

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information, Culture and Youth

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister without Portfolio and Leader of the House

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Health

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for the Public Service

The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development

The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, C.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Public Affairs (Absent)

The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests (Absent)

The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance and Trade

Dr. The Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Trade

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National
Development and Agriculture

(Absent)

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Information,
Culture and Youth

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and
Communications

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss M.M. Ackman, Government Whip
Mr. K. Bancroft
Mr. N.J. Bissember
Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.
Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. Jordan
Mr. S.M. Saffee
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.
Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive party

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

Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.H.G. Wilson
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P. Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholā Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent)

United Force

Mr. M.F. Singh
Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. J.A. Sutton

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. M.B. Henry

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

Prayers

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1973**

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to continue consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1973, totaling \$277,712,944.

Assembly in Committee of Supplying.

The Chairman: Pages 117 to 124.

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF WORKS**COMMUNICATIONS (WORKS)****ESTABLISHMENT**

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to speak on items (4), (5), (15), (32), (41), (58) and (83) and to make some comments on the Pure Water Supply Division. I also wish to speak on item (102) on page 121 and to ask some questions on the Hydropower Division as well as items (154), (155) and (162).

The Chairman: Does any other member wish to speak? *(No reply was given.)*

Hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud: Against item (4), Assistant Secretary, the Establishment shows one Assistant Secretary. The increment for this post is normally \$240 yearly. In 1972 the Revised Estimate shows the amount of \$6,396. The amount of money now sought is \$6,866. If

the normal increment of \$240 is added to the figure for 1972, then the sum of \$230 is over-provided for. I wonder if the Hon. Minister can offer an explanation.

For item (5), Administrative Assistants, the Establishment is three. The normal increment of the A14 salary scale is \$144 per year. The revised Estimate for 1972 was \$12,714. Assuming that the three officers receive their normal yearly increments in 1973 and that these amounts are added to the 1972 Revised Estimate, then there will be a difference from the 1973 figure now sought of \$360. Can the Minister explain?

Item (15), Assistant Accountants. The Approved Estimate for 1972 was \$21,811. The revised Estimate for 1972 is \$17,501. The amount now sought is \$2,060. The whole amount voted for 1972 is not to be spent. Can the Minister say why? If there were vacancies why they were not filled?

Item (32), Senior Supply Officer. According to the figure shown under Establishment, there are three Senior Supply Officers. The increase on the 1972 Approved Estimate is \$3,360. The normal yearly increment for three officers should be \$720. There has been no increase in the Establishment so why is such a huge sum sought as increment? The legend states that this increase is sought for normal increments.

Item (41) deals with the Senior Superintendent of Roads. An increment of \$480 is sought for this officer. In 1971 the sum of \$5,316 was voted as salary. In 1972 the sum of \$5,136 was voted. Two increments to which the officer is entitled are now being given. Why was no increase given in 1972? If two increments are given this year it does not mean that the increment which should have been given in 1972 is to be granted in 1973. It is not shown that the 1972 increment is included in this amount.

I turn to item (58), Senior Superintendent of Buildings (Georgetown) on page 119. The actual amount spent in 1971 was \$5,136. The Approved Estimate in 1972 was \$5,136. The

amount now sought is \$5,976, which is an increase of \$840 on the Approved Estimate for 1972. Perhaps the Hon. Minister will explain why there is this increase.

The post of Filing and Recording Officer, item (83) is vacant. Will the Hon. Minister say how soon this position will be filled? Can the Minister say why this post was not filled before?

With regard to the Pure Water Supply Division, Parliament has approved of the formation of a Water Authority. Can the Minister say how soon this authority will be set up? *(Interruption)* I am not aware that the authority has been set up.

Can the Hon. Minister give the reasons why this department has failed to maintain pure water supply wells throughout Guyana especially those on the Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo Coasts, those in the Essequibo Islands of Wakenaam and Leguan and those in the Black Bush Polder which have become silted up or have ceased to function for some reason?

Will the Minister give an undertaking to carry out works to alleviate the sufferings of the residents on Tiger Island where a shallow well was dug some time ago and has now silted up?

The same question is applicable to the districts of Zeelandia and Wakenaam. Can the Minister indicate whether there is a shortage of pipe-lines, taps and couplings? Can the Minister say whether, as a result of such shortages, maintenance works and the running of new lines have been seriously affected?

I wish to point out that there has been a serious water shortage in many parts of the country. I can well remember when the P.P.P. Government dug some shallow wells in various land settlement schemes the members of the Government took up an attitude of being very critical of such an exercise. But, at Anna Regina, the Government spent over \$90,000 to dig a well about 340 feet deep and, as far as I understand, the well is now abandoned.

I am told that advice was given to the Government that digging a well at Anna Regina not very far away from the site of the original well would create serious difficulties and it would not be possible to get a volume of water out of the well. Nevertheless the Government went ahead and dug the well and has wasted over \$90,000 on it because, as far as I understand, it is now abandoned.

2.20 p.m.

