlemen in other Departments.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I should like to associate myself with the remarks made by my hon. and learned Friend, Mr. Derek Jagan. It is very true that this is a specialised Department. It entails a lot of work to head this Department and I know that the present holder of the post is one of the most hard-working men in the Civil Service.

5.10 p.m.

The salary attached to this post, considering the responsibilities, considering the technical nature of the job, is certainly well worthy of consideration for revision.

I should also like to deal with subheads 2 to 7. I notice that, with respect to all these posts, the revised estimates for 1968 are much lower than the approved estimates. For example, with respect to subhead 2, the approved estimate was \$7,056 and the revised estimate was \$4,392. With respect to subhead 3, the approved estimate was \$5,856 and the revised estimate was \$2,688. With respect to subhead 4, the approved estimate was \$21,190 and the revised estimate was \$16,387. With respect to subhead 5, the approved estimate was \$14,256 and the revised estimate was \$6,160. I notice that the 1969 figures appear to be patterned after the 1968 approved estimates, but we must bear in mind that the 1968 revised estimates are very much lower. I should like the hon. Attorney-General to explain this.

Is it that these posts have not been filled? Is it that there are only a few officers drawing salaries and performing duties which would normally be performed by more officers? It appears to me that there are a few officers in this specialist department who are working very hard and carrying the burden. In fact, Government is spending less money, as is indicated in the revised estimates. Is it getting the same kind of service, or has there been a deterioration in the standard of service? What are the existing vacancies? Why is it that we spent so much less in 1968 than the approved estimates called for? What is the position this year in respect of the posts? Will the revised estimates for 1969 follow the same pattern as 1968 and show a lesser expenditure than we approved?

The Chairman: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak?

Mr. Wilson: There has been a long-standing complaint by the Georgetown and New Amsterdam Town Councils and the local authorities about a bottleneck in the Registry concerning proceedings for the recovery of rates. Sometimes it takes as long as three to four years before matters reach finality. I wonder if there is need for appointment of more officers in order to speed up matters with regard to proceedings for the recovery of rates by local authorities.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: May I, first of all, say to the House that I understand the comments and observations of my professional colleagues opposite with regard to the post of Registrar. The Deeds Registry is a department with which my hon. and learned Friend have a great deal of day to day acquaintance. They therefore bring a certain expertise to their observations to this House.

I am not entirely out of sympathy with those observations but I think it is fair for me to say, as I said with regard to the post of Registrar, that these are matters that come within the context of overall reorganization and I assure them that, in that context, their observations will be given very full consideration. I hope that they will be content, for the time being, having aired this matter publicly, to leave the matter there.

With regard to the last question that has been asked by my hon. Friend Mr. Wilson, the position is that efforts are being currently made. There have in fact been certain discussions with the authorities involved to try to deal with this difficult problem of the collection of rates. It does not only arise from a bottleneck in the Registry, it has to do also with the work of the Marshals provided for under the Supreme Court Head. It is a troublesome question, it is a question which, of course, affects revenue and is one which we are constantly examining to ascertain whether there are ways in which we can streamline our procedures.

We have felt that the answer does not lie merely in a proliferation in the proliferation in the number of Marshals. We are looking instead at the ways and means in which we can reform the system so that there is no time-lag that at the moment exists between the initial default in payment and the ultimate sanction of the law. I should like to assure my hon. Friend that we are mindful of the matters to which he referred and he can be assured that we shall be doing all in our power to ensure that they are improved.

Mr. Ram Karran: In view of what we heard earlier with respect to the senior officers in the Crown Solicitor's Office, it would seem that the Government has, when it found the necessity so to do, done some reorganization. It does not follow, as the hon. Attorney-General just said, that overall attention will be paid before there could be reorganization of the posts of the Registrar, Public Trustee, and the others that preceded them. How could you treat one set of officers differently, give them the status of Judges, and leave out posts which have been before this House for as long as I can remember?

