

**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**

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**14<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1969**

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**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

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. Bhol Persaud  
Cde. I. Remington, J.P.  
Cde. R.P. Sahoye  
Cde. V. Teekah  
Cde. R.E. Cheeks  
Cde. E. DaSilva  
Cde. M.F. Singh  
Cde. J.A. Sutton

**(Absent)**

### **OFFICERS**

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain

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

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING**

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

New Amsterdam Town Council (Amendment) Bill, 1969

**[The Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs on  
behalf of the Minister of Local Government.]**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS****MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1969****BUDGET DEBATE**

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance on 28<sup>th</sup> 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).

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**The Chairman:** Before dealing with any of the subheads, I think I should call the attention of hon. Members to the question of time. During the two portions of our sitting we kept to the time fairly well, but coming onto the end we lost out. We are 150 minutes behind now. If we are to manage this business properly then we must try not to duplicate points so that we may save some time in order to catch up with what we have lost.

We have Head 7: Public and Police Service Commissions. I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister is prepared to take this now.

**The Prime Minister** (Mr. Burnham): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Page 27 – Public and Police Service Commissions where the sum of \$270,837 has been allocated.

### HEAD 7 – PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I should like to deal with a general question.

I wish to refer to a recent appointment to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, and Lands, of an individual which caused a great deal of dissatisfaction in the Public Service, having regard to that individual's length of service and other factors which to my mind, would favour another officer.

I understand that the Government, through its political interference, is making promises to these people better suited to fill these posts. As long as this Government is in office, the opinion of the Opposition would not matter and not only the Opposition, the public outside as well. The Government has been head rolling and individuals are appointed to posts in the Public Service because of their political views.

I wish to take this opportunity, first of all, to point this particular case and to indicate to the Government that this sort of thing will not be allowed by the public for too long. It certainly does not go for the good Government of a country, where nepotism and things which are even more unsavoury than nepotism continues in the Public Service.

*[Interruption by the hon. Prime Minister.]* I am referring to the technical head of the Ministry of Agriculture where one of your pet boys has been appointed recently. *[Interruption*

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member should be addressing the Chair.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Mr. Chairman, the hon. Prime Minister is interrupting me. I was just giving him a direct answer.

**The Chairman:** It will count against your time.

**2.15 p.m.**

Another observation I should like to make is this: I tabled a Motion asking the hon. Minister of Home Affairs to indicate how many resignations there were in the Police Force. It might be improper for that question to be answered, but so far I have not seen it circulated. No notice has been taken of it.

There is a great deal of dissatisfaction in the Police Force and all these on-the-spot promotions, I am told, are really to bring an end to the frustration and dissatisfaction which exist in the Police Force.

These are matters on which the hon. Prime Minister sits very quietly and utters not a word, presumably because he wants to treat them as security questions. But this is no time to think about security when the whole Force, the whole Service, is dissatisfied. You can hear policemen in uniform grumbling on the streets. The country is entitled to proper Police protection. All these gimmicks are arranged by the Commissioner of Police and every now and again we hear the Minister saying something about the matter, but that does not bring about proper police protection.

I think this Head, Public and Police Service Commissions, must be reorganised to reflect public opinion. The Government cannot hope to have on these Commissions their own selectees and not to be prepared to look outside for other opinions so that people selected for these public

offices, both the Public Service and the Police Service Commissions, may be people who are capable of carrying out their duties without fear and with complete impartiality.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member mentioned something about tabling a Motion.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** A Question, sir.

**The Chairman:** As far as we understand this is not so. I have not seen it. I have just asked the Clerk and he does not have any recollection of it. Therefore, as far as we are concerned we do not know anything about it.

**The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan):** I should like to raise this question of the Public Service Commission as a matter of principle. I have had occasion in the past to raise the question of certain people who are qualified for appointment in the Service being by-passed and it seems that nothing is being done about it. We are told that these Commissions are supposed to act without political direction, to act impartially.

I have had on one occasion, when we debated the Estimates in this House previously, to refer to the case of a doctor. Doctors are in short supply in this country. All over the country there is need for more medical practitioners. There is no doubt about that. There is someone who has a temporary registration from the Medical Board and yet, no doubt for political reasons, the Public Service Commission refuses to offer that person appointment or to say that that person would not be employed.

I do not think this is good enough. Either the Public Service Commission acts impartially or we should scrap it and not have this country being burdened with all this expenditure. Now that we have a Public Service Ministry let that Ministry run it from there; let it be run from the Prime Minister's office, if the Public Service Commission is to be run on directions from the Prime Minister's Office.



Another point on principle which I should like to raise is the question of the Chairman of the Public Service Commission. I am not being personal by any means. I understand the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, who is paid a fairly substantial salary, has other interests. I think he is the senior partner of a firm and I am wondering whether a man who is to be a full-time officer of the Commission can perform his duties satisfactorily when he serves in another capacity elsewhere.

As I have said, I do not have anything personal against the individual concerned, but I raise it as a matter of principle, because I do not think it is right that certain persons should hold a big job in the Public Service and at the same time hold other positions privately which take up much of their time. I do not know to what extent these other interests may have any bearing, for instance, in his public functions as Chairman of the Commission.

I again repeat, I am not raising this on a personal basis, but as a matter of principle. I think the Government should look into this matter and whenever possible see that these things do not happen in this country.

**Mr. Jagan** *rose* --

**The Chairman:** Is there any particular item you would wish to speak on?

**Mr. Jagan:** Item (1), subhead 1. There is an increase of \$600 for salary to the Chairman and Members of the Commission. Will the hon. Prime Minister say how the \$600 is to be utilised? It is an increase of \$600 over the previous provision.

**The Chairman:** Does any other Member wish to speak? (*After a pause.*) Then will the hon. Prime Minister reply?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, so far as a proposed appointment in the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, or an appointment already made, is concerned, all I can say is I am unaware of the circumstances, but I can assure hon. Members that the Public Service Commission has exercised, or will exercise, the powers vested in it by the Constitution and that the Members thereof will apply their minds to the qualifications and suitability of the applicants, temperamentally and otherwise.

Very frequently one finds allegations of discrimination made on the basis of a person, who has served longer in the particular Ministry or in the Government service than an appointee, having been by-passed by the latter but, as I understand, selection bodies, including the Public and Public Service Commission – this is part of the Government's policy and incidentally I should also say this is something accepted by the Civil Service Association too – make senior appointments not on the basis of seniority, but on the basis of suitability.

2.25 p.m.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** “Why is Carter better suited than Kennard?”]

It is said *in vino veritas*, no, *in ignorantia veritas*. I am grateful for the information. I am grateful to the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran for informing us what is the matter he was discussing. We cannot permit mere seniority to be the criterion. The C.S.A. has accepted that it should not be the only criterion and I should like to assure you that I am completely unaware of the circumstances which led to one officer being preferred as against the other.

We heard that there is dissatisfaction with on-the-spot promotions. Actually, the percentage of on-the-spot promotion is very low as compared with those which are made by the Promotions Board and gazetted in advance. May I say that it is really not for the Police Service Commission to interfere or have any say with on-the-spot promotions? The on-the-spot promotions are promotions up to the top rank of Sergeant, and the Police Ordinance vests the

power of promotion, or the right to give promotion in that section of the Force, irrevocably in the Commissioner of Police.

If my hon. Friend Mr. Ram Karran feels that so wide a discretion ought not to be vested in the Commissioner of Police, the Government would be prepared to consider any proposal he may have for the amendment of the Police Ordinance. Now the Commissioner of Police cannot make any promotions above the rank of Sergeant. Those promotions are made by the Police service Commission and, therefore, they will not come within the net of the description “on-the-spot.” Anyhow, with his usual *penchant* for inaccuracy, my hon. Friend said he “tabled” a Question which neither the Clerk nor the Speaker has seen. When he will have taken unto himself the task of properly submitting the Question, there will be time enough to answer it and supplementary questions.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition made a point about a doctor not being appointed into the Public Service. Now there is a delicate distinction which some people cannot understand. What the Medical Board which is appointed by the Government of Guyana does is to decide what qualifications are registrable under the law and to say whether a person is qualified or would be qualified to practise medicine in Guyana, and may I pause for a moment? If it is suggested that there has been Government interference -- [**Mr. Ram Karran:** “There was.”] There may be Government interference at the level of the Board because it is Government that appoints the Board. The Board having decided whether particular qualifications in medicine are registrable and whether persons holding those qualifications are, therefore, *ipso facto* eligible – note the word eligible and no more – to serve in the Government service, it then becomes the duty of the Public Service Commission to decide whether the particular person is properly suited.

As I was saying, it is to say this: that because there are vacancies in the Attorney General’s Office, any little tiro who has passed the easiest professional examination in the world – I can say so, I passed it – can get the Leader of the Opposition to come here and say that, since this person is a member of an Inn, since this person has passed his Bar examination, since he is

admitted to practise in Guyana and there are vacancies in the Attorney General's Chambers, he ought to be appointed to one of those vacancies. [*Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Jagan.*] I have the highest regard for my hon. and learned Friend Mr. Jagan who makes the only sensible contributions from the front Bench and I would hate that he should fall in my estimation.

To raise this question every year is to waste the House's time because I am not going to interfere and tell the Public Service Commission what to do. I cannot, under article 95. There are certain posts in which the authority to confirm is vested in the Prime Minister. But what is the fuss about? Says the Leader of the Opposition, "There is a shortage of doctors in Guyana. Why can't this Russian lady open her own surgery?" Why can't he lend her some money to open her own surgery? What is all the fuss about getting her into the Public Service? I confess my incompetence to help because, according to the Constitution, the members of the Public Service Commission must make the decision. The Government sets the qualifications, other statutory bodies decide whether persons have the necessary qualifications, but the Public Service Commission is a law unto itself.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition says that the Chairman of the Public Service Commission has so many other interests and he does not know what bearing those other interests may have on the execution of his duties. I would say this: Number 1, I have had no complaint; number 2, the Constitution does not exclude the present holder of the post from being Chairman; number 3, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to say something, say something. Do not get up and say, "I do not know whether his other..." – I took it down verbatim – "I do not know whether his other interests have any bearing on the carrying out of his duties." If he does not know, keep his mouth shut.

When he finds out that there is a clash of interests, bring it to the attention of the authorities and then I will set in motion the elaborate procedure for the removal of the Chairman, if I am convinced that there is some merit in his complaint. But to take the Floor of the

Parliament to make these twilight criticisms of a person whose post is entrenched in the Constitution, I would submit, is to abuse the immunities which we enjoy in this House.

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition, as a responsible gentleman – however rebuttable that presumption may be it has to be accepted – has a complaint to make about a clash of interests, discuss it with the Prime Minister.

**2.35 p.m.**

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition convinces the Prime Minister that this is the case, the Prime Minister may ask the Chairman to resign. If the Chairman does not resign, then the Prime Minister will appoint the proper body under the Constitution to have the person removed.

Now about the increase of \$600, this is to give proper status to the Deputy Chairman, who, prior to this increase, was drawing the same remuneration as ordinary members. There is a legend and that is why I am a little surprised that the hon. member should ask this. It states, “Order No. 38 of 1966 as amended by order No. 2 of 1967. That explains the increase.

**Dr. Jagan:** The hon. Prime Minister suffers from a lapse of memory. He comes here with hand on heart and says that he does not issue instructions and this body is an independent body, etc. Perhaps he should be reminded that he made the observation, which was in public print and which was brought to the attention of the Commission, that no one, so long as he is Prime Minister of this country and he has anything to do with this Government, who has been on a P.P.P. scholarship will get a job in the Public Service. It is all well to say all the niceties between registration and employment. The fact of the matter is that the Public Service Commission is carrying out the Government’s instruction in this matter. Let us be rid of it. Let them run the Public Service through the Prime Minister’s Office and let us save the taxpayers’ money.

We heard the criticism about pensioners working in other places, the comment being made that people are unemployed today and pensioners are getting work and so on. Are we to get people mainly to carry out the Prime Minister's orders and pay them \$10,320, and then they earn maybe \$10,000 more in other jobs? How can they do their jobs properly? Of course, because they carry out instructions, then they can take long. They can do what they like.

That is why this whole country is so corrupt today because of the kind of example which the Government is setting. The Prime Minister says the individual concerned can practise privately. He does not know but a temporary registration as given to this individual by the Medical Board only permits her to work in a recognized medical institution and because the Government refuses to employ her in the hospital, other institutions take the cue. They do not want to offend the Prime Minister.

In the case of the other agronomists, engineers, etc. – they are told their degrees have not been evaluated. In this case where there is an evaluation, the Public Service Commission told me that the moment she got registration she would get the job. But now we are told, "We do not know whether she has the kind of degree or kind of suitability for employment." Why does not the Public Service Commission tell the individual concerned, "We cannot employ?" But it keeps silence three years in this matter.

Hypocrisy is not going to solve our problems. The Prime Minister must come out straight. The person concerned cannot practise privately. If the Government does not want to give her employment, then it must give her the right to be able to practise privately. Let the Government amend the law. The Prime Minister makes these statements in here, appearing to be always neutral. The fact of the matter is he is blocking these appointments and the Public Service Commission is carrying out his instructions. That is why I say these things must go.

*Head 7, Public and Police Service Commissions –\$246,431, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**HEAD 9 – OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
AND CABINET**

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Item 5.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** The item at the bottom of the page, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling. Subhead 8, Government Entertainment, subhead 9, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Would the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether the position of Youth Organiser has been filled? I ask this question because it is my information that at least three persons have acted in this position and at the moment, there is an individual acting. Will the Prime Minister let us know if this information is right and if the information is right, why the position has not been filled?

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Will the hon. Prime Minister give us an indication why this head has been increased from \$30,705 in 1966 to \$36,825 actual in 1967, then decreased in 1968, and now increased by some \$5,000? Will the hon. Prime Minister say whether he proposes to do additional travelling now when the elections are over?

Even with Government Entertainment, we notice under subhead 8 that the Government proposes to spend \$15,000 for entertainment and I think that this head is in relation to the Office of the Prime Minister and it has nothing to do with external affairs or any other entertainment. There must be some reason for this tremendous increase having regard to the fact that in 1966 we spent \$9,000, in 1967 we spent \$7,000, and in the approved estimates for 1968, we had \$9,600. There must be some reason for the Government spending so much money in this one Ministry for entertainment.

Under subhead 9 we notice that the travelling expenses for Ministerial Private Secretaries is to go up by \$2,680; this Head has now reached \$17,364. Is it that more Ministerial Secretaries have been appointed? Is it that they will do more travelling? Will the Prime Minister indicate to us how many of us these creatures there are in the Ministerial organisations? Can we get an idea as to how much each of them receives in relation to travelling expenses? I hope that these Ministerial Private Secretaries are now being...like the Ministers' chauffeurs who get a pittance in relation to the salary received by Ministers. I hope that these answers will be given.

**The Chairman:** There are a few subheads on page 32. Does any hon. Member wish to speak? If not, the Prime Minister will speak in reply.

**Mr. Wilson:** Item 10, Mr. Chairman, before you turn.

**The Chairman:** Mr. Wilson, you are getting behind hand. These things must be done in order. I will give you a chance in a moment. Let me straighten this out.

**Mr. BalchandPersaud:** Subhead 10, item –

**The Chairman:** It has no item. What page are you looking at?

**Mr. BalchandPersaud:** Page 32.

**The Chairman:** Subhead 10, yes.

2.45 p.m.

**Mr. BalchandPersaud:** I wish to speak on subheads 10, 12, 15 and 16.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Subhead 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.



**Mr. Teekah:** Subheads 12, 13 and 16 if, perhaps, my other colleague has not made the points.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member, Mr. Wilson. Will hon. Members turn back to page 31, subhead 1, item 10?

**Mr. Wilson:** The Chief Community Development Officer receives a salary of \$10,800 while the Permanent Secretary receives \$10,320. The legend explains "Post regarded from salary scale F 12, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1968." I would like to know the criteria for elevating the post. Is it a technical post? Is he a technical officer?