Another point which I wish to raise on the pure water supply system, since the Government is having difficulties with many of these deep wells it is digging, in terms of getting out the pure water that is needed, is whether the Government would consider the question of setting up a purifying plant and getting water from Tapakuma lake or Mainstay Lake, and purifying the water to be supplied to the whole coast. I do not know if it will cost less but the Minister can give an explanation.

There is no need to dig wells. For some time, you may be able to get water, but when you put on a pump, you get a certain quantity but after a period of time, it dries up and there is silted and muddy water. Maybe the Minister can consider this question.

Item (102), Assistant Hydrologist has been filled in 1972. Salary scale A4 gives a starting salary of \$4,656 per annum with a yearly increment of \$144 until the sum of \$5,376 is reached. Then the increment is increased to \$240 a year. From the Revised Estimates of 1972, the sum amounted to \$6,176, an increase of \$1,420. Can the Minister explain why this increase, further, why there is a further increase in 1973 by \$230?

Hydropower Division. The Government is undertaking feasibility studies for the hydro-electric project which the Government is planning to embark on. Could the Minister assure the House whether a complete report of the studies will be submitted to Parliament? From the

progress of the studies now undertaken, could the Minister say how soon the Tiboku project would commence, if the Government decides on that project?

Mr. Hamid: Sir, I crave your indulgence to ask a few questions on this page. Unfortunately, when you called the page I was not here.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 154, Technical Assistants, and Item 155, Laboratory Attendants. Provision is sought for these items. Could the Hon. Minister say why the vacancies are existing? Both items show vacancies. Can the Minister say how soon the vacancies will be filled?

Item (162), Watchmen, there is a great deal of uneasiness among Watchmen employed by the Ministry of Works and Communications. There is great fear these Watchmen will be retrenched. Many Watchmen express fear because there is talk that the Government intends to replace these Watchmen by special security personnel from either the Police Force and/or the Guyana Defence Force. I wonder in view of this fear and uneasiness in the minds of the Watchmen, whether the Hon. Minister would say what the position is. Those are all the questions.

Mr. Hamid: I will deal with page 121, items (112) to (116), Electrical Inspection Division. In view of the fact that there will be rural electrification on which a large sum of money is earmarked, it is rather difficult to trace how Government will be able to cope with this volume of work by not increasing its staff, inspectors, technical officers, technicians, etc. This is a question that I was asking for several years and it seems there is a rural and urban electrification extension.

The Hon. Minister seems to forget that if they are to carry on such a programme, it is necessary to have the necessary staff to accomplish their end. I do not see how they will be able to complete such a programme as planned and, at the same time, have such a limited staff.

From my experience, there are many vehicles that have been put at the disposal of the department, but many of them could not be operated because they were not serviceable. Again, I must repeat, when there is a vehicle, it seems you cannot get gasoline to put in the vehicle to operate it. At another time when there is gasoline and oil, the engine seems not to be there. Many electrical constructors, who may have electrical installation work to be inspected, find it difficult to wait for weeks and sometimes fortnights before some approach can be made to have their electrical installation work inspected. In most cases, I must repeat, contractors have to hire a car to take the inspectors to the very home to have their work inspected. This is an additional burden on the electrician.

I feel that with all this improvement there should be an increase of at least ten times this amount of staff they have. The Deputy Chief Electrical Inspector has been transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for a special task and his post is still vacant. I would be pleased if the Hon. Minister can inform us if this post will be filled or whether the officer is there on secondment and he will return to his post very soon. Thank you very much, sir.

The Minister of Works and Communications: (Mr. Hoyte): The Hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud, raised a number of questions on the emoluments paid in relation to certain posts on the Fixed Establishment, and also on the question of vacancies which seem to be apparent from the Estimates. It would not be possible for me to tell the Hon. Member when the vacancies would be filled because these are matters exclusively for the public Service Commission. The most the Ministry can do is to keep making repeated representations, to the Commission to fill the vacancies as early as possible.

He raised a number of points about the increment which appeared on the Estimates against several heads. Again, these increments are in accordance with the terms of appointment of the several officers and are matters which one has to meet by way of the provisions which are there.

I reject the statement by the Hon. Member that the Pure Water Supply Division, as it was up to the end of September this year, has failed to do any significant work in the field of pure water supply. But before dealing with this point a little more in detail, I would point out to the Hon. Member that the Guyana Water Authority was established on the 1st October, 1972. There is, in the course of 1972, very extensive work done in pure water supply. As a matter of fact, this year has seen a greater number of wells drilled and more pipelines laid in this country than ever before in the history of Guyana.

Specifically, the Hon. Member picked out Black Bush Polder as an area where he claimed no work was done. I would draw to his attention that four wells were drilled in 1972 at Black Bush Polder, at Yakusari, at Johanna, and two at Mibikuri. There was also drilling at Rose Hall on the Corentyne and at Anna Regina. At the present time a team now operating under the aegis of the Guyana Water Authority is concentrated at Dem Amstel where mobilization has begun to drill a well there. A large number of wells were also completed in the Interior at several locations including the Kumaka/Quebana Scheme, two at Baramita, three at Lethem, one at St. Ignatius and two at Moco-Moco; and wells were also drilled in the South Savannahs, including wells at Aishalton, Sand Creek, and Arawana. There are also wells being drilled at Paramakatoi in the Pakaraimas and at Karamat in the Mahaicony Creek. There is also well which is being drilled and is in a state of completion at Kuru Kuru on the Linden Highway.