When members of the Government were in the Opposition they used to raise this same question, along with other questions. We have always held the view that all these things should be done at one time and I think it is most unfair for the Government to act in this manner. If the Government is going to reorganize the whole structure, all the posts should be dealt with at the same time. The hon. Attorney-General's argument falls into thin air when we see what has been done with respect to certain officers and, with respect to other officers, we are told that there must be overall examination.

Head 17, Attorney-General – Deeds Registry - \$106,770, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Bissember: I should like to ask that Head 12 be deferred until tomorrow.

The Chairman: Do you propose that we take Head 18? We are finished with Head 17.

Mr. Bissember: Yes, sir.

HEAD 18 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 49 and 50.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I wish to speak on item 19, Archivist.

The Chairman: Just let me see if any other hon. Member wants to speak on any other item prior to item 19.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am wondering if the hon. Minister --

The Chairman: Just indicate the item number that you want to speak on.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 10.

Mr. Chandisingh: I wish to speak on item 18.

The Chairman: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak?

Mr. Wilson: I am looking for the item which deals with the post to which Mr. Nascimento was appointed. I should like to know something. I do not know if the Minister could assist me. [*Interruption*] Well I will have to speak on the absence of the item.

5.20 p.m.

The Chairman: It is very difficult to speak on the absence of an item. It is possible to speak on an item that is present. Shall we deal with item (10)?

Mr. Ram Karran: This was once a department which has now grown into a Ministry and is still growing. No one knows, not even the Government knows where it is going. We are spending an additional sum of \$2,547 and the note here is, "Normal increments." It has been increased from eleven bodies in 1967, to thirteen in 1968, and thirteen in 1969. I wonder whether the Government has any idea as to where this Department, which in addition to the broadcasting side of Government's activities I see nothing, is going to take place. It is a non-productive Ministry even though the Minister is capable of producing; one cannot see that this large sum of money, nearly \$200,000 on the personal emoluments side, is taking this country anywhere. I wonder whether the Minister would tell us whether any benefits accrue to Guyana as a result of this expenditure.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item (18), Artist Designer. I wonder what is taking place in this Ministry. We have a full complement of Permanent Secretary, Chief Information Officer, Principal Information Officer, Senior Information Officers, etc. including the item that I just referred to and several other offshoots. I should like the Minister to give us some idea of what is the extent of the productivity of this post in particular. What has actually come out in the last year, at least from the Artist Designer? I cannot recall having seen any particular work in this respect but perhaps the Minister can enlighten us on what is happening.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: The Archives. Guyana is now independent and the time has come when this Government should begin to think of housing our Archives in a decent building. This important place in our country is still being housed in a building over a police station near the Stabroek Market with about three people to take care of the whole Department. This estimate shows a provision for the salaries of people working at the Archives. If we are to keep the records of our history properly, we must have them in a building where they are properly kept, far away from fire hazards. We may argue that it is next to the fire station. This is not the answer. The building is now inadequate to house the records of this country.

I have gone into it and it looks more like a dark hole than an Archives. People coming into this country to find its history, are sent to that place and it does not augur well for this country. I want the Minister of information to tell us if Government is giving consideration to the establishment of a proper place for our Archives, for more people to be employed there and for the records of our history to be properly kept.

Mr. Wilson: I regret to have to refer to a name but I understand that a Mr. Nascimento has been appointed as Consultant in the Ministry of Information but I do not see the information here. I wonder whether the Minister can throw any light on the item, whether provision is made for a consultant.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Item (22). Would the hon. Minister tell us whether this post of Secretary, National History and Arts Council has been filled? If so, was the post advertised?

The Chairman: Does any other Member have any other points on page 49?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item (22). On the question of Culture, I note one post of Secretary under this item but nothing is mentioned concerning Guyanese culture. I wonder whether the Minister can tell us whether there is any institution of culture.

The Chairman: Can the Minister deal with the questions now?