**The Chairman:** We shall now turn to page 32, subhead 10.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Item 10. I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister –

**The Prime Minister:** I do not wish to interrupt my hon. Friend, but on what are we speaking? He said item.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 10. I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the services are spread throughout the country so that every area is taken into consideration. I notice that over the past four years the Government officers and workers have been concentrated in villages and very little effort and time is spent in other rural areas. I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister will explain to us whether this programme is to be spread throughout the country.

**The Chairman:** Subhead 12.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I have noticed that grants are given to voluntary youth organisations and social welfare organisations receive these grants and how much money each organisation will be given? Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us in detail what part these organisations are playing in our social and economic development programmes?

18.3.69

National Assembly

2.45 – 2.55 p.m.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 13. I notice that under this subhead – Promotion of Youth Work – there is an estimate of \$35,000. First of all, if we are to vote for this amount

Of money, we must understand what programme the Government has for the development of our youths and, so far as I understand it, there is hardly evidence of a planned programme. I would like to know in what specific fields the Government intends to promote this type of activity.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** \$5,000 is being asked for under this subhead. I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister where are these youth camps and what type of training our youths are getting in these camps? This is very important. There has been a lot of talk of youth camps being set up in the country and, in these youth camps, there is gross discrimination. On the matter of the selection of youths for this type of training, it was brought to my attention that, in September last year, at Tumatumari, the Government trained seventy youths; of this amount, taking the racial composition into consideration, sixty-seven were Negroes, two were Amerindians and one was Indo-Guyanese. I would like to know whether it is the policy of the Government to assist in the training of P.N.C. youths because if this National Assembly is to vote money for the training of Guyanese youths, then all sections should be involved.

As far as I know, there is gross discrimination and P.N.C. activists are asked to assist in the recruitment of persons for training. The Government claims to be a nationalist Government so all youths should be involved in this type of training. \$5,000 is estimated for this project. Is the Government serious? That sum is inadequate for the training of our youths in whatever type of training the Government has in mind and for providing youth camps all over the country.

The youths are the ones who are supposed to have all types of training because they will be the future leaders of our country and the Government should seriously give consideration to increasing this amount of money; instead of \$5,000, provide \$30,000 in order to have a good programme to train our youths.

**The Chairman:** Subhead 11.

**Mr. Harry Lall** *rose* --

**The Chairman:** Only those hon. Members who indicated numbers of items or subheads will be allowed to speak. I do not remember Mr. Harry Lall saying that he wanted to speak.

**DaSilva:** Subhead 10, Community Development Workers. Could the hon. Minister tell us who they are and if they are recruited through the Labour Exchange as all workers ought to be?

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Subhead 11; \$24,000 is asked for. Money was already voted for work in the District Offices, so why is this additional sum of money necessary for assistance.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** \$44,000 is asked for youth organisations under subheads 12 and 13. We would like to know, as the hon. Member Mr. Persaud just said, what qualifications are necessary for enrolment to these youth organisations. What sort of youth organisations get these grants? Are they given to everyone? Do you have to belong to one group of Guyanese to get this grant or one particular party?

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Subhead 14, Upkeep of Residence, shows an increase of \$400. That is not such a large amount of money but we need every cent for Guyana; we all have to make sacrifices and we want to know what this sum is being used for, why it is necessary? Others have to make sacrifices so why cannot the Prime Minister do so in his residence? Maybe there is a good excuse. [**The Prime Minister:** "What is that?"]

**Mrs. DaSilva:** This is the first time that \$10,000 is being asked for. Were there ever any vehicles before, and, if so, where were they maintained and operated? What are the qualifications for admission to these youth camps and who qualifies for admission? I ask this question because a young man who qualified was told that it was not intended for members of the G.U.Y.S. and that furthermore it belongs to the Young Socialist Movement.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

**Mr. Teekah:** I decline because my colleague spoke on it already.

**The Chairman:** That is very good. We shall save some time. The hon. Prime Minister will reply.

**The Prime Minister:** I shall answer the questions in the order in which they were asked which I think roughly corresponds with the order of the heads and subheads.

As regards the post of Youth Organiser, that post is filled, but the officer is away on a course. There was someone acting for the officer who had originally been seconded from Co-operatives to hold the position of Assistant Youth Organiser on probation. He has now gone back to Co-ops and therefore someone else had to be brought in to act for the Youth Organiser. It is true that two persons have acted. It is not because the post is vacant; it is because the holder of the post is on an academic year's course which is nine months.

The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran asked why the increase in transport and travel. The legend in the explanatory notes explains.

Government's entertainment is always questioned, but it should be pointed out that last year, apart from meetings in Guyana of the Carifta members, there were visits by the Prime Ministers of India and Jamaica. We found that, from last year's experience the sum originally

voted was inadequate. We propose, this year, to ask for approximately \$15,000 and it is hoped that this amount would be adequate for our entertainment expenses.

May I indicate that we could not have anticipated the visit of Mrs. Ghandi because there was no indication on the 1<sup>st</sup> January that she would be doing a South American tour? And we felt that it would be a proper thing to invite her. This was also the case with the Prime Minister of Jamaica. As a result of this, we thought it more advisable to ask for a larger sum this year to save the trouble of the interminable and niggling objections which one hears voiced when we come for supplementary. We are hopeful that no supplementary will be necessary this year.

The hon. Member Mr. Wilson - - - why regarding of the post of Chief Community Development Officer and whether it is a technical post. It is not a technical post, in the sense that it asks for disciplines in technical subjects. I would rather say that it is a very important post in the context of what community development undertakes. Community Development does not only handle self-help work at the community level, but it also arranges, and is responsible for work in certain communities where there is payment. Community Development services, education and health, and it is responsible for the co-ordination, though not necessarily the execution of all community projects, regardless of the Ministry under which such projects may fall.

During the period 1965/1968, community development organising efforts was responsible for the input of approximately \$20 million into the community. And Government felt that the officer heading a division like this ought to be remunerated in proportion to the importance of the task and the significance of the job which he carries out.

The hon. Member Mr.--

**The Chairman:** There is one from the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran under subhead 9 on page 31.

**The Prime Minister:** I do know how many there are. The hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud pointed out that Community Development workers are posted to villages and not rural areas. That is impossible and therefore I will ignore the question. So far as I understand, villages are part of the rural areas.

Who gets the grants, ask the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud and his coalition partner Mrs. Da Silva, under subhead 12? The Guyana Assembly of Youth, the Muslim Youth, the Ghandi Youth, the Maha Sabha Youth, the Catholic Youth, the Y.M.C.A., Boy Scouts. Those are the organizations.

Promotion of Youth Work: what is the sum \$35,000 for? That is for the remuneration of District Youth Officers who are to be found in all parts of the country.

Then, asks Mrs. Da Silva: How do we explain “Clerical Assistance, District Offices?” Well, it is what it says. It is there to provide a vote of which persons rendering clerical assistance to Community Development workers in their district offices, as well as to Youth Officers might be paid. It is an addition to the establishment and staff of District Commissioners’ offices. It is true that in many, if not most, cases the District Officers are situate physically in the District Commissioners’ offices, but they do not come under the District Commissioners’ vote and consequently provision has to be made here.

The Community Development workers are recruited by the Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister by virtue of the delegation of authority under the Constitution by the Public Service Commission. The difference between the P.N.C. and the P.P.P. is that the former are not cowards. The P.P.P. put persons as village workers and as soon as the P.N.C. made a noise they dropped it. We put Community Development workers and we employ them.

[*Interruption*] Do you expect the Prime Minister to be interested in how many clerks we will give the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

**The Chairman:** I do not know that is in the Estimates.

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Member Mrs. Da Silva very properly asked this question and I want to congratulate her on her perspicacity. This item Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles never before appeared. That is quite right. It is because Government has found it more convenient to transfer to this Head the vote for maintaining vehicles attached to Youth and Development, and that is not without reason. The maintenance of vehicles also gives the Youth Division an opportunity to give a certain amount of training to youth in the maintenance and handling of vehicles. That is why it was transferred from the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics' vote where previously it appeared as part of the total or global sum.

We heard a comment from the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud as to the make-up of the Youth Corps. Last year the Leader of the Opposition called on me in my office and I explained to him again that the make-up of the Youth Corps ethnically is in proportion roughly to the applications. [*Interruption*]

**The Chairman:** Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** If the members of the Opposition want to see a wider spectrum amongst the members of the Corps, they must use their political influence to get a greater number of applicants and also to ensure a smaller percentage of absconding. [**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** "You chased them out."] Whenever I hear the members of the Opposition I remember the trick that used to be played on little boys by bigger boys. You spin a coin and say, "Heads I win; tails you lose. I tell them that certain people are absconding; he tells me I chased them out.

**The Chairman:** You should ignore the statement when it comes from someone who is sitting.

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Member asked how many youth camps there are. There is one at Madewini, one at Den Amstel and one at Mainstay. The sum to be voted for the upkeep of Youth Camps we consider sufficient because the youth camps are to be distinguished from the camp sites of the Youth Corps, the last being provided for under the Capital Estimates quite substantially. Youth camps are places where we encourage youth groups to go to spend weekends and to hold seminars. They are places to which even non-youths are encouraged to go. We also use the youth camps as places where youths themselves can be trained in certain skills. Their contribution lessens the cost of upkeep.

**The Chairman:** I shall put the question because we have over-stayed our time.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Just before you put the question –

**The Chairman:** You must be brief.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** On the post of Youth Organiser, I am not saying that the Prime Minister is wilfully misleading the House. I would just like to inform hon. Members that the post of Youth Organiser has been advertised and Saturday is the closing date for application.

**The Prime Minister:** When I reach the stage of my hon. Friend talking, I must say, irresponsibly – I refuse to answer him. He cannot even read the Gazette. The post of Assistant Youth Organiser was published. The post of Youth Organiser is filled.

**The Chairman:** It is known clearly than when the Prime Minister makes a statement you cannot challenge him. He must be correct.

*Head 9, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - \$448,691, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*



**HEAD 10 – PRIME MINISTER****GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE**

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Will hon. Members kindly indicate what items they would like to speak on?

**Mr. M.Y. Ally:** Subhead 1, item 14.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 1, item 12.

**The Chairman:** Let us get them all. Anyone else? Did I see the hon. Member Mr. Lall get up?

**Mr. Lall:** Subhead 1, item 13.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** I do not know if anyone has asked for subhead 1, item 1.

**The Chairman:** No; are we through?

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 15.

**The Chairman:** Are we through? [*After a pause.*] Mr. Chandisingh – subhead 1, item 1.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** This is just a simple question I have for the hon. Prime Minister. We see that the former Lieutenant Colonel has been appointed Chief of Staff. Would the Prime Minister give us some indication as to what will be the eventual position with regard to the person now occupying the post, in view of the fact that everyone has been calling for

Guyanisation of our services? Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister may also give us some indication if there is any qualified Guyanese, at the moment, who can fill the post of the Head of the Guyana Defence Force.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 1, item 12 – Privates. I notice that the Government is asking for an amount of \$756,290 to be voted and one hundred and fifty new posts will be created. Since there is a threat of Venezuelan aggression, I was wondering whether the number of new posts created is not inadequate.

**Mr. Lall:** Item 13: Under the head House Allowance the sum of \$156,000 has been allocated and under the head Separation Allowance the sum of \$75,600 has been allocated. I should like the Prime Minister to tell us what were the amounts voted in 1967 and 1968 with respect to these two big heads.

**Mr. M.Y. Ally:** Item 14, Entertainment Allowance: I cannot help wondering whether or not there is real interference from Venezuela. The Government is asking for an amount of \$432 to entertain our local troops who will preserve our border but, with respect to the overseas Entertainment Allowance, the sum of \$49,000 was spent in 1967, the sum of \$65,000 was spent in 1968, and in this year's allocation the sum of \$123,000 is provided. This is a great shame. I want to know if this is just window-dressing and the Prime Minister is just fooling the nation that we are being invaded.

**The Chairman:** May we turn to page 34 and see if any hon. Member would like to speak?

**Mr. Jagan:** Before we turn, I should just like to ask a question under subhead 3, Miscellaneous. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the amount set out under this subhead includes compensation paid to dependents of a person who dies by accident in his service in the Army. I do not see any other subhead dealing with this aspect of the matter, apart

from Funeral Expenses. In my view, if a person whilst in the Army and in active service dies as a result of an accident – [**The Prime Minister:** “In the course of his duties.”]– in the course of his employment, the dependents of such a person should be compensated. I do not think that there is provision in the Workmen’s Compensation Ordinance under which the dependents of such a person could claim compensation. I think the Prime Minister should give this matter some consideration. This is above party politics.

**The Chairman:** Page 34. Does any hon. Member wish to speak?

**Mr. Jagan:** Subhead 15, Funeral Expenses.

**The Chairman:** Anyone else to speak on page 34? Let me get the numbers please.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I should like to deal with an item on page 34. There is an item here, perhaps the Prime Minister –

**The Chairman:** I just want to know what subhead you wish to speak on so that I can call on you.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Subhead 23.

**The Chairman:** We shall start with subhead 15, Funeral Expenses – the hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

**Mr. Jagan:** Looking at the Estimates over the past few years, I notice that under this subhead the actual amount spent in 1966 was \$2,173; the actual amount spent in 1967 was \$1,708; the revised estimate in 1968 was \$4,000; and this year the Government is asking for an amount of \$1,000 only. Does the Government contemplate that there would be less Funeral Expenses this year?

**Mr. Sutton** *rose* --

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Subhead 23 is a new subhead that has been slipped in.

**The Chairman:** Does the hon. Member Mr. Sutton want to speak on a subhead before subhead 23?

**Mr. Sutton:** Subhead 21, Maintenance of Buildings and Compounds - \$85000. I should like to emphasize on the word "Maintenance." In the light of the necessary expansion of the Force and bearing in mind that 90 per cent of the buildings of the G.D.F. are new buildings, it is difficult to see how \$85,000 could be expended on maintenance. I wonder whether a large part of this expenditure should not, in fact, be put under the Capital Estimates for new buildings rather than Maintenance of Buildings. It is difficult to understand how buildings of recent erection need the terrific amount of \$85,500 to maintain them.

**3.25 p.m.**

That is in connection with subhead 21. I do not know if there is anybody who wants to speak on something before 23.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** In subhead 23, \$59,500, I should like to ask the hon. Prime Minister where we can find this farm and whether it is at the back of the Gardens.

We have gone into a new system of book-keeping. We have "deduct" under Total Personal Emoluments and Other Charges, "issues of farm produce." This is an account for \$58,000 which seems to be there to balance off expenditure, but instead of a minus sign, we have a plus sign. I am sure there is a mistake, but the substantive question is, where is this farm and how is it operated?

**Mr. Sutton:** I found it difficult to hear what the hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, was saying and it is quite possible that I would ask a question which he may have covered but on the question of subhead 23, Expenses – G.D.F. Farm, \$59,500, and the Issue of Farm Produce, \$58,000, it seems difficult to understand why this farm cannot at least be self-supporting when the cost of the labour on the farm comes from elsewhere. It is not easy to understand when we are encouraging people to go into agriculture and finding the cost of operating, with labour costs charged elsewhere, so high. It seems that the farm cannot operate by itself. Are we to presume that the other issues were unsalable and had to be thrown away and other people have to pay for them?

**The Prime Minister:** The present Chief of Staff's contract comes to an end shortly. The next Chief of Staff, who will succeed him immediately, will be a Guyanese.

Subhead 1, item (12), there will be more than 650 so my hon. Friend, Mr. Balchand Persaud, need have no fears.

Mr. Harry Lall asked about subhead 1, item (13). I can give the information with respect to 1968 – House was \$94,000, Separation \$50,400, Field \$35,000, Flying \$3,660, Specialist \$45,000. Obviously, there has been an increase because of the necessity to increase on these estimates, let alone such increases that will have to be made in the size of the force. The house allowance was intended for members of the Defence Force for whom accommodation is not provided. The separation allowance is given when married persons are in the field, away from their homes. This is a normal practice with armies.

Mr. Y. Ally's remarks about Entertainment Allowance were, in fact, entertaining because the \$432, as I explained since last year, is Entertainment Allowance for the Chief of Staff.

At the moment, we have not yet established the regulations for the payment of death benefits but the draft regulations are with the law officers and the point is well taken that there ought to be provision for the dependents of persons who die on duty.