The Minister of Information: (Mr. Carter): The hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, referred to item (10), Information Officers, and asked what the general philosophy of the Ministry of Information is. I am sure that the hon. Member knows that one of the most important factors in the development of any nation or country is that the inhabitants should be informed about what is going on in their country, and should be given an idea of what has happened in the past and what is possible in the future. The only means of doing this is to have established, an effective means of communication, that is to say, to make use of language in as effective a

manner as possible, such things as the newspaper, the radio, cinema and various other means of communication. This is something which is accepted all over the world and in reply to his query I would say that we are only doing what other nations have done and are still doing.

The hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh, enquired as to item (18), the function of the Artist Designer. The Artist Designer is an officer who gives service to the Government Ministries and Corporations in so far as it introduces posters and other printed means of attracting public attention and of conveying information in a simple and vivid way.

The hon. Member, Mr. R.D. Persaud, on item (19) spoke of the Archives and I should like to say immediately that I agree with him that the Archives of a country are extremely important things, and that our building in which we house our Archives is certainly not what is ideal. We are very much concerned about this and we are examining every possible means of rectifying this situation.

I think the same hon. Member enquired as to the salary of the Secretary, National History and Arts Council, and I tell him that this Department came into the Ministry of Information from the Ministry of Education. The officer of this Council is in an acting appointment and the reason for this is that originally, as I understand it, there were certain qualifications which the Secretary should have had.

5.30 p.m.

A certain officer from the Information Services was seconded and he has remained doing that job because, in the first place, he is familiar with the procedures, but, on the other hand, the man had the qualifications as far back as three years ago which the original advertisement asked for.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Surely, in three years, the Government had enough time, according to the Minister, to advertise and to give Guyanese who felt that they were qualified to perform the duties of that post enough time to gain experience.

This is an important aspect of our lives and culture may offer some area for agreement in this country but is it not true that the present Secretary was sent on a course recently abroad? Has he returned? Is he being trained to perform the duties of Secretary? Is the officer who is acting as Secretary being sent to be trained in order to occupy permanently the post of Secretary?

Mr. Wilson: Apparently the Minister has forgotten to answer my question as to the Consultant.

Mr. Carter: Am I supposed to answer that or only what is here?

The Chairman: I do not know if you will consider the point that Mr. Persaud made.

Mr. Wilson: Is he being paid by the C.I.A.?

The Chairman: That is not a question. We will turn now to page 50 of the same Head. Will the hon. Members indicate their interest in any of the subhead numbers?

Mr. Ram Karran: Subhead 19.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subheads 8, 17, 18, 19.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Subhead 20.

Dr. Jagan: Subhead 10.

The Chairman: Any others?

Mrs. Da Silva: Subhead 10.

The Chairman: May we begin? Subhead 8; the hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: I would like the Minister to give us some idea as to what is the production at the Ministry in respect of films. We observed earlier on that we had provided in the Estimates for a Chief Films Officer, a Cameraman and two Assistant Cameramen totalling the sum of \$15,192 by way of salary and so I think this is a rather large sum even if we should exclude the other posts listed as Films Assistant. But, taking those four posts into account, I would like to know how many films and what type of films have been produced.

I would like to ask whether, in view of the fact that the hon. Minister of Health had given us some advice on the need for instructing mothers on the care of their babies and so on, the Minister of Information has had any request for any films of a health education nature to be produced by the staff of the Ministry for publicity in Guyana to meet the need for Health Education. While on the subject of films, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the much-boasted film “Operation Greenheart” which purports to show the efficiency and preparedness of the Guyana Defence Force – although from a technical point of view it was reasonably good – produced the opposite reaction from the audience to that which was expected.

I remember that when I saw this film some nights ago the whole reaction, particularly from the pit section and a certain extent from the House, was one of loud guffaw, of incredulity; I myself thought that the method of presentation – the script and so on – was something borrowed from the United States or British war films, blood and guts and all that sort of thing. Even the commentary was so foreign to our Guyanese situation that I am sure that this film was hardly convincing to the Venezuelans if not to the Guyanese audience.