The maintenance of buildings covers not only the maintenance of buildings but also the maintenance of compounds and my hon. Friend, Mr. Sutton, would have been correct if he had said that the G.D.F. buildings at Thomas Lands are new buildings, but there are other buildings at other places which were rather decrepit, the maintenance and rehabilitation of which take a fairly high sum. We are sorry about it but those are facts of life. We cannot discuss where these buildings are, they are in other parts of the country, but we can rest assured that they had fallen into disrepair before they were taken over by the G.D.F.

My hon. Friend, Mr. Ram Karran, would be pleased to learn that the farm is not situated anywhere in or near the Botanical Gardens. It is situated on the East Bank Demerara, a few yards away from the Accabra College, from which it is properly protected.

I concede to my hon. Friend, Mr. Sutton, that on the face of it, this is a losing undertaking but that is more apparent than real. What has happened, as I understand, is that you have here not only working capital put in but a certain amount of money for fixed assets which naturally would not be recurring but further, I raised this question with my officers yesterday, because on eggs alone from our showing last year, there will be a saving of about \$45,000 in 1969. I raised this with my officers and I was told that the sum of \$58,000 was put down *ex abundanti cautela* but I have given instructions that they must see to it that the income exceeds the expenses and not be bothered by the caution of certain officers. I agree with the observation of my hon. Friend, Mr. Sutton, made from the facts at his disposal.

I think the officers must understand that when the G.D.F. goes in for farming, it can be profitable and will be profitable. We know that we encourage some people to run the farm properly and try to run it competitively and I give an undertaking that it will be made competitive with some other producers of eggs and milk during the course of the year.

*Head 10, Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force - \$3,576,167, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### **DIVISION V – PRIME MINISTER**

*Question proposed that this Division stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I wish to speak on subhead 5.

**Mrs. Da Silva:** Subheads 4 and 7.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member, Mrs Da Silva.

**Mrs. Da Silva:** I cannot understand the sum of \$50,000 being asked for under subhead 4 for buildings for the Guyana Defence Force when the explanatory note reads: “To provide for the construction of a perimeter fence at headquarters.”

In the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance said that the prisoners at the Georgetown Prison have machinery for the malfunction of chain link fencing, and as I think that it is the type of fencing used, maybe that fence could be made by the men at the Georgetown Prison, that is by prison labour, and it would cut down on the cost.

Mr. Chairman, may I go to subhead 7?

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Da Silva:** Subhead 7, National Efficiency Campaign, \$25,000. We had this campaign last year and I hope that whatever purpose it hoped to achieve would be put across to us during the 365 days of that year. It was not very successful and it is a great pity that we

cannot scrap it altogether. I have a letter from the National Registration Centre for people to take photographs for the National Registration Scheme; it has the correct address but it does not tell one where to go or when to go. They have not been following up the campaign of efficiency and that is one of the top offices in the country. Something should be done.

**The Chairman:** Subhead 5.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** During 1966 the sum of \$32,839 was spent on the National Youth Corps. In 1967, \$40,867 was spent and in 1968, \$150,000 was spent making a total \$223,699. It is expected that \$320,000 will be spent this year; that makes a grand total of \$543,699 spent over the period 1966 to 1969. Could the hon. Prime Minister tell us what the Youth Corps has achieved in the past three years? What is the size of the Youth Corps? When will this Youth Corps complete its programme of training for its present batch?

As Members of this National Assembly we should be made aware of all the activities of the Youth Corps, yet the Prime Minister takes serious objection when we wish to hear what we can of this institution. We hope that he can tell us what has been done so far, what is expected in the future and when the present batch will complete its training.

My other point is this: so far as I am aware very little is done in the country as a whole for the development of young people. We are all aware of the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency among our people and I am sure that the Prime Minister will say that it is necessary for a properly drawn out youth program to be put into operation as speedily as possible. For some time the National Youth Council was not meeting; only recently a meeting was held.

I assume that the sum of \$35,000 under the subhead Promotion of Youth Work will be expended by the National Youth Council. I know that the Council is advisory and my information on that is that the Council was not consulted. I am not saying that the Government



must follow all the advice given, but the advice given by the Jamaican expert would help to promote activities in the country.

I feel that a substantial sum has been spent but youth development has been neglected. I would like to know what has been done throughout the country for the promotion of activities with respect to the Prime Minister's suggestion that persons should be encouraged to apply for enrolment in the Youth Corps. I think that it would be better for the Government to reorganise existing organisations which are receiving grants from the Government. When the necessity arises for the constitution of the Youth Corps to be drafted these organisations should submit names for consideration and selection by those in charge. This would be a positive way of getting all sections of the existing community involved in the National Youth Corps.

\$543,699 is a large sum but we are not opposed to it if there is a definite policy involved for many young people either in a youth corps or in youth activities.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, I shall answer the questions on the Guyana Defence Force and will ask the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Jack) to answer on Youth.

Once again, the hon. Member, Mrs. Da Silva must be congratulated on the suggestion that the machinery at the Georgetown Prison be used. That suggestion will be looked into but I cannot undertake that prison labour will be widely used as certain trade unions may object. We would like to thank her for the proposal and will certainly consider it.

We are looking into the question now – and I must say that ‘great minds think alike...’ so far as the Efficiency Campaign is concerned. I cannot agree with Mrs. Da Silva that the Efficiency Campaign was without results. I concede that it was without spectacular results, but those of us involved in the administration of Ministries and also business concerns must admit that the Efficiency Campaign brought very good results in many fields.

What we are proposing to do is to induct the efficiency campaign apparatus into community development so as to try to reach certain levels which we were unable to reach effectively during the course of the campaign of 1968.

3.45 p.m.

**The Minister without Portfolio** (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, on the question of the size of the Youth Corps, I wish to state that it is now ninety-eight. This figure has been arrived at because recently there was an intake of thirty-two persons and it is significant that this occurred after some...sixty-nine youths had been invited to join the Corps and only sixteen had availed themselves of the opportunity of applying. Subsequently, further efforts were made and that is how the figure was increased. I wish to state further that intensive efforts are being made to further increase the number speedily.

With regard to the comment made that advice was given by a Youth Consultant, which was not needed I am not aware of any such advice, because apart from my information, as far as I know, a youth adviser works in close collaboration with the Youth Organiser who has not found the necessity to refuse any advice given so far.

The suggestion made by the hon. Member of consulting various organisations with regard to the selection of youths for the Youth Corps is an interesting one, and it will, I can assure the hon. Member, be considered. This Government is determined to maintain absolute impartiality in the recruitment of persons into the Youth Corps and elsewhere. [*Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.*] It is only a question of time before the results will be seen with regard to what is being done for the youths of our country. I think it should be pointed out that the Youth Division could only attack the problems of youth at certain angles, and that the problems of youth transcends the problems of the Youth Division as such. All the problems of youth cannot be tackled by the Youth Division. Take for example, the question of unemployment; the Government is doing its best in this regard.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I wonder if the Minister without Portfolio could tell us when the training of this present batch will come to an end.

**Mr. Jack:** First of all, each batch undergoes a period of training for two years. The present batch, that is the first batch, would conclude its training by the beginning of next week.

**The Chairman:** I shall put the question now.

**Mrs. Da Silva:** I beg to crave your indulgence Mr. Chairman. I overlooked a point and I am fully aware that the hon. Minister has already replied. I was wondering if you would grant me permission to say something. It is on item 11 and it is very short.

**The Chairman:** Try and be very brief. Proceed.

**Mrs. Da Silva:** Item 11 states that this amount of \$520,000 is to purchase equipment. I just wanted to know if the purchase of equipment as dealt with in subhead 3 for the Guyana Defence Force and subhead 11 are the same and what this equipment is, and for whom it is required?

**The Prime Minister:** For the purchase of equipment.

*Division V, Prime Minister - \$3,440,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Page 36.

## HEAD 11 – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Could hon. Members please indicate how they wish to speak?

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I would like to speak on item 2. I also wish to speak generally on this Head in relation to the Government's policy for the change of this Ministry and the cost.

**The Chairman:** Just give me the items or subheads. Any other Member wishes to speak?

**Mr. Harry Lall:** I wish to speak on item 17.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I wish to speak on the absence of an item. [*Laughter*]

**The Chairman:** I am afraid I cannot deal with that. The hon. Member Mr, Ram Karran.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** On this monstrosity called the Public Service Ministry, we had warned the Government about the misuse of funds in this country. We see from the day that this subject was handed from the Ministry of Finance to the Prime Minister, and there must be some philosophy behind the Prime Minister removing it from Mr.D'Aguiar, the head of the United Force, this Ministry has been increasing year after year. The figures are there. In 1966 this Ministry cost this Government \$70,551. Today, in addition to the \$300,000 on the other page, it is going to cost \$239,925.

In all the other Ministries provision is made for a Principal Assistant Secretary which post is more or less the equivalent to that of Deputy Permanent Secretary. Why is it that this Ministry needs this creature – deputy Permanent Secretary – for what purpose does this --

**The Chairman:** It is the second time that the hon. Member referred to an officer of the Government as a creature. I do not think we should allow it in this House.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I am sorry sir. I really meant a creature of the Estimates. I apologise.

**The Chairman:** It cannot be a creature of the Estimates. It is a man and you should call it a man.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I cannot understand why there should be a deputy Permanent Secretary in this Ministry, and knowing the practice of this Government, since one Ministry is able to establish something like this, the whole Service will eventually be riddled with deputy Permanent Secretaries.

I think the Prime Minister ought to give a satisfactory explanation to this House as to the reason for the inclusion of this new post which is costing taxpayers so much. While going through this Estimates I thought that that post might have been a substitution for the Senior Organisation and Methods Officer which even the English Civil Service found to be very useful.

**3.55 p.m.**

If that is the explanation it certainly does not justify the Government removing this post of Organisation and Methods Officer, which has specific functions and duties, and substituting a Deputy Permanent Secretary in this Ministry.

The last point is that even though this is a relatively new Ministry we find all through the pages legends reading “change in holder of posts,” “post no longer required,” “new posts.”

**The Chairman:** Let us not anticipate the next page. We are dealing with Current Expenditure, not Capital Expenditure.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** It shows that the Government does not put itself in order and that is why there is a tremendous lot of change for an Estimate of only one page.

**Mr. Lall:** I should like to speak on the salaries at which civil servants start. If we look at this Establishment we will see that the most junior civil servant starts off on A34 salary scale at \$117 per month.

**The Chairman:** I am afraid this is not applicable in this particular case. We are not dealing with salary scales now. We are dealing with Estimates of Expenditure. We are examining the expenditure. Is the expenditure correct or is it not correct? As regards what is paid and how much is paid, those questions are not before us for consideration now.

**Mr. Lall:** I should like to make an observation on the disparity that exists between junior and senior clerks.

**The Chairman:** Go right ahead; you can say that.

**Mr. Lall:** If we look at the starting point of civil servants in Trinidad, our CARIFTA neighbour, we will see that the junior civil servants start at \$179 per month, whereas in Guyana junior civil servants start at \$117 a month. For the past few years the cost of living has gone up very steeply and Government should reconsider the starting point. If the Government cannot reach the salary scale of our neighbour Trinidad then, at least, it can go near it. I am appealing to the Government to consider these junior civil servants.

**The Chairman:** Lest this matter be repeated as we move on in the course of the Estimates, let me point out that only yesterday it was made very clear to the House, on more than one occasion, that the whole question of changes in salaries cannot be dealt with in isolation; it has to be dealt with as a whole and the Government has pledged itself to look into the matter. Therefore, to repeat it day after day will not change the position. It will only make us consume

time and the members of the Opposition will find that they will lose an opportunity to speak on particular Heads that they would like to speak on when we get down to them. Let us not waste time on trivialities at the moment.

**The Prime Minister:** So far as the post of Deputy Permanent Secretary is concerned it was necessary to have someone who was the Deputy Permanent Secretary because this Ministry has four Officers at Principal Assistant Secretary level, one in Personnel, one in Management Services, one in Training and one in Inspection. There are four divisions. This Ministry is responsible for Personnel Management Services, for Training and for Inspection of the entire Service and it was thought advisable and necessary to have a Deputy Permanent Secretary who is, in fact, Deputy to the Permanent Secretary, otherwise how are you going to identify one of four P.A.S. level Officers as Deputy?

In so far as the comment of the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran is concerned, it persuades me of the accuracy of St. Paul's statement, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." He made some passing reference to the British Civil Service finding it necessary to have an Organization and Methods Officer. That is so, but he is a little way behind. The nomenclature now is Management Services." The same purpose is served. It is a more euphonious description of the duties.

*Head 11, Public Service Ministry - \$239,925, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

*Assembly resumed.*

*Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.*

*On resumption --*

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**  
**RECEIPT OF CERTIFICATE BY DEPUTY CLERK OF**  
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, before we proceed, there is a slight announcement that I should have made earlier and that is this: It is a matter of gratification to all Members of this Assembly to know that the Deputy Clerk who went away on an attachment to the House of Commons last year for three months has now been presented with his Certificate from Westminster to say that he has been attached. Now we have not only certified Amerindians in the House but also a certified Clerk. [*Applause*]

**MOTION**

**APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1969**

**BUDGET DEBATE**

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance on 28<sup>th</sup> 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).

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**DIVISION VI – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY**

**The Chairman:** At the suspension we had just dealt with the Public Service Ministry, Recurrent. Now we turn to Division VI, Public Service Ministry on page 37.

*Question proposed that this Division stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members, is it the wish that I put the question right away?



**Dr. Ramsahoye:** Will it be proper for me to ask a question on page 37 under Conditional Scholarships?

**The Chairman:** Yes, subhead 1.

**Dr. Ramsahoye:** May I ask how many scholars there are, enjoying conditional scholarships at the moment and how many scholars there are who have enjoyed conditional scholarships but who have refused to return to the country to serve?

**Mr. Wilson:** I should like to ask a question on the same subject. Will Government consider allowing scholars who enjoyed conditional scholarships to pursue post-graduate training after they obtain their first degrees? I understand that Government steadfastly refuses to allow such persons, although they have been reported well on, to pursue post-graduate training because they signed agreements to return after they got their first degrees.

4.50 p.m.

**The Chairman:** Any other hon. Member would like to speak?

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I should like to speak on subhead 1, Conditional Scholarships and Training Courses - \$294,000. The legend states: "To provide scholarships and training courses." I should like to know how many scholarships the Government anticipates to provide and for which countries. I should also like to know what type of training courses the Government has in mind.

**The Prime Minister:** If I may, I should like to answer the questions in the order in which they were put.

So far as the number of scholars on courses is concerned, I will have to get notice of that question. I cannot at this stage say how many. Then there is the other question: "How many have refused?" A sizable number has refused and/or failed to return and proceedings are being taken against their guarantors in their absence. [**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** "No confidence in the Government."] Actually, we found that the greater number refused to return between the years

1961 and 1964 and we are now executing proceedings against those. We are doing them chronologically, so we start from those who refused to come back in 1961 to 1964 when they were quite wrong to refuse to come back. Yes, they were afraid to come back in 1961 and 1964.

The hon. Member Mr. Wilson raised an interesting point and this, in the final analysis, is a matter for Government to make a decision on each case. There are some disciplines which require a post-graduate course, depending on the institution to which the scholar went. In some American Universities, where the curricula are differently arranged from Commonwealth Universities, a certain degree of expertise is not achieved until the Master's is done. As a matter of fact, most American University students will speak of doing graduate studies when they are proceeding to their Master's – but that is not true of all – whereas, in other Universities, the Bachelor's degree is the qualification. But even in the former circumstances there are occasions when the qualification of the Bachelor's alone fits the candidate or the person to come back and to pursue a certain occupation or vocation in Guyana.

There is the second category namely those cases where the Bachelor's is the graduate qualification and the Master's is clearly an additional post-graduate qualification. In theoretical terms, it is good to permit a person, especially in the technical fields and the natural science fields, to proceed to post-graduate work, but all of that depends on the needs of the society, the community, the country, at the time.