In short, I think that the Minister should be more concerned about local films and their production because I think that “Operation Greenheart,” although meant to serve a good purpose by showing the Guyana Defence Force in action, achieved the exact opposite and aroused merely humorous comment on the part of the audience. It would have been much better had a study been made of the Guyanese psychology when such a film was being produced. It would have been much better to show it in a simple way, not so overdramatic. I shall not go further on this subject as I think that these few words should be sufficient. Those are my points on subhead 8.

Mrs. Da Silva: I wish to speak on subhead 10.

The Chairman: Let Mr. Persaud speak.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: The Government should not only produce films of Government ministers and functions. I have been seeing some of these films in the cinemas. Most, if not all, are given some aspect of the Government’s work; not that I am opposed to the Government advertising what they are doing, but with the Minister of Information in charge of culture surely the Government can extend this facility in order that Guyanese can see other aspects such as Phagwah, Eid-ul-Azha, Diwali and YammanNabi. These are four national holidays in the country and it is necessary for all Guyanese to see, by way of film shows, the meaning, the significance and the manner in which these festivals are celebrated in this country. This will go a far way to create a greater awareness among the people of this country of all the cultural streams.

5.40 p.m.

The two most recent festivals celebrated were Phagwah and Yaou-mun-Nabi. It would have been a very good thing if the Government’s Film Unit could have filmed the two celebrations. I am in a position to say that the Government Information Services did not show any concern whatsoever with the celebrations. I can excuse the hon. Minister because he says that he is new so far as culture is concerned. Now that he has taken over responsibility for

culture, and I am sure that he is interested in the cultural development of the country, his aim would be to help all Guyanese to understand each other's culture and that he will give consideration to my proposals.

The Film Unit is there only to film Ministries when they are making speeches, when there are march passes, and so on. This should not be so. The Unit should make films which would put forward the cultural development of our community because these types of films will have greater support from all sections of the Guyanese community and if these functions and celebrations are filmed and put on the screens of our country, the audiences in the cinemas will welcome them and applaud the Government taking such action.

Mr. BalchandPersaud *rose --*

Mrs. DaSilva *rose --*

The Chairman: Mr. Persaud was recognised.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I should like to say something on this very Head. Every one of us is aware that in this country sports activities are lacking considerably. I will therefore hope that the Ministry of Information will be able to do something about this. I would suggest that various types of sports be filmed so as to generate the interest among our young people and in so doing we will be able to build a strong and healthy nation.

Mrs. DaSilva: I feel that when estimates are presented to this House, the figures ought to be as realistic as possible. Under subhead 10: Broadcasting (General) it says here that the approved estimates for 1968 were \$12,000; the revised estimates in 1968 were \$36,000; and for 1969 the Government is asking for \$15,000. Is it that in 1968, \$36,000 was spent when only \$12,000 was asked for because it was election year and as we all know the Government Broadcasting Station was used mainly to paddle political propaganda with a slant towards one

particular political party, and \$15,000 will be enough for broadcasting this year? Or will the Government later on in the year suddenly realise that that amount will not be enough and will ask for more?

Dr. Jagan: This is one of the Heads which I am concerned about particularly in relation to what the Minister had to say a while ago. He said that the object of this Head: Ministry of Information is to communicate information through the various media of information. The radio in this country is certainly one of the most effective means by which people could be brought to an awareness of what is taking place in this country. If we are to spend taxpayers money for this purpose, is it to be used mainly to channel one point of view, and that is the Government's point of view? If the PNC wants a radio station surely the Government has the power to give it to them. We hear almost every week one hon. Member from this House speaking on a programme called View Point. Mr. Nascimento's name was mentioned. He was a candidate of the PNC at the last elections. If we are really interested in disseminating information there are various points of view.