For instance, I met a young man the other day who was going to do his doctorate in photosyneteology and a young lady who was going to do nematology. When I inquired of them what those two meant, after a careful examination, they were not relevant to our Development Programme and to the needs of our country but would have fitted them for academic research in other countries. In such cases, Government distinctly refuses to permit any post-graduate course at Government's expense and the money becomes immediately payable. We cannot afford the luxury in these cases. We cannot afford academic research at Government's expense at this stage. Our need, at the moment, is for technological and technical people to come and help in the development.

There is one further complication which the unlearned will not understand, that is that sometimes young men or young women decide to go on to post-graduate work without being exposed to the field and being able to make a decision compatible with their abilities. I will give you an example: There was a young man who wanted badly to do an M.Cs. Economics in industrial relations. He was told, "Finish your B.Sc. Economics, come back home, start working and then after you have finished your first tour, Government will make available facilities for you to do your post-graduate in a field of your choice and preference." He did so, and do you know that when he was to go on to his post-graduate work he decided to do that work in organization of small industries, which subject he found much more to his liking and predilection, and which subject was much more relevant and more urgently needed in Guyana?

Government's policy on this question of post-graduate training is elastic. It depends on the circumstances, which circumstances can include the need, the relevancy, and also the definiteness that Government will make available opportunities for post-graduate training, after the graduate has identified 'on the spot or job', so to speak, his field of interest relevant to the circumstances of Guyana.

To speak idly about research is to waste time. For instance, if we sent away a young man to do Physics and he starts doing research in Physics relevant to the launching of cosmonauts when we do not even have jet planes, do you want us to spend our money on a young man to do cosmology? If he wants to do cosmology, let the American Government or the Russian Government give him the money. Let him pay back what he owes us so we can give to another man who wants to specialize in a field of Physics relevant to Guyana.

*Division VI, Public Service Ministry - \$300,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** We shall now turn to Head 13, Ministry of Economic Development, page 41. We will come back to Head 12 a little later.

### **HEAD 13 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members, please indicate to me your preference as to what you wish to speak on. We will start with page 41.

**5 p.m.**

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Page 41, item (14). The hon. Minister in his Budget Speech indicated serious short-comings on the part of the Government with respect to the strengthening of Government funds. He said that every effort has to be made to ensure that funds are properly spent. He also said that a study was going to be conducted by the officers to ensure that a proper system of taxation was introduced. It is my information that the Government had sent an officer to the United States of America at a cost of about \$5,000 to return to Guyana to review the tax structure in this country. This officer has returned and I understand that nothing has come out of his training or visit. A little while ago, the Prime Minister was telling us of Government's policy in the granting of scholarships for training. Can he tell us about this alleged waste of Government's funds with nothing to show?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not know what my hon. Friend, Mr. Ram Karran, is talking about and he certainly has nothing to do with the Chief Statistician.

**Mr. Lall:** I wish to speak on subhead 21.

**Mr. Jagan:** Subhead 17.

**Mr. Wilson:** Subheads 8, 17 and 21. Preparation of Consumers Price Index. The price index is usually very unrealistic and I should urge the Government to try and get its index correct and realistic in relation to what is happening in the market.

Subsidy, Guyana Development Corporation. I should like to know whether this subsidy will allow the Corporation to undertake the running of industries.

**Dr. Jagan:** I wonder whether the hon. Minister will let us know what was intimated in the Budget statement, whether the Government in fact will be participating in the flour mill and also in the Pegasus Hotel. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what is the extent of

the Government's participation through this Corporation in the Pegasus Hotel and the flour mill, what are the conditions, etc? [*Interruption*] That is what you said in the budget statement.

**Mr. Lall:** The Government had national registration last year. Now, an amount of \$140,000 is provided for a population census. The Opposition feels that this money is unwisely allocated, that at the time of national registration, the Government should have taken the opportunity to carry out a population census. It would have been a case of shooting two birds with one stone. We want to teach this Government to spend the taxpayers' money wisely. We want some explanation why a population census was not done last year when there was a national registration.

**Mr. Wilson:** I endorse what my colleague just said but I should go on further to say that if this Government carries through with this exercise, I trust it will be done on a national basis, that not only P.N.C. supporters will be recruited, so that we can check on the rigging that took place in the national registration.

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Member, Mr. Wilson, proffered sensible advice when he suggested that the preparation of the new Consumers Price Index should reflect a realistic position. That Government has in mind and that is what Government intends to do. This question of participation in the flour mill and the hotel – a confusion arises understandably, when the relevant paragraph, to which the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) referred, reads thus:

“During 1968 construction commenced on both the wheat flour mill and the hotel (Pegasus) in which Government has joint participation.”

That can be interpreted in the way in which the Leader of the Opposition interpreted it and the way that it is meant. There was no participation in the wheat flour mill. There was participation in the Pegasus hotel. From the Pegasus Hotel, the Government gets a rental; I think it is \$5,000

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5- 5.10 p.m.

an acre, plus a shareholding of 71/2 per cent without the expenditure of any money. So, the Government gets a substantial lease from the hotel and 71/2 per cent equity.

5.10 p.m.

The hon. Member Mr. Wilson proposed to ask whether the sum of \$370,000, a subsidy to the Guyana Development Corporation, represented an amount to the Corporation for an interest in industry. It does not. This is a subsidy towards its administration and its promotion campaigns. The direct allocations will be found on the capital at subhead 2 and again under the Ministry of Finance where there are two instances of allocations for the Corporation on behalf of Government taking part in industry; but it must not be assumed that these two allocations represent the sum total of participation.

There are negotiations going on at the moment with a particular Corporation whose activities require the use of lands; Government's proposal has been accepted, and, if negotiations are successful, it will be part of the bargain that the lands will represent Government's equity. This is also proposed in the field of housing, manufacturing and extractive industries.

A million dollars equity does not necessarily represent a million dollars' worth of shares or a million dollars working capital, as in all commercial and industrial exercises once a company is established there are other means of securing working capital.

The population census is something separate and distinct from the National Registration; the census would cover all Guyanese instead of those above the age of fourteen; the latter category being the category envisaged for the National Registration Scheme. Furthermore, this census was timed to coincide with the general Caribbean census to take place this year and the Government of Guyana has been working with the other Caribbean territories.

**Mr. Jagan:** This question arises from what the Prime Minister just said. Would he agree with me that the site is less than acre?

**The Prime Minister:** No. It is five acres. We who are accustomed to wide spaces of land may underestimate this area.

*Head 13, Ministry of Economic Development - \$1,412,858 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

#### HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTERIOR

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Minister of Finance** (Dr. Reid): I wish to make an explanation on this Head before it is put to the House. Hon. Members may remember that on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1969 the House approved a Resolution; because of this there are some changes to be made so that we can give effect to the Resolution at this stage.

**The Chairman:** If you will do it slowly, we will make the changes. Hon. Members, please check your pages.

**Dr. Reid:** Page 43, subhead 1, item 1: Under Commissioner of the Interior and Chief Interior Development Officer whose salary for 1969 will be \$8,000.

**The Chairman:** \$8,000 from when?

**Dr. Reid:** From 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1969, but we will also have to include \$1,680 to take care of the Commissioner of the Interior up to the same period.

**The Chairman:** Could we merely change the figures from \$8,000 to \$1,000 odd against the Commissioner and add the Chief Interior Development Officer?

**Dr. Reid:** Also change the sum opposite the Amerindian Development Officer. This will change the total to \$355,135 - \$400 less than printed. I do not know if to go on and make the other changes at Local Government as I am on my feet – a corresponding change according to the Resolution.

**The Chairman:** No. Let that wait.

**Dr. Reid:** All right, I shall wait.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members, do you have the changes? These changes cause a reduction of the total \$355,135. Now, will hon. Members state their preferences? Are there no questions?

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Subhead 1, item 5. I would like to speak on that.

**Mr. Wilson:** I would like to make a general comment.

**Mr. Sutton:** Subhead 1, items 11, 14 and 16.

**Mr. Stoby:** Subhead 1, item 11.

**The Chairman:** Did the hon. Member Mr. Sutton refer to items 11, 14 and 16?

**Mr. Sutton:** Yes, sir.

**The Chairman:** May we commence? Subhead 1, item 5.

**Mr. Wilson:** Could I make a statement --

**The Prime Minister:** May I crave your indulgence to move a very minor amendment, that is, to re-designate this department Interior Development Department instead of just Interior Department.



**The Chairman:** The name is to be re-designated? All right.

**The Prime Minister:** in other words, put in the word “Development” between Interior and Department.

**The Chairman:** We will consider that as just filling in the empty spaces.

**Mr. Wilson:** I wish to speak on subhead 1, item 11 and also generally.

**5.20 p.m.**

There was pointed out in the Budget Speech that the object of the Interior Development Committee would be to progress into the hinterland by establishing settlements where the centres will not only produce, but will also be prepared to defend our territorial integrity. I trust that when the settlers are to be selected, it will be done on a national basis.

Under subhead 11 – Amerindians Captains the Prime Minister made a lot of fuss saying that it is the first time in the history of this country that Captains were brought down; but this happened in the old colonial days where captains were brought here for conferences for the purpose of wooing them to re-capture run-away slaves. [**The Prime Minister:** “We want to re-capture you.”] I think it is very disgusting to see the Prime Minister fooling these people with little gifts.

**The Chairman:** I think the hon. Member has gone beyond the point because this item speaks of a launch captain and not an Amerindian Captain.

**Mr. Wilson:** But it is subhead 11 I speaking on.

**The Chairman:** You had said item 11 and it is stated in my book “Launch Captain.” Anyway, note has been taken.

**Mr. Stoby:** I would like to speak on subheads 11 and 12.

**The Chairman:** Is it subhead 11 or item 11 you would like to speak on?

**Mr. Stoby:** Subheads 11 and 12.

**The Chairman:** Wait a moment please. Was it Mr. Sutton who wanted to speak on items 8 and 9? [*Pause*] Well then we are finished. The hon. Member Mr. Stoby.

**Mr. Stoby:** Mr. Chairman, there was a lot of publicity when the Amerindian Captains came to the city and a number of promises were made to these people. I would like to make some suggestions to the Government. It is my view that some of these Captains would rather at this period of our history to be relieved of this position. Some progress is being made in certain areas of the Interior and I think that as far as I could understand a large section of the community feels that more status is required.

For instance, in the Local Authority, there are area councils and village councils. We feel that it is not suitable to have the post of Captains. These Captains attend the council meetings and there is some sort of dictatorship. I understand that there is a Captain who feels himself superior to the others and he influences the council when decisions are taken. And these decisions are very important to the welfare and development of a community. Several times a wrong decision is taken by a Captain and it is supported by members of the same council. I feel that the Government should seriously look into these things if we want to have development of the Interior areas.

I think that the Government should view seriously the question of giving some education to the Amerindians on local authority so that the right type of taxation may be implemented. I understand that they do not even like to hear about the Head Tax because it is not suited for the development of the areas. In a particular area in the Northwest District a local authority had imposed a tax of four dollars per year for the male and one dollar per year for the females.

Now we have a Lands Commission which has produced a report. I feel that the Government should make a real effort to improve the running of these local authorities rather than looking forward to these Captains to have authority over specific areas.

As regards subhead 12 – Amerindians Depots – Wages and Caretakers, Maintenance, I have been getting quite a number of complaints about the employees at the Hostel. I understand that the Government intends to remove the Hostel to somewhere in High Street. Up to this morning I was there and I found a number of problems. I think it is time the Government do something in the interest of the Amerindians of this country because according to the Prime Minister this is a new age for the Amerindians.

**5.30 p.m.**

I feel that something specific should be done to let these people know that the Government is taking an interest. A lot of stealing is going on; Amerindians are stealing from each other. I think that the Government should view this matter seriously and not create another Amerindian hostel with the same practices that go on in the old one. I think that some disciplinary measures should be taken. Government must have specific rulings and not let anything get out of hand. I understand that the caretaker is unable to cope with the affairs of the guest who come from remote areas. There is no control. I think that the Government should do something so that we may be able to get things running smoothly in this Amerindian hostel.

**Mr. Sutton and Dr. Ramsahoye** *rose --*

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

**Mr. Sutton:** Subhead 11 Amerindians Captains. I am considerably perturbed by what appears to be a discrepancy between what the Government would have us believe and what we actually see in print.

I remember drawing attention to the Government's declaration and now well-known theme which runs through the Budget Speech, namely, "making the small man a real man." I presume that this statement will also apply to Amerindians, who have always been treated as "no-account" people and now will be given an opportunity to become real men and women.

I notice under subhead 11 that the total vote for Amerindian Captains is \$13,140. There is an increase of \$2,640 over last year's vote and the explanatory note says that this is

“To provide for payment of stipends to forty-four additional Captains.”

I have, therefore, come to the conclusion – I should like to be corrected if I am wrong – that the amount of \$2,640 will go to 44 additional Captains. If my second standard arithmetic is correct this means the noble sum of \$5 a month to each Captain.

A Captain is an Amerindian who is supposed to be a leader of his community. If you are going to give him remuneration for the duties which you think he will have to do, at least give him something that does not look as though you are taking it out of the collection plate to give him. Give him something worthwhile. But, in these days, what can \$5 a month do for a Captain? What does \$5 a month mean? Old age pensions are \$10 a month in rural areas and \$12 a month in Georgetown. You tell these Captains how much you think about them by giving them \$5 a month.

Even though this was the current thing before, because of the disturbances in the Rupununi, which suddenly caused the Government to be very concerned about these people, I would have expected that the Minister would have moved an amendment to these obviously inadequate allowances. If the members of the Government really mean what they say, then give these people favourable consideration. In fact, give them something that allows them to think of themselves as men rather than as little boys and little children who will take a tip of \$5 and be responsible for their communities for a month. To put down \$5 a month in this year 1969 in the Government Estimates as a reasonable remuneration for no matter what kind of man is, I think, a disgrace to this Government. [**The Prime Minister:** “I agree with you. Who put it in the Estimates?”]

Subhead 14 deals with the agricultural development of the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District, which unfortunately is known to the majority of the people here in Georgetown. The Mazaruni area is well populated with several important communities of Amerindians and we find that the sum of \$1,100 is earmarked for Amerindian development of agriculture when that would be inadequate as a sum for each Amerindian community in that area, much less for the whole area which has a couple dozen Amerindian communities.

Whom is this Government trying to fool? Let us understand where we stand. Let the members of the Government say they are considering Amerindian development, but do not say that they are actually carrying it out. They brought these people down here, had a lovely Conference, with a lot of publicity, and when we look at the Estimates what do we see? We see a mere pittance being earmarked for development of the Amerindian areas. It is an insult to give an Amerindian Captain, by virtue of his being a Captain, the sum of \$5 a month.

We are further perplexed when we go down to subhead 16 and find that amount for Scholarships Funds and Books is now only \$6,000. In spite of the increased interest in these people the allocation in 1969 is reduced from \$8,000 to \$6,000. That is how the Government shows its concern for these people – by reducing their allocation from what it was in 1968.

This only shows the type of thinking that was going on in the Government, where Amerindians were concerned, before the Rupununi disturbances. No matter that the members of the Government are bending over backwards to tell us that the disturbances in the Rupununi play no part in their present solicitude for these people, we have no option but to conclude: in the light of these figures, that all that is said is so much eyewash, and unless all the people who are interested, unless all the citizens of this country keep a lot of noise and keep the members of the Government with spike nails in their backs, the Amerindians will never get a square deal. [**The Prime Minister:** “Where is the Amerindian among you?”]

The unfortunate part about this situation is that since the late Mr. Stephen Campbell, there is no Amerindian who has shown himself willing, able and capable of representing the Amerindians. What the Government would like is to have the place filled with Amerindians who cannot put up their case properly, in the hope that it would then be able to say, “This is what they asked for and this is what they got.” Amerindians are still in a state where they are very much behind the remainder of the Guyanese people, and the Guyanese people must recognize that these are their brothers and need a square deal.

The hon. Member is talking about bringing people who, owing to the conditions under which they live, find it difficult to appreciate the whole problem. The Government then can use that as an excuse to say, “We are doing this for the Amerindians.” [*Interruptions*]

**The Chairman:** Order, order!

**Mr. Sutton:** I sincerely hope that the Government will take the opportunity to move the necessary amendment to increase the vote to a realistic figure and so let everybody see that it is really trying to do something for the Amerindians.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye had indicated that he would like to speak.