One hon. Member who just spoke mentioned the various streams of culture – in ideology, in economic strategy and development strategy. There are various points of view, how are these points of view going to be put across if the Government banishes certain people. I understand that because of certain commentaries made during the elections broadcast Messrs. Miles Fitzpatrick and David deCarries were banned from the radio. We understand that Dr. Richmond was also banned from View Point. During the elections campaign the Prime Minister used the radio stations; others used the radio to put forward their points of view. When I requested time it was refused. The other radio station was told that it was not supposed to carry any political broadcasts. It is therefore clear that this Government is using the radio stations to put forward its own point of view.

In the same way films are used to show Ministers opening this and doing that. Criticisms have been raised about the field of culture and that of sports. There are other fields. For

instance, scientific and technical where creativity could be used to show people how to do things efficiently but we do not see any such films. In the radio section, we see that only one point of view is heard. From the BBC, we know of controversial issues. It should not only be persons like Mr. Sancho who should get on the radio and speak, but possibly the members of the Opposition should have an opportunity perhaps jointly on the radio stations to give different points of view so that the public could be enlightened. This is not being done. *[Interruption]*

I repeat, the taxpayers' money is being spent to put out party propaganda. It is very likely that this amount stated will not be the same and the public will be called upon to pay for the maintenance and upkeep of this radio station.

5.50 p.m.

If this partisan approach continues to be taken -- [**Mr. Jordan:** "Open your own radio station."] It is not a question of opening our own radio station as the Minister said. This would not be permitted, but another thing can be done and that is that those on this side of the House can certainly advise their supporters not to listen to partisan programmes, in which case the subsidy is likely to be increased doublefold because, if advertisers find that people are not listening, then they are not going to advertise through this radio station.

I urge the Government to let the House understand clearly. The Minister who is interested in the dissemination of information – and, we presume, of ideas also – should say that his Ministry will see to it that not only Government Ministers and back-benchers are permitted to express their political points of view on this radio station.

Mr. R.D. Persaud and Mr. Teekah *rose* --

The Chairman: I do not think Mr. Persaud should take up all the time. I think other hon. Members should also be permitted to speak.

Mr. Teekah: I wish to speak on subhead 18, Public Free Library.

The Chairman: Mr. Persaud, do you wish to speak on subhead 17?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: On broadcasting, sir.

The Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I remember that some time ago I asked the hon. Minister of Information if the Government was taking over Station G.B.S. He was not in a position then to answer. I think the Government should submit to Members of Parliament a complete statement as to how these programmes will be operated. It is contemptuous for us to read about Government programmes in the Press. I think it is time for us to know in some permanent form what Government is doing about broadcasting.

The Government radio station has moved to permanent quarters in Lodge but at the moment recording is still being done Radio Demerara. How soon will the Government be able to provide facilities of its own for recording?

Now that the Government is broadcasting from morning until night, the time is ripe for a full-length broadcast of important debates in this House. I wonder if the hon. Minister will tell us about this.

The Chairman: I think someone wanted to speak on subhead 17.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 17, Expenses Film Censorship. I should like to take the opportunity of asking the hon. Minister what are the standards now in use for film censorship generally. We note that there are certain principles on the Statute Book, but I recall that some time ago the hon. Minister made a public statement in which he indicated that he was taking a

closer look at the standard generally and the principles involved in film censorship. I wonder if he is in a position today to tell us what has been done.

The reason I ask this question, Mr. Chairman, is that from what I can see – and I am a very keen fan of the films – there is no policy really. All sorts of films come here nowadays in which one can see crime, cruelty and all the vices. I am sure that we wish to protect citizens, particularly our youths, from these kinds of film.

That is just one aspect of film censorship, but I should also like to pose another question based on censorship. We saw recently that the Government, by a Regulation, deemed that the Minister can ban certain films. The Minister of Home Affairs can ban certain films which are prejudicial to public order and morality. We, sir, and the public generally have been given no clear idea of what sort of film the Government has in mind. We are at a loss, and so we have to come to certain conclusions. We have to conjecture: Is it that this Regulation was made in order to stop films like “The Making of a Prime Minister?” Of course, we would understand if the Government came out very clearly and told us that this is the purpose, but when the whole thing is left in such a general way, when there is so much vagueness about it, it stirs our fears because this new move can be the basis for widespread banning of films which the Government sees as a danger to itself, that is, to the political party that forms the Government.