5.40 p.m.

**Dr. Ramsahoye:** This provision which comes so soon after the display of allegiance and loyalty of these Captains, who were brought to Georgetown at the instance of the hon. Prime Minister, forces us to make a reassessment of this sort of expenditure. In a sense, this money is a sort of pittance which is being given, and now it is being given to 44 of our new friends, but I think that the hon. Prime Minister needs to be reminded of something. Since 1953, the misguided mentors of the Amerindians told them that they cannot expect any justice at the hands of the two major races who live in this country, and I think the hon. Prime Minister should be guided so that he ought not to feel that these little hand-outs will in any way preserve or maintain a loyalty which we very well know may not exist.

I think that we need a new thinking on this subject; I do not see why we should continue paying that money to the Amerindian Captains. I think we need a new organization. We need to think a little bigger, and if the Captains can be of use, they should be used in authorities where Government is, to some extent, centralized. One may not necessarily have village districts or local authorities, but we can certainly devise something else.

I would agree with the hon. Member Mr. Sutton that this small amount does savour, in some way, of an insult in these days. I think the Government should think a little bigger and it should really devise new institutions dealing with the Amerindians, and if the Amerindian Captains are going to be used, well then they should be used at a higher and with more popular participation in the work of the Amerindian community.

**The Prime Minister:** I could forgive the hon. Member Mr. Sutton but certainly not my hon. and learned Friend Dr. Ramsahoye because the latter knows, whereas the former does not know, and will never be in a position to know, that these Estimates were submitted long before the end of December and it has been physically impossible to go back combing, especially in the case of payments to Amerindian Captains. At this stage, however, there has been a new approach which will be as follows: All Amerindian Captains will be paid, and when the hon. Member Mr. Sutton's colleague was Minister of Local Government, I had to beg him that all should be paid because he told me that the sum was too small, so those who did not vote a particular way -- [*Interruption*] Yes, if "touchau" Cheeks was here, he would have been honest enough to admit it.

Amerindian Captains are now going to be paid but they are going to be paid in relation to the size of their committees and responsibilities and, therefore, the House will be approached later, when we have worked this out in consultation, for a greater allocation for this particular subhead. We do not ask for it now because the basis of payment has not been worked out.

Certainly, I should like to admit that the responsibilities of Captains, as my hon. and learned Friend Dr. Ramsahoye said, should go beyond just merely those of being Captains. They will be, in fact, in some respects and in some areas, responsible for community development organization. Already two Captains are employed in the Community Development Division of the Office of the Prime Minister, and to show that there is no political discrimination, one of them was a candidate on the United Force list. That brings me to a relevant point, though it may at first appear a digression: the temerity and the impudence of the United Force to come here with three non-Amerindians when the paltry votes they got were Amerindian votes, and to say that there is no Amerindian suited to talk more sense than they.

If you look at Mr. Duncan, the man is intelligent and he speaks more fluently than those who were educated in Barbados. This is part of this attitude towards the Amerindians on the part of the U.F. – they are inferior, they cannot speak. Why then did their leader a day before the outbreak in Rupununi say that he was going to find an Amerindian candidate to put among his paltry four? You cannot eat your cake and have it. You cannot display your hypocrisy before the public and then talk about no Amerindian being stupid.

Look at the hon. Member Mr. Stoby. I do not agree with his politics, but do you want a man to express more fluently, pungently, intelligently, a point of view? Look at the hon. Parliamentary Secretary Mr. Duncan. It is an insult to our parliamentary colleagues! I think the hon. Member Mr. Sutton ought to withdraw his remarks.

Let us know the truth, that the U.F. had to find places for three of the boys and one girl, and the poor Amerindians could not fit; there was not enough to go around. Vested interest in the United Force has to be satisfied first and the poor Amerindians, but for the P.P.P. and the P.N.C., would not have a face. How dare they talk of the Amerindians! What did Jesus say about the wicked and adulterous generation? [*Laughter*]

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I concede the hon. Member Mr. Stoby's point that there must be an education of the Amerindian communities in the responsibilities of local government but I would remind him that all of the captains – so far as I was informed by my ex-Minister of Local Government who ran the elections along with his Permanent Secretary, the son-in-law of the late Mr. Stephen Campbell – were elected and we are going to see that there will be elections again this year. It must be admitted that they are at the moment elected – that is one step. Their councillors are also elected and Government will seek, during the ensuing period, to assist them further in developing community services similar to those for which the villages, country authorities, etc. are responsible on the coast.

Now the question of the changing of the name "Captain" is a very ticklish one but Government is prepared to consider whether or not we should call them "Chairman." So far as I understand, to be a Captain is to wear a badge of honour, and after all their wishes have to be



headed, whether they want to be called Captains, or they want to be called “Touchaus,” or they want to be called Sheriffs or Chairmen.

It is correct to say that the vote of \$1,100 for the Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District, Agricultural Development of, is inadequate and, at first blush, appears parsimonious. I would not be so ungentlemanly to remind this House of the fact that this vote was prepared by the former Minister of Local Government (Mr. Cheeks), for I must accept the responsibility now and I do so.

5.50 p.m.

But it must not be forgotten that the transfer of the Interior Department into the Ministry of Economic Development therefore means that subhead 16 of Division VIII on page 44, where there is \$1 million allocated with a new concept, approach and thrust, will mean that the \$1,100 will be merged with that and every other item that before might not have been referable at all to Amerindian Development, agriculture or otherwise.

The question of merging the Interior Development Division into Economic Development is to make available the funds for joint development of this particular area and to give one Minister responsibility for overall economic development, because we found in the past there were occasions when two Ministries attempted to serve the same purpose but it turned out to be more expensive and to be less effective. We want to emphasize the fact that we are not thinking of the Amerindian in the way the United Force would like to think of them, as a people unable to help themselves, to be entertained with a tape recorder saying, “This is Peter speaking from heaven.” I am told that a certain political party played a tape recorder and informed the audience, “This is the voice of God.”

That is not the way the P.N.C. thinks of Amerindian development. The P.N.C. thinks of Amerindian development as part of the development of Guyana. Amerindians suffer from certain disadvantages and expect and are entitled to get certain extra considerations. Today, we received a letter from the Superior of the Jesuits in the Rupununi praising the conduct of the

G.D.F. There are certain additional forms of assistance required for Amerindians but that does not mean that their areas must not be developed *paripassu* with the rest of Guyana.

*Head 14, Ministry of Economic Development, Interior - \$355135, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### DIVISION VIII – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Question proposed that this Division stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I intend to speak on subheads 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 15.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Subheads 6, 12 and 16.

**Mr. Wilson:** Subhead 12.

**Mr. Y. Ally:** Subhead 16.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister, who has taken the Ministry of Economic Development under his wing, would let us know what this \$100,000 is going to be spent on. It is said to continue with the development of industrial estates. I think it refers to Ruimveldt. Where are these commercial farms and what is this participation in joint ventures? Do these have to do with the hotel and some other joint venture the Government has mentioned?

We move to integrated planning, \$80,000, to provide for the implementation of the U.N. Special Fund Project on integrated planning. What is this all about? Would the Prime Minister indicate to us?

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We come to this \$250,000 for hydro power investigation. I think this was mentioned in the general debate but I remember that the Prime Minister did not speak on the head. As far as I remember, Preece, Cardew and Rider in their report to the Government had indicated it would be time in this country to move on to hydroelectricity in 1971. Whichever site it was going to be, we wanted to avoid putting in additional thermal generating plant at Kingston but with all these reports that the Government has, not only from the Ministers of Communications and Works and Hydraulics but also the Minister of Economic Development, it seems to me that the opportunity was lost by the Government. It is not very keen on real development. It will have to add two additional ten-megawatt plants which, in due course, will become obsolete with hydroelectric development. I wonder if the P.C.R. report has been thrown aside or whether the Government is working by that time-table. The Government was sleeping all these years when the investigation should have been carried out.

There is an item, Specialist Assistance, and the explanation we have alongside is:

“Counterpart contribution to Technical Assistance and salaries, allowances and other expenses in connection with Technical Assistance.”

In this development estimate and capital estimate, one would have thought that the Government would give some explanation for these things because where is this technical assistance going, in what area are we going to \$150,000, especially when salaries, allowances and other expenses are ... It is very vague and I think it is necessary for Government to give some indication to this House.

6.00 p.m.

Subhead 7 tells us that we are going to spend \$1,570,000. We have been spending a lot of money all along for feasibility studies. In what areas are we going to spend this USAID money? For what sort of feasibility studies? Surely the Minister is going to tell us! Then we have a number of other subheads.

Subhead 10. The legend states “To provide for various agricultural and other projects for Amerindian Development.” I do not think that any thought has been given to Amerindian development before the circus held at Queen’s College and I am wondering if this is an afterthought on the part of the Government. Surely the hon. Prime Minister will give us some detail on how this money will be spent on “agriculture and other projects for Amerindian Development.”

The first subhead is left empty but we have it repeated below under subhead 15 – Purchase of Equipment - \$24,000. The legend says “To provide for the purchase of four Land Rovers.” I understand that the Government will acquire all imports without the payment of duty – duty-free purchases will be made and I would like to know if one Land Rover is going to cost the Government as much as \$6,000.

**The Chairman:** Would hon. Members like to speak on subhead 6? Shall we pass on to subhead 12? I have that subhead marked for two hon. Members.

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

**Mr. Wilson** *rose* --

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member, Mr. Persaud.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I understand that the Amerindian Lands Commission has submitted an interim report to the Government and I think that there was a publication in the Press to the effect that the Prime Minister had received an interim report from the Amerindian Lands Commission. I would like to know if the Government considers it unnecessary to lay on the table in Parliament that interim report. Secondly, could the Prime Minister indicate how early the final report will be presented by the Amerindian Lands Commission? Can I go on to subhead 16?

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Could the Prime Minister say if, in the resettlement programme in the Interior, people from outside of the Interior area, people from the coastland, will be integrated in the development of the Interior and if they will also be made in existing residence occupied by Amerindians? Has a proper survey been carried out to ascertain whether the areas to be occupied

are suitable? We had broad statements like this: there will be interior development. We have no White Paper in Parliament as to the position.

**The Chairman:** Do any other Members wish to speak on subhead 16?

**Mr. Wilson:** Subhead 12. I wonder if there is any need for the Amerindian Lands Commission to continue functioning after the conference of the Captains. The Prime Minister is supposed to have said that the Amerindians will get whatever they want; that the Government will allow them to have what they want. This would make one believe that there is no need for the Lands Commission; it would become redundant since the Amerindians would say what they want and the Government will give them what they want. This item ought to be deleted. I feel, too, that this matter which the Commission was looking into could very well be taken care of by the Chief Interior Development Officer among the Amerindian Captains. They will say what they want, co-ordinate with them and the Government will decide what to give them; then this officer would be quite enough for this matter. I would like to suggest that, if this is accepted and he is given the duties that the Lands Commission was charged with, then his remuneration should be increased.

I asked why the Chief Community Development Officer's salary was under \$10,080 –

**The Chairman:** We passed that already.

**Mr. Wilson:** In view of the emphasis stressed on Interior development I feel that the officer-in-charge ought to get not less than what the Chief Community Development Officer is getting.

**The Chairman:** Is the hon. Member Mr. Wilson finished? The hon. Member Mr. Stoby.

**Mr. Wilson:** I see that it is \$8,640.

**The Prime Minister:** It is a fixed amount; look at the scale.

**Mr. Wilson:** Why is one more than the other?

**The Chairman:** I think that Mr. Stoby wishes to speak.

**Mr. Stoby:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak on subhead 6.

**The Chairman:** Are you going to go back to that?

**Mr. Stoby:** I wonder if this comes under the general administrative officer in charge of Amerindian Education. I see here the sum of \$14,000 -- [*Interruptions*]

**The Chairman:** Let the hon. Member be heard!

**Mr. Stoby:** \$14,000 is the capital expenditure for Amerindian education. I think that Government is fully aware that Amerindian scholarship had started about five years ago and I wonder whether this Government has it in mind to further the education of these people depending on the results of the Amerindian scholarships. Let us say, for instance, that Government is going to award those scholarships to persons leaving high school. Then that amount would be inadequate having in mind what the Government has in view for Amerindian affairs.

**Mr. Stoby:** Subhead 16, \$1,000,000. We would like to have an explanation. What type of settlement will there be? What kind of people will be allowed to resettle in the Interior areas? Will small communities of Amerindians be shifted to large settlements? There was a lot of speculation as to Government's policy with respect to changing Amerindians from one community to another. I would like to know whether all nationalities will be permitted to resettle in the interior in Amerindian areas in general – a general integration. I would also like to know the position considering that the sum of \$1,000,000 is allocated.

**6.10 p.m.**

**The Prime Minister:** First of all, Mr. Chairman, the hydroelectricity power by 1971, as prophesied by Preece, Cardew & Ryder, is easily said; but one has to identify sites, the potential, and also the use. One has to be sure – not because one can go borrowing an amount of \$132,000, whether it be from foreign companies or international agencies – that there are certain

commitments as to the use of the power which will then give one a proper presentation to persuade the would-be lenders that it would be an economically viable project.

Preece, Cardew & Ryder made certain remarks which were attractive rather than profound, and it was left to the Government to have a detailed engineering study and also a feasibility study. That was done by the Canadian firm of Shawinigan on a UNDP project. That having been done, Government has, at the moment, another UNDP expert who is going through with our officers, the presentation for bargaining with the bauxite companies as to how much power they will take for a smelter or smelters and then approaches will be made.

The access road to the proposed site will pass through a heavily forested area of one billion of merchantable timber. It is not that the Government is tardy but it has taken the first definite steps to put Government in the position to borrow money to proceed with the project, and this is going apace.

Specialist assistance is to cover counterpart staff. For instance, when we have a UNDP team or a team from any international agency, we have to find accommodation, transportation, secretarial staff and sometimes counterpart staff. There are occasions when Guyanese – take for instance like Dr. Grant, a Guyanese who came here for a period of three months to do a particular study on local government, which we have found of great assistance would be paid out of this fund.

The Interim Report of the Amerindian Lands Commission was submitted a few weeks ago and is now being studied by the Government. This is an interim Report which cannot be released until the final report is in. This we expect within the next few months. Government has no control over this Commission, except to urge members of the Commission to deal with the Report as expeditiously as possible. One hon. Member, I think it was Mr. Wilson, contended that in the light of Government's consultative policy towards the Amerindians, there is no need for an Amerindian Lands Commission. Maybe there is wisdom in what Mr. Wilson said but, unfortunately the United Force had written into the Constitution the provision for the appointment of an Amerindian Lands Commission. [*Interruption*]

Now the Commission is more representative than it was before and I made it more representative on the democratic votes of the Amerindians, after they brought to my attention the fact that they did not consider Mrs. Campbell as representative of the Amerindians. I asked them and they told me this: “Mrs. Campbell is not Amerindian and she cannot represent us.” I said, “Very well, choose one of your own.”

The observation was made; I think it was by my hon. Friend Mr. Stoby, that the sum of \$14,000 allocated for Amerindian education is likely to be insufficient. I agree with him. This was out here because this was just removed from the Ministry of Local Government to the Ministry of Economic Development, but the amount allocated under this head has never been the exclusive source of funds for Amerindian education. There has been expenditure from the general education vote. We hope that now that the Interior Department integrated with Economic Development, and now that there is one party responsible for the administration of this country – [Mr. Ram Karran: “God help us.”] – it will be possible to take a national view of education and out of the general education vote make an allocation for work in one area or another. I can assure my hon. Friend Mr. Stoby that if, as he and I think, this sum is inadequate, it will be increased during the course of the year.

Ask the hon. Member Mr. Stoby, “What are the plans for resettlement as envisaged under subhead 16?” Broadly speaking, our interior will have to be resettled by Amerindians and also people from the coast. To get the further details is one of the purposes of appointing a knowledgeable Interior Development Committee on which there are two responsible and leading Amerindians. When this Committee reports, Government will be in a position to publish the White Paper to which my hon. Friend Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud referred.



Let me say that the interior consists not only of areas occupied by Amerindians. It also consists of area completely unoccupied or virtually unoccupied, and therefore not in every case will there have to be a weighing of interests. In any case, let me say this: Government considers that the first claims to resettlement are those held by the Amerindians.

It is interesting to note in answer to the question as to whether there will be integration of coastal settlers with Amerindians that in the Arakaka/Kaituma area, where there is an Amerindian colony, the Amerindians have been amongst those who have sought and have been allocated land on an individual basis, as part of the Government's allocations of land in the area. It is a trend which we hope will continue for, if it continues, it will mean that the integration of Amerindians into the general society with peace, opportunities, advantages, will be accelerated.

**The Chairman:** I will now put the question.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Before you do, I would like to make one observation. It seems to me as if the clock stopped in 1964 in so far as hydroelectricity development is concerned. I thought that the hon. Prime Minister would have read the Report or, at least, got one of his advisers to do so. From these Estimates it is obvious that nothing has been spent under this Head since 1966.

I do advise the hon. Prime Minister and his colleagues to study what has gone before. Preece, Cardew and Ryder had put up a detailed survey of electricity needs in this country on the coast and had offered some suggestions about the power required by the bauxite industry which, at the moment, uses as much electricity as we generate on the coast.

I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned the other day, when we were discussing this thing in a general way, that one Lascelles had come from the United Nations to do some preliminary work on a feasibility survey and that others came here on subjects related to hydroelectricity.

The only conclusion I can come to is that the Government is bitten by the North American bug to discard every report dealing with hydroelectricity power and to go to North America to get advice. We are not discussing this, but everyone can see the situation in the Guyana Electricity Corporation which, instead of moving forward, is going backward. There are

large areas on the coast where this organisation has a franchise and these areas are unable to get electricity. The Government, in its usual spitefulness, or for some other reason, deprives the people who live within the franchise from getting electricity. It is not at all interested in developing electricity in this country.

**The Prime Minister:** I crave your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, because we must not allow these half-truths to pass in Parliament. [*Interruptions*]

**The Chairman:** Please, we must not have interruptions.

**The Prime Minister:** The fact that there was no money against this subhead in previous years means that it was transferred from the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics where it had appeared before. I am not denying that Preece, Cardew and Ryder said that we should exploit hydroelectricity power, but there were no engineering studies. There were no hydrographical studies on the two sites, Tiboku and Tiger Hill. There were no levels taken; there was no road suggested. [*Interruption*]

Does the hon. Member believe that one can fly like a crow and land on a place in the interior and make a hydro dam? The hon. Members want to tell us about Preece, Cardew and Ryder who took them to sea on the Guyana Electricity Project. Is the Opposition suggesting that one can just go to Preece, Cardew and Ryder and borrow \$2 million to start a hydroelectricity dam? That is why when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Trade and was abroad with Renison, that Renison said you cannot get money on “guesstimates.” It seems to me that the tradition of guessing has now become an epidemic in the Opposition.

To suggest to the public that the electrification of the coast is not proceeding is a palpable untruth. There is electricity on West Coast Berbice, Essequibo Coast, East Bank of Berbice and now the East Coast of Berbice is to be started.

If people do not want to pay for electricity do they hope to get freeness? Not from this Government. There are people in the past who have gotten freeness. But if there is an unorganised area which will not undertake to pay for street lighting, must Government be Father Christmas as in Black Bush? I say, No.

**The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan):** I wish to make a correction on what the Prime Minister said that there were no surveys and levels taken. The hon. Prime Minister must be excused but then he must not speak out of turn on things he does not know about. The Tiger Hill project was surveyed by the Demerara Bauxite Company and they turned over all their investigations after they said they were not interested in going ahead with that hydroelectricity project. That is the Preece, Cardew and Ryder Report. I just state this for the information of the Prime Minister. [Mr. Jordan: "We know."] The Prime Minister does not know. He just said there were no levels and no surveys. I am trying to correct him. [Interruption]

**The Chairman:** Please, time is going.

**Dr. Jagan:** That Member is being stupid.

**The Chairman:** You cannot refer to the hon. Member as being stupid. Deal with the subject.

**Dr. Jagan:** The hon. Members on the Government side will not be so uneconomical as to go over and resurvey an area which was done by competent persons already because the kind of people they are hiring are the same kind of people who have done the survey before.

The point I am making is that Preece, Cardew and Ryder said it would be most economical for the Government to tie in the Tiger Hill hydroelectric project with the steam plants; to purchase one, which we did when we bought the Electricity undertaking, and not to proceed with more steam plants, to supplement the one with cheap electricity power Tiger Hill.

We appreciate the point and this was why the P.P.P. Government agreed with the idea of carrying out surveys because it was thinking of industrial purposes beyond domestic lighting. The Government now seems to be indicating that it has no bird in hand in terms of industrial usage for the Tiboku Project, so it may want to consider the point my hon. Friend is making about the development of Tiger Hill because it would then be much cheaper.

We want to know if the Government has any industrial schemes – whether wood pulp, aluminium smelting, and so on – what are the possibilities, and when we are likely to get these. I remember when the hon. Prime Minister was in Canada he said that an aluminium company was

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interested and Mr. Thomas, who was then Minister of Economic Development, contradicted him. Perhaps that was the reason why his head rolled. As the Prime Minister said, God forgives but he does not forgive.

We would like specific information because we do not want to keep buying steam plants. Plants are seen; probably we will hear that they are coming from the U.S.A. and they will have to pay, as industries are now complaining that they are being called upon to pay 25 per cent more on the prices. We are not opposed to taxation. We are talking about unnecessary costs to industry which will make industrialization uneconomical in this country.

*Division VIII, Ministry of Economic Development - \$4,475,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** We shall now suspend the sitting and resumed at 8 o'clock at which time we will deal with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

*Sitting suspended at 6.33 p.m.*

8.04 p.m.

*On resumption --*

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**The Chairman:** When the sitting was suspended this afternoon we had just finished Division VIII, Ministry of Economic Development, and I had announced that upon resumption this evening we will begin consideration of the Estimates of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

#### HEAD 19 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members, will you please indicate what items you wish to speak on?

**Mr. Jagan:** I wish to speak on a number of items.

**The Chairman:** Just tell me what they are so I can make a note.

**Mr. Jagan:** Subhead 1, items 1, 2, 14, 19, 22, and on the following page subheads 9, 13, 14.

**The Chairman:** Let us hear what other hon. Members would like to speak on.

**Mr. Lall:** I should like to speak on subhead 1, items 13 and 14.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I should like to speak on subhead 1, items 1, 20, 21, and subheads 3, 5, 14, 14.

**Mr. Sutton:** I should like to speak on subhead 1, items 1 and 2.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Depending on what hon. Members who have risen before me have to say on page 52, I would prefer to tag along, if Your Honour would allow me. I should like to speak on subheads 5, 9, 12, 14, on page 53.

**The Chairman:** We will make a start. Subhead 1, item 1 – the hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

**Mr. Jagan:** I am rather surprised at the inclusion of the votes for the Chairman and Members of the Elections Commission. It may be convenient to deal with these two items together with subhead 9 – Expenses – Elections Commission. When one looks at the expenses in connection with the Elections Commission, at the expenses in connection with the Elections Commission, one would find that the Government intends to spend a total of \$41,000.

**The Chairman:** Are you thinking of speaking on all three of them together – subhead 1, items 1 and 2, and subhead 9? Yes, I think they can go together; you may combine them.

**Mr. Jagan:** This year the Government intends to spend \$41,000 with respect to the Elections Commission.

**8.10 p.m.**

Your honour, we have seen during the last election that there was some dispute between the Government and the Opposition as to the functions of the elections Commission. Under article 69 (1) of the Constitution –

“The Elections Commission shall have such functions connected with or relating to the registration of electors or the conduct of elections as are conferred upon it by or under this Constitution.”

The registration of voters, as we all know, for the last election was not done under the supervision or control of the Elections Commission. The Commission itself had nothing to do with the conduct of the election. There was some dispute as to the interpretation of article 69 (1) of the Constitution.

We on this side of the House interpreted it to mean that the Elections Commission should have had the right to consider persons who were qualified to be electors and they should also have been entitled to deal with questions of claims and objections of persons entitled to vote at an election. Apart from that, we also found that persons were registered abroad although the Chairman of the Elections Commission had said that he knew nothing about what was happening. Our view was that the Elections Commission should have had a right to deal with all these aspects of registration.

Apart from that, the Elections Commission had nothing to do with the elections. The Government, in our view and in our interpretation of the article, eroded the functions of the Elections Commission. On the other hand, the Government's interpretation of article 69 (1) is that the Elections Commission is just there to see that the registration is done by the Government, that the Government would go ahead and select registrars to do the work. We do not know what are the functions of the Chairman and members of the Elections Commission.

The hon. Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Hoyte) was at one time a member of the Elections Commission and I think he will agree with me that the Elections Commission had nothing whatsoever to do with respect to the registration of voters or with the question as to who were entitled to be electors at the last elections. The Commission had nothing whatsoever to do with the question of selecting persons who were selected eventually as election agents and deputy agents and with persons who were employed at the polling stations.

Mr. Chairman, if the Government's argument is correct, that this Elections Commission does not have any real duty to perform in respect of the election, we on this side of the House feel that this is a waste of the taxpayers' money to pay the Chairman the sum of \$1,000 a month and members of the Commission, \$250 a month. Apart from that, as I said, there is an extra \$20,000 with respect to the expenses of the Elections Commission. The provision dealing with the payment of the Elections Commission is contained in article 68 (1) of the Constitution. I remember when I dealt with this question during the budget debate, the hon. Prime Minister asked whether the Constitution makes provision that there should be an Elections Commission should not be appointed. If the Commission's duty is that as the Government contends, then we contend that the Government should go out of office three months after the last General Election.

My interpretation of article 68 (1) is that there should be an Elections Commission and it should not be appointed within three months of the last election but nothing is said therein that the Government is forced to appoint the Elections Commission at the expiration of the three months. My submission is there would not be in the near foreseeable future any duty for the Election's Commission to perform. There should not be a General Election until five years from the last General Election unless the Government thinks fit to resign and call another General Election. Knowing the members of the Government, I do not see that they would like to do that but in fact, they might try to extend the period of their time.

That being apart, can the Minister tell us what would be the duty of the Elections Commission say within this year? It is not like a boundaries commission, which has the duty of deciding on shifting boundaries where a country is divided into constituencies. We do not have constituencies and therefore I can see no necessity for the reappointment of the Chairman and members of the Elections Commission immediately, since I do not foresee any work that they would have to do within the next few years.

**The Chairman:** Dealing with item (1) subhead 1, there were two other Members who indicated a desire to speak on this.

**Mr. Sutton:** In view of all the circumstances it is impossible for this item to be considered in the estimates with honour. Once again we are registering our disapproval of the functions of the Elections Commission with particular reference to the last election. Notwithstanding we are told that we are throwing water on duck's back when we refer to the rigging of the last elections, and notwithstanding that we are told no matter how much we talk about it it is a *fait accompli* and there is nothing we can do about it, though that may be so, it is fit and proper, in order to vindicate the character of the majority of people in this country, to express our disapproval and abhorrence of the manner in which the powers of the Elections Commission were ignored by the Government in order to serve its own purposes and arrange a result which nobody in this country could think would have been possible in the area and atmosphere of honesty which we have all been accustomed to enjoy.

**8.20 p.m.**

These facts, as I said on another occasion, are unpleasant. Some of us do not like to hear them; some of us will have to continue hearing them for a long time. In view of the fact that the world must understand that the majority of people in this country abhor the way this place is run, we will have to keep talking about it for a long time before that fact is forgotten. I will repeat once again what is repeated over and over again from the Constitution. I quote from Article 69 (1):

“69. (1) The Elections Commission shall have such functions connected with or relating to the registration of electors or the conduct of elections as are conferred upon it by or under this Constitution or, subject thereto, any Act of Parliament: and, subject to the provisions of this

Constitution, the Commission –

(a) shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors and the administrative conduct of elections; and

(b) shall issue such instructions and take such action as appear to it necessary or expedient to ensure impartiality, fairness and compliance with the provisions of this Constitution or of any Act of Parliament on the part of persons exercising powers or performing duties connected with or relating to the matters aforesaid.”



It is abundantly clear, notwithstanding what anyone else would say as to what the average citizen of this country bases his hopes upon, that no matter what any Government may want to do or attempts to do, they are supposed to have an impartial elections commission which is expected to be the protection of the systems of elections and to ensure that such elections are fair and impartial. I was not singular in hearing in this House a letter written by the Chairman of the Elections Commission disowning anything, up to that point, regarding overseas registration.

The Constitution states that the Elections Commission must be responsible and satisfied about the propriety of the arrangement of the electoral registrars wherever constituted. In addition to that we find that in the year immediately after elections, bearing in mind that the Government intends to be with us for a long time, there is no need for an Elections Commission. We have heard the reason given as the revision of voters' lists. I wonder if the Elections Commission will bring themselves to enter into the voters' lists and find that it is false, what regrets would anyone have? This is a clause entrenched in the Constitution and they can put it in order or leave it there.

They must do this so that the persons on the Elections Commission can keep the money; be paid for doing nothing. When they should have done something they did nothing; they failed to exercise their right which people expected of them to see that elections were impartially conducted.

In the circumstances, we cannot but register our disapproval of this state of affairs and sincerely hope that, in time, right will prevail and the impartiality of the Elections Commission will be preserved, and everyone will be proud and the money voted for the operation of the Elections Commission will be voted honourably without any sense of smell of a Commission which has served no useful purpose in this country up to now.

We feel that the total sum of \$41,000 which is divided between subhead 1, items 1 and 2 and subhead 9 is regrettable and is a waste which has to be borne by the people of this country. If it is contemplated that the work of the Elections Commission will be subverted, and I am sure

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that the question of including and entrenching the responsibilities in the Constitution would not been considered, I have no doubt that this Government will find out in time that anything come by dishonestly will not last. They will not have the people behind them. I sincerely hope that the situation will not be allowed to continue and the opportunity will be taken to see that the Commission functions as it should.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 1, item 1.

**The Chairman:** In view of the statement made by the hon. Member, Mr. Sutton, let me point out for the attention of the Members that, of the \$41,000 to which reference has been made, only \$21,000 comes within the ambit tonight.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** May I continue on subhead 1, item 1?

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** The principle of having an election commission is that all Guyanese felt that the Elections Commission would look after their interests in the conducting of elections in Guyana and in ensuring that the Constitution is preserved and that any Government elected in power would be fairly elected. But we have seen that the Elections Commission was appointed according to the Constitution and members were unable to perform their duties because of the fact that certain persons in the Government usurped the powers of the Elections Commission. Now, one wonders if the Government has been pushing its nose into all the other commissions formulated. No one can tell whether the Elections Commission will be given the opportunity to function properly seeing that their duties were taken away by certain Ministers of the Government.

8.30 p.m.

The appointment of registration officers was done by the Minister of Home Affairs without the consultation of the Elections Commissions. The members of this Commission had no

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opportunity to give their opinions as to the persons whom they feel should be registration officers.

There is also the question of overseas voting. The Minister himself also appointed persons as registration officers without the consultation of the Elections Commission. The whole election machinery was manipulated by certain Ministers of this Government and the chief rigger, the ex-Minister of Home Affairs, is not here. We have another gentleman – I do not know what part he played in the rigging but I hope that he would be in a position to ensure that –

**The Chairman:** Before the hon. Member goes any further, I would like to point out that there is no objection to the hon. Member referring to the rigging of the Elections; but it is not right for an hon. Member to single out any particular Minister to say that he is the chief rigger.

[**Hon. Members:** “Apologise.”]

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I wish to apologise and I withdraw that statement.

**The Chairman:** It is noted.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** It is universally accepted in this period of our country's history. I feel that although the appointment of the Elections Commission is by law, it is established that this Commission would be unable to function, as embodied in our Constitution. I therefore strongly urge that this Commission be scrapped because it does not seem that this Commission would ever have the opportunity to function properly in this country, or even the right to function.