Will the hon. Minister tell us whether this provision is intended to ban films which portray the life in socialist countries? Or whether it is intended to ban films which show how people have struggled in the underdeveloped world, in Africa, in Asia and in other parts of the world, to secure their liberation?

This is one of the vital questions and it is in some way linked up with the general civil rights of the Guyanese population. We on this side do not think that this is merely a trifling matter that ought to be brushed aside. We think it is a fundamental question that ought to be answered. I hope the hon. Minister can attempt to give us an answer to this question.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I should like to speak on subhead 19.

Mr. Teekah: Under subhead 18, Public Free Library, I observe that the sum of \$201,000 is to be voted. My observations tell me that the governing party is only interested in projecting a viewpoint which misleads Guyanese people into supporting it.

If one looks around at the Public Free Library and if one checks the books there, one will find certain books that are most irrelevant to Guyana. I have heard hon. Members on the Government side talk about things that are relevant to a developing nation, things that are relevant to Guyana, and so on, but let us take, for instance, the history section of the Public Free Library.

6 p.m.

Note well! If one should go there one would find few books on Guyanese history. There is a very bad collection of books on Guyanese history and one would have thought that Government would have been very much concerned about the history of this nation. There is not a good selection of books at the Public Free Library. I know this because I have always been attending that Library. If one wants to do a research on the history of this country one cannot get anything at the Public Free Library.

I should like to mention another matter and this concerns philosophy. All over the world today progressive ideas are sought and are used to assist the developing nations. Even at the University of Guyana, when philosophy is done there, there is a study from Plato to present day philosophy which includes the study of the works of Marx and Lenin, and other progressive philosophers. But such books cannot be found at the Library. Even if they are there, the number is so limited that one could hardly get copies to borrow.

I should also like to mention that if one should go upstairs in the reading room one would find, of course, a copy of the *Graphic* and of the *Evening Post*, but one would not find a copy of the *Mirror* which is a daily newspaper. What are we voting \$201,000 for? Is the Government using the money to project one point of view only? Are we going to have the Government projecting bourgeois ideology? All over the world today people are using progressive ideas of Marx and Lenin, and even your institution of higher learning uses that. But you do not find such progressive literature at the Public Free Library. We cannot find even our own history books at the Public Free Library.

I think that the Library Board needs a thorough reorganization, or at least persons with more progressive ideas should be put on the Library Board. What we want here is to draw from the potentials of any intelligent or every intelligent person in this country so that our nation can develop. You cannot have American ideology being put forward all the time. In the fiction section there are very many books on America – American propaganda, but there is poverty in the sections dealing with philosophy and history. I, therefore, should like to ask the Minister what are his plans so far as revolutionizing the Public Free Library is concerned.

The Chairman: Subhead 19.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 19, Publishing and Publicising. The legend here states that this term was previously shown under Capital Estimates and the astronomical figure of \$63,000 is provided for this year. You will see what I mean in a month. If we look at page 51, under Development Programme – Publishing and Publicising, we would see that the revised estimate for 1968 was \$18,000; the actual amount spent in 1967 was \$7,625; and the actual amount spent in 1966 was \$13,542. Why, I want to ask, has it risen from \$13,000, \$7,000, \$18,000 to the huge astronomical figure of \$63,000 for 1969, and we do not have any elections this year? How has the sum gone up to \$63,000? What is the Government going to do with this money? Will the Minister please tell us what he proposes to do with \$63,000 under this subhead?

Mr. Ram Karran: It is precisely these points I wish to make and to add that, in cases where amounts are transferred from one Head to another, some explanation ought to be made. Looking at this as it is, one would get the impression that the whole amount was transferred from the other pages whereas, as the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh pointed out, in 1966 it was \$13,542; in 1967 it was \$7,625; in 1968 it was \$18,000; and this year it is \$63,000. Will the hon. Minister tell us exactly what is to be published and what is to be publicised? This is a very large sum of money.

The Chairman: Subhead 20.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Subhead 20, History and Culture. I want to be very brief on this because I think I have already conveyed my idea to the Minister. Some time ago I stated in the House that the National History and Arts Council, as presently constituted, operates within a compartment all by itself. I am not criticizing any particular member of the Council. There are members who have cultural interests and there are members whose outlook so far as culture is concerned is foreign to the Guyanese society. For several years money has been provided for cultural development and, apart from a little booklet published by the National History and Arts Council and the issuing of letters periodically asking religious organizations to conduct suitable prayers for Human Rights and so on, nothing else is done.

It is important that the Minister now charged with the responsibility for cultural development in our country take a serious look at the National History and Arts Council and that he also looks immediately into the composition of the Council, reorganize it and appoint members reflecting the broad cross-section of our country's community. He should ensure that something more be done – I know that is a courteous term – that something is done so far as cultural development in this country is concerned. I have spoken to him privately on this matter but I wish to ask him to look at the Council and at what the Council has been doing for the past two to three years.

The Minister of Information (Mr. Carter): The hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh spoke about films. I should like to question what he said about the film "Operation Greenheart." I wonder whether the cinema in which he saw it, the house - - [Dr. Jagan: "The house?"] [Mr. Chandisingh: "The Metropole."] We do not have here facilities for processing films. The most we can do here is to shoot. [Mr. Wilson: "Yes, 'shoot'."] They are sent to the United States or Britain to be processed, then they are sent back here to be edited, and then they are sent back to the United States or Britain to be further processed before final prints are obtained. This is an extremely expensive operation and while this sum of money may seem to be a great amount, it is not, in the context of film making, very much.

6.10 p.m.

In addition to this, this money is spent not only on the film but also on the other day to day expenses. The point I would like to make in this connection and in other connections is that the Ministry of Information is a service Ministry which not only makes things of its own but it has to make....

The hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, spoke on subhead 10 and asked why this sum is so small. I explain to her that since we took over G.B.S., we are moving to make it self-sufficient and this is to cover any eventualities, but we are hoping not to ask for anything next year.

The hon. Member, Dr. Jagan, spoke on time for individuals and asked whether Dr. Richmond, Mr. deCaires and Mr. Miles Fitzpatrick were banned from the radio. In reference to the last elections, he knows as well as I do that the political parties were given radio time with the agreement of the Member.

The hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh, asked about the banning of films and stated that he was disturbed about the quality of the films being shown at cinemas. I can assure him that we are disturbed too but I think the greatest of the problems we have is that the system of film

censorship is not quite...and we are seeking to change it. So far as the banning of films...is concerned, that does not come under the purview of the Board of Film Censors.

The hon. Member, Mr. Teekah, spoke of the library and said that certain books are not in the library. The library committee selects these books and I agree that we need many more books and many more copies of the books, but if you object to the spending of money we have to take account of your wishes as we do and you cannot complain.

The hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, spoke on subhead 19 and referred to astronomical figures. I have to explain to him that previous allocations were grossly inadequate and stymied the work of the Ministry. This year, we are hoping to catch up with the work we were unable to do last year. The hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, referred to the same item and asked why such a large sum has been allocated. The answer I gave just now is confirmed.

On the question of history and culture, Tolstoy once said that it is easy for anyone to write a book and carry an argument and on that side we have experts on culture. The question which we are dealing with is a very complex one and people must not believe that putting a picture on the screen of a cinema or giving a lecture in the Town Hall, or giving a viewpoint on the radio would transform the culture of any country. Culture is a process which begins at the bottom and goes up to the top and one who participates in this communication and information has to make priorities. He has to select that which is most relevant at the moment. It is this concept of priority which determines what is produced, what is the form in which it is produced and the style in which it is produced, and it is not enough for any one person to believe that his opinion is the right one at the expense of every other opinion. Consequently, I cannot accept the arguments put forward by some of the hon. Members on the other side as either relevant or accurate.