**The Chairman:** May we deal with item 13 now?

**Mr. Jagan:** Item 14.

**The Chairman:** There were two Members who said they wish to speak on 13. Wasn't it you Mr. Jagan, or was it Mr. Lall?

**Mr. Lall:** I wish to speak on item 14. I notice that a new post of Stock Verifier has been created. I wonder why this is so when there are three Principal Assistant Secretaries, two Administrative Assistants, two Assistant Accountants and there are a number of other responsible individuals in this Ministry. Why is it there is no need for a Stock Verifier when this Ministry is dealing with the law of this country. Is there a leakage? Could the Minister please explain?

**The Chairman:** The hon. Minister will reply. We will move on now to item 19.

**Mr. Jagan:** In 1967, the Government spent \$3,223; in 1968, the approved estimates was \$2,400 but the actual revised estimates for 1968 was \$2,763. Here, again, we see there is need for two more watchmen. May I ask the Minister, if in 1966, in 1967, and in 1968, the Government spent more than \$2,400, why it is that the Government is now asking for only \$2,400?

May I be permitted to deal with item 22 at the same time? Normally, if the Government was spending this extra sum for overtime, I could understand. I notice that there is a separate item dealing with overtime, but I think that overtime should be added to item 19; maybe the Minister could give an explanation.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I would like to ask the hon. Minister for an explanation regarding items 20 and 21.

**The Chairman:** Could we ask the hon. Minister to reply now seeing that all the questions are on this page?

**The Minister of Home Affairs:** (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, the comments on subhead 1 – items 1 and 2 are mainly repetitions. I would suggest to honourable Members that repetition is not a touchstone which converts irrelevance into pertinent comment. The crux of the matter is that most hon. Members do not seem to understand that the provisions 1 and 2 are really statutory provisions. There is no question of not providing them unless hon. Members on the other side of this House are prepared to move a Motion to amend article 68 of the Constitution which provides for the establishment of an Elections Commission. It is not within the competence of the Government, unless there is an amendment to that particular article not to provide for the chairman and members of the Elections Commission.

Indeed, it has been suggested that the Elections Commission is serving no useful purpose. I find this rather astonishing, because in 1967 when the General Secretary of the party to which the majority of the members on the opposite side belong was appointed, the same allegation was made.

**8.40 p.m.**

She made headlines by saying she was not prepared to accept the salary which was voted for her because she had nothing to do. At that time the salary due, owing and payable to members of the Commission was well over \$1,000. Suffice it to say that when the good lady crept into the Ministry of Home Affairs and uplifted that money there were no headlines. I am forced to the inevitable conclusion that at that stage she discovered that the Elections Commission was doing work and that she, the labourer, was worthy of her hire.

My hon. and learned Friend, Mr. Derek Jagan, enquired what were the duties of the Elections Commission. I would think that this question was largely rhetorical because he himself referred to the relevant article of the Constitution – I believe it is article 69 – and he then proceeded to give us his interpretation of the meaning of article 69.

At this stage I would say there has been a lot of comment, which to my mind should not really have been made, at least as we lawyers understand the position, because this matter as to the meaning of article 69 is at present *sub judice* in two matters, Petrie et al. against Jackson and Persaud et al against Jackson and others, which are engaging the attention of the High Court. I would not encourage or indulge in references to matters which are *sub judice*.

**The Chairman:** May I interrupt the hon. Minister at this point to say that I agree fully that if a matter is *sub judice* it should not be discussed here or anywhere. The Chairman is in no position to know that matters are *sub judice* unless it is brought to his attention.

**Mr. Jagan:** My understanding of the Standing Order is that even if a matter is *sub judice* it should not be discussed here or anywhere. The Chairman is in no position to know that matters are *sub judice* unless it is brought to his attention.

**Mr. Hoyte:** I knew that my hon. and learned Friend Mr. Jagan knew what the position was and I left it to his judgment as an hon. Member of the House; but I would break a lance with him on his interpretation of article 69 because I think it is made abundantly clear in paragraph (4) of article 66 that Parliament has the right to make provision for the for the registration of electors and the manner in which lists of candidates shall be prepared and entered for an election.

There is no question of the Elections Commission exercising any function as a legislative body. I do not propose to dwell on that because the matter is before the Courts and what is more, in the interlocutory proceedings, in the matter of Petrie et al against Jackson et al, the learned Chief Justice had cause to advert to the meaning and significance of article 69. I believe he gave an interpretation which is at variance with that propounded by my hon. and learned Friend Mr. Jagan and that propounded by the hon. Member Mr. Sutton. I would say, in passing, that I would prefer to be wrong with the hon. Chief Justice than to be right on a matter of law with my hon. Friend Mr. Sutton until I am satisfied as to the Inns of Court from which he has emerged.

I would also say in passing – my hon. and learned Friend Mr. Jagan did allude to the fact that I had been for some time a member of the Elections Commission – that at all material times when I was a member of that Commission the representative of the United Force never expressed any dissatisfaction with the conduct of the registration for elections or with the manner of the preparation of the electoral roll. Indeed, in this honourable House, Mr. Hilbert Spence, who had been my colleague on that Commission, defended the role of the Elections Commission. Up to November 1968, when I resigned from that Commission, there was no word of criticism – indeed; there was active commendation of the role of that Commission from the person who succeeded him. Between November and December how that goodly gentleman came to a somersault is something which I cannot explain, and he has not seen it fit to explain.

I cannot understand the allegation that the Elections Commission was by-passed and that its power were eroded. In the National Registration Act of 1967 in section 16 thereof, specific provision is made conferring upon the Elections Commission the right to have supervision of the preparation of the registration roll in so far as registrants therein may be qualified as electors to the National Assembly; and that particular provision is also enshrined in the Representation of the People (Adaptation and Modification) Act, 1968. Therefore, in all the relevant legislation which impinges upon elections, you will find that the constitutional powers, the rights, the privileges of the Elections Commission are fully honoured and enshrined.

I find it difficult to understand how hon. Members can say that the Elections Commission was by-passed. I do not think it necessary to labour this point any further and I do not propose to do so.

The hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall was querulous of item (14), subhead 1, a new post of Stock Verifier. That is quite simply explained. The spot was recommended by the Public Service Ministry. I think that hon. Members will understand and appreciate that one of the functions of the Public Service Ministry is to examine the structure of various Ministries with a view to streamlining that structure and making it more efficient. Very often you will find that

the Public Service Ministry recommends that posts be created or that posts be abolished or that persons be transferred in the interest of efficiency. In other words, it is a two-way process. Some Departments may well be over-staffed and some under-staffed. In some Departments, it may well be that the deployment of personnel is not in the best interest of the efficient functioning of the Ministry, and so it is in regard to item (14). The Public Service Ministry, having had a look at the structure of the Ministry of Home Affairs, recommended that the Field Auditor should be assisted in his functions.

**8.50 p.m.**

The Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for this Department, and the Field Auditor has the duty of servicing this Department, checking on stock; and he alone cannot efficiently discharge such onerous functions. I think hon. Members will know that one of the great sources of loss in Government departments comes from pilfering, bad stock-keeping, and things of that sort. It is in the interest of good and efficient Government that there should be an officer who keeps a very close watch on stock and be in a position to prevent what the hon. Minister of Finance may well call "unauthorized borrowing." It is in deference to these considerations that it has been recommended that there should be this new post of Stock Verifier. He does what his name suggests, he checks on stock, he verifies and makes sure that the stock is there.

My hon. and learned Friend Mr. Jaganraised a query on item 19. Again, that is very simply explained. In the course of a year, a regular watchman sometimes becomes ill and it is necessary to employ a temporary watchman in his place, so you find that you have to pay two sets of wages. We do not withhold the wages of a man if he is ill. You will find that, over and above the figure which is approved there may be payments which have become necessary because of contingent circumstances such as I have explained. There is not much in that.



With respect to item 20, that is a token provision which frequently appears in these Estimates and which I believe my hon. Friend Mr. Balchand Persaud will understand when he has had a little more experience in dealing with Estimates in Government.

**Dr. Jagan:** The hon. Minister, in trying to defend the work of the Elections Commission, certainly has given this House the wrong impression of what was done. He knows, as one of the early Members of the Commission, that for many months the Chairman and the other Members of the Commission were merely twiddling their thumbs doing very little, not that they did not want to do something but they were not allowed to do what they were supposed to do by law. The Minister knows about this. He has seen the letter which the Chairman wrote to the Minister complaining that, in the early stages, the Commission was not allowed to participate in the compilation of the voters' list. He knows that the then Minister told the Chairman that the Commission will function when the elections legislation empowering them to operate was passed. He knows all of this.

He knows also that the Chairman and the P.N.C. Member voted on one side and the U.F. Member and the P.P.P. Member voted on the other side to have the list revised. [**Mr. Hoyte:** "Not in my time."] But you know about that. The Chairman used his casting vote to prevent this from being done. Everyone knows that the list was corrupt. It contained the names of dead people, people who were underage, and many others who did not even exist.

If the Commission is working so well, why has the Chairman of the Commission refused to make available to another Member of the Commission the proxy list which was supposed to be made available and published four days before voting day? Why tell us that we have to vote money that this is a statutory body and it has statutory functions, etc? This is all to fool the world. The reality is that this Commission was not allowed to function in the early stages when the Chairman wanted it to function and later on he was muzzled.

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This Government operates on the basis of coercion and bribery. Those whom it cannot bribe it pushes with bayonet, it pushes them against the wall, and others they bribe with \$1,000 per month. We had a vase this afternoon --

**The Chairman:** I do not think the hon. Leader of the Opposition could be allowed to make that statement because it is a clear inference to the salary of the Chairman of the Elections Commission. This is a salary which cannot be considered in this House as a bribe. I ask the Leader of the Opposition not to pursue that.

**Dr. Jagan:** I would not use that word but we have to call a spade a spade in this country and stop beating around the bush because people in high places are being corrupted today and, had it not been for these big salaries, it is likely that these people would behave morally, justly, according to the positions in which they are put. This is why these big sums of money are voted.

This afternoon I had to refer to another case where, in reference to the Public Service Commission, I was told that the minute the person to whom I referred to this afternoon was registered by the Medical Board, she would get employment. The Deputy Chairman was there. The Deputy Chairman went all over the world looking for doctors. He even went to South Korea to bring second-class doctors here.

**The Chairman:** Let us get back to the subject

**Dr. Jagan:** They are quack politicians. Let us assess if these are statutory positions, if these are constitutional positions. Let us find out whether the salary being paid is commensurate with the job that is being done. This year and the coming year there will be no elections. What will be the job of the Commission? Does this job of the Chairman deserve a salary of \$1,000 per month and the other Member \$250 per month?

[*Interruption*] Yes, and for your information, it is given to the party, the P.P.P., of which she is General Secretary. It is not used for corrupt purposes.

As I said this afternoon, let us dispense with all the paraphernalia which goes with the pretence of respecting the Constitution and at the same time save the taxpayers the money. If the Government wants to run all the things as it is doing on orders from the Prime Minister's Office and indirect orders from other Ministers, then everybody will know exactly how the country is run. We are not fooling anybody. We do not see that it is necessary to spend this amount of money for functions which are not very large, for work which does not take too much time. Consequently, we feel that the Government should reconsider the salaries attached to these posts because, as I have said already, big salaries tend to corrupt people in this country, especially people in these big positions.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I wish to observe here that we had an explanation earlier on the very extensive telephone bills, but this one, as you will notice, is an increase of \$66,000 and all the explanation we have is, "Ditto." I think that this House ought to be treated with a little more respect and I think it is a little bit of "eye pass" for the Minister to come here and tell us "ditto." All the way through we see, "Previous provision inadequate." This is not an explanation for people who have to foot the bill. Some explanation is required. The hon. Minister got up and said in reply to a query on Stock Verifier, "The Public Service Ministry has put the post there and therefore it is there." We do not want that sort of explanation. I hope the hon. Minister has studied the subject and is in a position to say why it is there. Expenses – Elections Commission, \$20,000 –

**The Chairman:** We have dealt with that as we were dealing with the others.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Subheads 9 and 13 seem to be related.

**The Chairman:** Mr. Balchand Persaud.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** The point I wished to make has already been made.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Expenses – Elections Commission, \$20,000 and National Elections, \$50,000. Will the hon. Minister kindly explain what is the difference between these two and why is it, this year, 1969, when there are no elections, we have a different system from any other country? We are not going to have a little fun with by-elections. We have it cut and dried. Why is it we are going to have this huge expenditure for National Elections?

May I refer to subhead 12 and observe the legend which states, “To provide for celebrations at the Embassy in Caracas.” I thought this country was on the verge of breaking off relations with the Venezuelan Government, having regard to the treacherous behaviour of that Government toward our territorial integrity. This subhead 12 is intended to increase it by \$1,000 to provide for celebrations at the Embassy in Caracas. I said earlier that the people who ought to be hanged for the sell-out are all sitting in the front Bench of the Government, first for creating the Geneva Agreement and all the way through for the trouble that has arisen with Venezuela.

Tonight we see on page 53 of the estimates, more evidence of the infidelity of the people who govern. National Registration is a scandal in this country. Only this afternoon, a United Force member, Mrs. Da Silva, read from a letter where someone was told to go to take new photographs. Going through the Head of the estimates and going through the capital estimates, we note that \$1,822,887 has been voted for the national registration of our citizens. If we should divide that by the number of people resident in this country, it would be very simple for one to ascertain the cost of registration of each person in Guyana. It is a very shocking situation.

One final question I should like to ask is, when is this circus going to end? When are all the people in this country going to be registered? I went to the polling station on the day of polling and I was shown a card, presumably an identification card, which had a picture of

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someone looking like me, but no sooner was it shown to me than it was snatched back by the person and I was told to go and exercise the franchise. For what reason, I tried to ascertain, was this identification card taken back when the majority of identification cards for that division were proffered. Why is it the Government refrained from delivering the cards to the people? I daresay, the Government had to remove the cards of those who were dead and those who were not twenty-one, and it was for that reason those cards were not delivered to the people.

9.10 p.m.

This whole thing is a masquerade; it is a masquerade of deceit and records in the most graphic manner the decision of this Government not to be up-to-date and not to be right.

**The Chairman:** Does any other hon. Member wish to speak on item 13 and 14?

**Mr. Yacoob Ally:** I would like to speak on item 12, Independence Anniversary Celebrations.

**The Chairman:** Please do not repeat the same points.

**Mr. Yacoob Ally:** One could remember quite well that in 1967 the Prime Minister said - and the nation should be told, as my colleagues said before, what the true position of this Government is - he said: "Not a blade of grass"; we have found not only the blade of grass but the whole island of Ankoko was lost.

For celebrations in 1967 we spent about \$7,000; today we find that relations with Venezuela and this puppet Government are bad and yet they are calling for \$14,500 for celebrations in Caracas. What are they celebrating? Are they celebrating the giving away of Ankoko or the event which occurred in the Rupununi? It leaves one to wonder. We had the

opportunity to tell the United Nations that Venezuela had taken away our land. But this Government remained quiet. There was opportunity to tell other bodies such as the United Kingdom Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference that people are taking advantage of our Nation; but instead of that, this Government is prepared to wine and dine with these people who once told us that they would take away our land. Why fool the people that taxes must be laid down to prepare for invasion yet going back and entertaining in Caracas?

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subhead 14. I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Home Affairs if he can give us the figures with respect to the money spent on National Registration of Guyanese.

**The Chairman:** I think that the hon. Minister may now reply.

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Hoyte):** The hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran queried the subhead about telephones. I think that the Prime Minister has already given an explanation of these items, telephones, which appear under various heads; that explanation I will repeat for the benefit of hon. Members who did not understand. With the coming into being of the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation, the various Government Ministries and Departments, which prior to the establishment of this Corporation were provided with free telephones and telephone services, have to pay their own bills. When you look at the Departments under the Ministry of Home Affairs alone, it is obvious that the use of telephones is pretty extensive. So I do not think that the hon. Member is serious when he challenges that subhead.

With regard to subhead 12, I would point out that there seems to be a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding over the question of the Independence Celebrations. In all embassies all over the world, Independence Day or the national day of the guest country is

celebrated. It is not a celebration for the members of the host country; it is a celebration primarily in the interest of the particular country whose independence or national day is being celebrated. It is a celebration to which members of the diplomatic corps are invited. Perhaps when hon. Members understand the nature of independence celebrations abroad, we will stop getting this type of niggling and wholly irrelevant questioning.

With regard to subhead 13, the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran questioned the provision of the sum of \$50,000. Again there have been expenses, bills from the last elections exercise, which have not been paid. They have come forward to the new financial year and provision has to be made for meeting those bills as and when they come.

Subhead 14 – there was some question as to that provision and again the answer is quite simple. National Registration is conceived as a continuous process. If hon. Members would remove from their eyes the scales that blind them, they would realise that National Registration is not directed primarily to elections, but is a system that will continue from year to year providing information which is popularly called vital statistics; this information which is popularly called vital statistics; this information will feed a large number of services that require data. Already requests have been made by the Minister of Labour and by the Statistical Bureau, for information which has been gleaned from the last exercises and this has been filtered to these departments to be used by them in the particular field of investigation for which they were required. I find it difficult to understand what the quarrel really is.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Since the hon. Minister is in a position to know how much money is owed for last year's National Election, we would like to know what was the total expenditure for the expenses incurred.

The question with respect to subhead 14 was not answered.

*Head 19, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$621,806, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## HEAD 20 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

### POLICE

*Question proposed that this Head stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Mr. Chairman, the hon. Minister tells us –

**The Chairman:** Please identify the subhead number.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I want to know if all the positions have been filled under the Fixed Establishment. There are several petitions involving various positions in the Police Force; then I want to speak generally on this question of Police.

**9.20 p.m.**

**The Chairman:** Would any other Member like to speak on any particular item or items?

**Mr. Teekah:** Subhead 12 and 19 on page 55.

**Mr. Jagan:** I would like to speak on subhead 18 and I would also like to speak generally as well.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** There are so many juicy ones.

**The Chairman:** I would like to point out that we had allocated thirty minutes for the last one and we took seventy minutes.



**Mr. Ram Karran:** I should like to deal with items on page 56 and also to make some general comments and perhaps as the hon. –

**The Chairman:** Could you just tell me what are the items on page 56?

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Subhead 35: Road Traffic Education and subhead 36: Maintenance of Traffic Lights and Road Signs.

**The Chairman:** Let us start on page 54.

**Mr. Wilson** *rose* --

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Subheads 33, 36, and 43.

**Mr. Wilson:** Page 55, subheads 10 and 23. Page 56, subheads 35 and 36.

**Mr. Sutton:** Subhead 19.

**The Chairman:** Those hon. Members who would like to make general comments, let them deal with that first.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** The sum of over \$7,000,000 – the population of this country of about 700,000 are paying roughly \$10 per head per year for protection. I think the hon. Minister in making that division, will like myself, come to the conclusion that this is a very high sum for citizens to pay and to be treated in the manner in which we are choked and robbed or to be attacked with cutlasses and slaughtered on the roads and generally for this huge sum of money to be spent.

Some time ago, about a few years ago, all the Awards, barring one, from Her Majesty the Queen, were won by the then British Guiana Police Force. Out of twenty-one, I think twenty were won the Q.P.M. being grabbed by the then Commissioner. Recently, over the past few years with the appointment of a Guyanese Head of the Force we have been treated with a great deal of what one would perhaps term as entertainment of on-the-spot promotion. Never before in the history of the Force have we ever heard of so many on-the-spot promotions. A few years ago one would come across an item – [*Interruption*] – in the newspapers where the Commissioner visiting some country stations will recognise an officer carrying himself in a proper manner and answering questions intelligently who will probably receive a stripe or perhaps a first-class. The interpretations of the people who are knowledgeable in this department are definitely of the view that there is lack of morale in the Force and that has caused dissatisfaction in the Force and what has forced the political Government to adopt these techniques to bring some measure of satisfaction among those people who are leaving the Force by the hundreds today.

I do hope that the hon. Minister – he has his advisers – will be in a position to remove those fears from the minds of those of us who have the feeling that all is not well in the \$7 million Police Force. It is hoped that the Guyanese people particularly those in the countryside and the city who have to be on their way late in the evenings and those who have business places will be free from the menace of the choke and rob men and the cutlass wielders.

My other observation is that it is a waste of time and taxpayers' money for individuals, other than the Head of State, to be accompanied when going around by out-riders. There can be no justification for this. I mention one instance of an individual who is now Minister of Works and Hydraulics. He was at that time General Secretary of the party. When I was in Essequibo he passed me with two out-riders. I feel that this is being overdone. Apart from the noise and the nuisance he has created to the traffic and public, I think that this practice should be brought to a halt. Things such as these should only be for a Head of State and not for the ordinary man –

politicians like us. I am sure that the Commissioner of Police and the members of his staff are fed up with this sort of thing.

9.30 p.m.

The hon. Minister of Home Affairs must call a halt to this sort of rubbish that goes on.

**Mr. Jagan:** Mr. Chairman, the Attorney-General some time ago made great play about the International Commission of Jurists. If I remember correctly that Commission recommended the proportion in which people should be recruited to the Police Force according to ethnic grouping. I have seen that there are quite a number of new posts to be created. First of all, I wish to find out from my learned Friend the hon. Minister whether in the past the Government carried out the recommendation of the International Commission of Jurists and whether Government will also take those recommendations into account when the new batch of persons are to be recruited.

I hope also that my learned and hon. Friend will advise his Police Force as to some of their duties in respect of the rights of citizens. A few months ago we saw that persons were arrested, kept for nearly 24 hours, released and, as soon as they got to the street, rearrested, kept for another 24 hours and so on. In one case the person was detained for over 3 or 4 days and when the Police heard that *habeas corpus* proceedings were about to be launched they said, "Don't worry to institute proceedings, we have decided to release him."

Surely the Police are abusing their powers in arresting people on the pretence that a crime has been committed and then, when they are threatened with litigation, they decide to release such persons? We have no objection, if a person has committed an offence that he should be charged and prosecuted, but we do not think that people should be persecuted because they belong to a particular political party.

During the debate on the Miscellaneous Enactments (Amendment) Bill a few weeks ago, some members of the People's Progressive Party were arrested on the very minor charge of

disorderly behaviour. Those persons were taken to the Police Station, Brickdam, where their photographs were taken on three occasions. They were refused bail, and taken to Court on the following morning handcuffed. The Senior Superintendent of Police, in giving evidence on these matters, said that during his long period in the Force his experience was that no photograph was ever taken of anyone who was charged with the minor offence of disorderly behaviour. There was no question that these persons were violent during the morning when they were taken to the Court and therefore were required to be handcuffed. This should not be done to persons because they belong to a political party; the Police should consider the offence for which people are charged and should treat them as citizens regardless of what particular party they belong to.

One other item I wish to refer to: A few weeks ago I had referred to the question that citizens cannot sue the Government where a tort has been committed by the Government. The hon. Prime Minister said he was quite aware of the drawbacks of private citizens and Government would try to rectify this as soon as an opportunity was available because the Law Officers are now tied up with preparation of other legislation. Until the position is rectified so that a private citizen can sue the Government on a question of tort, where a tort has been committed, I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Home Affairs would not consider it advisable to recommend to the Government that when police vehicles are involved in accidents and private citizens are injured or killed, then the Government should try to compensate the person who was injured or the dependants of the deceased who died as a result of the accident.

The practice right now is that one has to go to the Attorney-General's Chambers and negotiate a settlement with the Officers and the person has to accept whatever the Attorney-General's Chambers offers regardless of the amount that would have been rewarded in a Court of law.

In view of the fact that Government vehicles are not insured and therefore a private citizen, who is injured as a result of an accident involving a Government vehicle, cannot be compensated – we have seen lately that quite a number of persons have been injured by Police

vehicles – the Government should undertake to compensate these people. Also, if the person takes the servant of the Crown to Court and judgement is awarded against the servant of the Crown, does Government not consider it advisable and equitable that it should indemnify the servant of the Crown so that the injured person does not lose anything? Those are the main general points.

**The Chairman:** I think there was one other hon. Member who wished to make a general comment.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** The Police Force in any country is an important institution. I wish to support the hon. Member Mr. Derek Jagan on the question of trying to implement the recommendations of the I.C.J. Report.

There was a release to the Press to the effect that there is need to expand the Police Force. I want to urge upon the Government that, in this expansion, efforts be made to have a balanced Force.

It is important for the Police of a country to have confidence in the Security Forces for if there is no confidence in the Security Forces this will tend to create fear among the population of the country.

On the question of promotion, whether on-the-spot or otherwise, I do not say that the people who have been promoted should not have been promoted, but what I am saying is this: There are a large number of members of the Police Force who should be promoted and are not given consideration.

Some time ago I had cause to refer to a specific matter where the individual was highly qualified and no one would deny this. I do not lay the blame entirely at the feet of the present Commissioner of Police because it took a long time before the Commissioner was appointed; the Government could not decide whom it should appoint as Commissioner of Police, but the point I

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wish to make is that at the present moment there is serious dissatisfaction felt by members of the Police Force, the ordinary policemen as well as inspectors, officers and so on. We are being spoken to, as Members of Parliament, when there is dissatisfaction among members of the Police Force.

9.40 p.m.

I may say that many of the complaints received from ordinary policemen, as well as inspectors and officers, are justified. I feel that the Minister should ensure that, in future promotions, particularly on the question of on-the-spot promotions, the Commissioner of Police should extend his sight so that he could see throughout the whole Police Force and promote who should be promoted.

So far as the present crime wave is concerned, almost every responsible citizen in this country has spoken against it. I remember that, some time ago, a release was issued by the police to the effect that the master mind behind the knife robberies was known, that there was a dragnet out to get this man and, as soon as he was caught, this particular new phase in crime would come to an end. Since that report, there has not been any subsequent report from the police as to whether the master mind was caught or whether he is still at large.

Further, within recent months, people in this country are prevented from walking on the streets, they are being choked and robbed. There were cases where several people from the country were robbed, particularly while going to the hospital and railway station. Many of those cases are not reported to the police because after an individual from the country is beaten and deprived of his possessions, the first thing he or she seeks to do is to catch the ferry or the train and get back home. It is known in this country that if you should walk on the streets without money, you are beaten and told, "Try and get money or else you will get a double beating" so to prevent a second beating from the robbers, some people go home and do not report the incident to the police.

In the *Evening Post* of Monday, March 17, the Commissioner of Police stated that he is going to take serious action against those people who have been walking into business premises armed with cutlasses and robbing the owners of these premises, including people who attend these premises. In the case of the “Rainbow Terrace” restaurant – I think it is a Middleton Street, Campbellville – I am told that not only were the owners robbed but the people who were in the restaurant at the time were attacked by the robbers and told to hand over their possessions. A civil servant who was present at the time spoke to me about the incident and told me he was terrified by the armed robbery.

The question of crime in our country has reached the worst position. I cannot recall during my time the position being more serious than it is today. This is no laughing matter; this is a matter on which every member of the Government, and particularly Cabinet Ministers, should take a serious view and call upon all the citizen of this land to join hands with the security forces to prevent this cancer of violent robberies being committed day after day. Despite the fact that there was a release by the police to the effect that action is going to be taken, crime continues to go on and the criminals attack premises and individuals all the time.

It started a long time ago. My one criticism is that serious action will be taken too late. A man went into a drug store to purchase something and he was attacked. For nearly three months several incidents have been reported in the newspapers. The Commission will now take action to stop criminals from roaming the streets threatening, assaulting and injuring people. This action is commendable but I say that it should have been taken a long time ago. Several persons have not only lost their possessions but have been injured by bandits roaming the streets with weapons. The time has come for experts from the Police Force to be put into action so that the population of this country can live and exist in peace.

In view of this serious situation, can the Government still continue to say that there is peace in this country, when residents cannot sleep in peace in their homes, when at night people

are forced to close all their windows and sleep under very difficult conditions? The City of Georgetown is very hot, people cannot afford to buy fans and they have to close their windows before they go to sleep. I therefore hope that the Commissioner of Police will not only issue a statement but will indeed take every possible step to ensure that this new cancer of armed robberies will come to a speedy and almost immediate end.

**The Chairman:** I think you have belaboured that point very well and it is taken.

**Mr. R.D Persaud:** This is a new point. I want to say that there are policemen who are not only discourteous but who are indeed ignorant of their powers under the law. This is a matter concerning traffic. I was proceeding north along the La Penitence Public Road. On Saturdays you cannot continue on the Albouystown Public Road, you have to turn right or left going through by Toolsie Persaud Sawmill. I wanted to turn right. I knew that I could because there was no “No Entry” sign but the policeman insisted that I turn left. I said, “No, there is no sign to prevent me from turning right.” He said, “Look, do not tell me stupidity.” There was a serious traffic jam. I was about the sixth or seventh car in the line. I had to get out and tell the people that if the policeman is acting like that we should turn left and get out of the place. Surely, policemen on the street should act differently with people.

There is need in the Police Force not only for training abroad but for policemen to be trained as to what is their right under the law. They should be given special courses on how to treat members of the public. If a policeman speaks nicely to an individual he can get him to do almost anything, but if he comes in a harsh way and says, “Look, remove this car and get away from here,” the individual will refuse to remove the car.

Finally, I see that many Ministers have two watchmen but members of the public do not have watchmen.



With respect to police vehicles not being insured, it is a serious matter –

**The Chairman:** Mr. Derek Jagan made that point. We cannot have a repetition.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Under Chapter 281, it is compulsory for owners of motor vehicles to take out insurance, third party insurance at least, but the police does not take out.

**The Chairman:** We have ten minutes more. May we deal with general items? The first subhead is 10.

**Mr. Wilson:** Prisoners' Rations. It should be known that a person under arrest is not necessarily guilty. He should be presumed innocent until he has passed through the court, but we find that prisoners in police custody are not given proper food and many persons have complained about the bad quality of the food they receive. Stale biscuits and bread, sometimes salmon. We think that proper provision should be made in relation to the prisoners' rations. As a matter of fact, they should be given proper food when they are convicted.

With regard to this matter of passports, we find that many persons are being denied passports in order to leave the country. We have cases of persons applying for passports five or six months ago but they are not given any reason for being denied them. They are just being pushed around. This is a denial of the persons' right to travel out of the country. They are denied their fundamental right of travelling in a normal manner.

**9.50 p.m.**

**Mr. Teekah:** Subhead 12, Maintenance and operation of Air, Land and Water Transport, and the sum of \$240,000 is to be put to this subhead. Certainly the means of transport in the Police Force ought to be properly maintained and we do not have anything against the proper use

of the means of transport. The means of transport of the police ought to be very efficient but these means of transport must be used for the purpose of police work. It is sometime now that the Police Force has been under Government's manipulation. The P.N.C. in Government has manipulated the Police Force

I wish to draw the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to an incident which was reported in the *Weekend Post* of 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1969 on the back page, which is supposed to be page 20, and there it is a photograph of a police truck, No. GO 103. At the bottom, there is a note which states, I quote:

“The Police Force kindly loaned this truck to the members of the PNC's Young Socialist Movement to take them from Congress Place, Georgetown to Mackenzie, for the annual Congress of the Y.S.M.”

There it is, a truck being used by some young ladies and young men and there it is, further, a photograph at the disposal of every Member of this House to show where a truck of the police, a vehicle of the police, the means of transport of the police, is being used as transport by a political organisation for its own selfish purposes and in the interest of the P.N.C. This is a very sinister act on the part of those who govern the force. It certainly will not contribute to confidence in the police in so far as the population is concerned. What this aims at doing and what it will ultimately do is contribute greatly to the already ebbing confidence which the people have in this Government.

The Police Force of a country ought to be impartial. It ought to conduct its duties so that people will have respect and the highest possible regard for this national institution, but what is being done certainly will not bring about confidence. This will cause persons to look at the police as a sectional institution. It will also contribute to the loss of confidence among members of the Force because it would mean that if you are a member of a political organization, you will have favours from the police and if you are not a member of that political party, it means certain promotional opportunities will pass you by. Therefore, I ask the Minister of Home Affairs to

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give an explanation of this incident and I also ask if it is possible for other youth organizations to enjoy such privileges as the Young Socialist Movement. If you wish, sir, I can go to the next item.

**The Chairman:** We shall stop here. It is time for the Adjournment. We shall leave it for tomorrow.

*Assembly resumed.*

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Speaker:** This House is adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1969.

*Adjourned accordingly at 10 p.m.*

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