Head 18, Ministry of Information - \$782,416, agreed to and ordered to standpart of the Estimates.

DIVISION X – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that this Division stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister told us a minute ago that the amount provided in these estimates will make the National Broadcasting Service fully equipped. I assume that that was when he dealt with the subhead, Broadcasting (General). However, I see \$1/2 million allocated for the purpose of transmitters, etc. This is really on the development side - capital expenditure – but this is to be obtained from a foreign loan. In these estimates, it is indicated where the loan is coming from. In this case it is not.

It is clear here that the Guyanese people will be called upon at some time in the future to repay this loan for the establishment of a broadcasting service and the point which was made earlier by my colleagues on this side is very clear, that all sections of the Guyanese people and particularly all sections of this House should be represented on the broadcasting service. But more than that. The general observation one would like to make is that loans are not made available to the Government, and the hon. Minister of Finance said so in his marathon speech, unless the persons lending the money are in agreement with the project.

6.20 p.m.

It is here that one questions the Government's policy. Should \$500,000 be spent on the establishment of a radio station to serve one political party in the country when, prior to the acquisition of this station, there were already two stations which could have been used by the Government to the fullest advantage for the dissemination of information – not propaganda – to the public and for all opinions to be expressed on those stations? But we must accept the words of the Minister of Finance when he says that we can only enlarge our development program if we accept what our masters are prepared to give; perhaps for broadcasting rather than for Drainage and Irrigation or for facilities which would really develop Guyana. A loan is anticipated and I

thought that the Government would be in a position to tell us where it will come from. Instead of money which we could use, we are given things which are, as in the case of the motor vehicle for the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, obsolete, unfit and hopeless. I hope that the Government will not involve itself in applying a good plan which might be obsolete.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: On the last occasion when I spoke of broadcasting, the Minister (Mr. Carter) was not in a position to give a positive answer. Whilst Government has established a broadcasting service, no one knows whether it will be under the Ministry of Information with the Minister being the sole boss, or whether the Government is giving consideration to the establishment of a broadcasting corporation.

In the case of Radio Demerara, that station has a Board of Directors and policies are made by this Board of Director. G.B.S. is operated as a commercial station and therefore all sections of our community are called on to contribute by ways of advertisements. I feel that if the Government wishes to operate a broadcasting station on which advertisements will come so that all of those who are advertising through this medium, it is important that the Government install a management body to manage the station. So far as broadcasting is concerned, I think it is absolutely necessary for the establishment of a Corporation or a Board of Directors and that the Opposition be involved in such a body.

It is only then that the station can really make any headway, but if the Government operates the station wholly by themselves without consideration to a body being established to administer the work of the station it will not make the progress that can be made by a broadcasting station in this country. Is the Government willing to consider the granting of franchise to private companies for the establishing of radio stations?

Mr. Carter: In reply to Mr. Ram Karran, the loan is from the United Kingdom. In reply to Mr. Persaud, the Broadcasting Act is now being drafted and the whole question of how it will be operated will be taken into consideration.

Division X – Ministry of Information - \$490,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Do you want to continue or shall we suspend?

Mr. Ram Karran: I would like to suggest that we adjourn because by the time we get into assembly it will be half past six.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Trade (Mr. Bissember): I am suggesting that we do not sit until tomorrow. I do this with the approval of the Opposition.

Mr. Ram Karran: I think that we can, in the time left, finish all these Heads.

The Chairman: It is agreed that we adjourn rather than suspend. We shall resume into assembly.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: This Assembly now stands adjourned until Tuesday, 18th March, 1969 at 2.00 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.