In view of that extension work which has been done this year, it is difficult to understand the allegation made by the Hon. Member that no significant work was done. In addition, pipeline extensions were laid at Queenstown and La Belle Alliance on the Essequibo, at Canal No. 1 and at Farm, West Demerara, at Bush Lot, Rosignol, d'Edward in West Berbice, at Whim, Johanna and Yakusari in Berbice. There is also an extension in the No. 19 area on the Corentyne. Approximately ten miles of pipelines were laid during the course of this year.

In addition, there were several areas, for example, East Berbice, where pipelines were laid by self-help and that work had not been included in the formal report which I have at hand.

I would also point to a water supply improvement project which is nearing its completion on the East Bank and on the East Coast of Demerara which is costing some \$7 million and also to the pure water supply project at Linden which will begin early next month.

The Hon. Member enquired whether there was a shortage of pipeline and couplings. The answer to that question is, no. There is a sufficient supply of pipelines and couplings on hand for the work which is on-going. Moreover, there are large orders; some of them are on the high seas now, to supply materials for the work which we will be continuing next year.

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The Hon. Member raised a question on hydro-power. I would wish to assure him that, as I have already said in this Hon. House that by March next year we hope to have the Report from the Yugoslav team on the possibilities of the Upper Mazaruni Project. That Report will be laid in this House as, indeed, all the Reports dealing with any hydro-power project which the Government is likely to undertake.

He mentioned something about fears expressed to him by Watchmen. This is the first time I am hearing about these fears, and I wish to state that I cannot take cognizance of allegations of vague fears by people working in the Ministry.

The Hon. Member Mr. Hamid was of the view that the Electrical Division of the Ministry was not sufficiently staffed to deal with the expansion programme of rural electrification which the Guyana Electricity Corporation is undertaking at the moment. My own view is that the Electrical Division had been coping with the work which is required of it to date. I see no particular difficulty in meeting the work which has been done if, perchance, there is a sudden expansion in the volume of work. Because there are many ways in which this problem could be tackled, one of them being, of course, to give the necessary authority, to give contracts to the private persons if it came to that. But I do not think it would be right to expand the Division to meet any temporary increase in volume and at the end of the programme find yourself with a large staff of people who have nothing to do.

Mr. Hamid: Supplementary question, sir. The Hon. Minister is apparently mixing the technicians with the inspectors so to speak. But what I would wish to draw to the Hon. Minister's attention is that last year the price for electrical inspection was increased by nearly 500 percent on the tax that one would normally pay, and it was said that the increase was to cope with the volume of work which was responsible for delays so that they can be able to get the necessary vehicles. I may wish to draw the Hon. Minister's attention to the fact that vehicles are not available for inspectors to use for inspecting electrical installation work, and as such, these officers are forced to purchase cars so as to do their jobs. The Minister must bear with me, because I am in this field and I know that this is so because the Land Rovers that are supplied by the Government are not available, because they do not have the necessary funds to replace them and the officers are forced to purchase cars beyond their reach. When one considers the delay that the ordinary consumer may have to undergo by virtue of changing over from kerosene to electricity ---

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Hamid, you said you are going to ask a supplementary question. Please ask the question.

Mr. Hamid: I am only showing the Minister because they are saying that a small man will become a real man but there it is they are, squeezing the small consumers.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you wish to say anything?

Mr. Hoyte: I wish merely to assure the Hon. Member that we have on order and we hope to get before the end of this year twenty vehicles from local sources; and we have on order twelve Land Rovers.

But I do not accept his statement that Officers are forced to buy cars to do their work. There are officers who are required to travel in the course of their duties. These Officers are very heavily subsidized by being allowed to purchase cars duty-free, they are given advances at a

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2.30 - 2.40 p.m.

low rate of interest, they are allowed to repay over a long period and, of course, they get their travelling allowances.

2.40 p.m.

Head 38, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works), Establishment - \$5,826,206, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 125 and 126.

**HEAD 39 - MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS
(WORKS)
ANNUALLY RECURRENT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,681,754 for Head 39, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works), Annually Recurrent, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subheads 5, 20, 26 and 27.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Subheads 2, 3, 9, 10 and on page 126, subheads 20, 21, 27, 39, and 101.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: Subhead 4.

Mrs. DaSilva: Subhead 37 on page 126.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: Subhead 14

The Chairman: There is an amendment to subhead 39 on page 126. Instead of "Hire of Transport" it should read "Miscellaneous Works and Services".

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 5, Roads. The sum of \$1,300,000 is now sought for roads. I wish to point out to the Hon. Minister that the residents at Mon Repos, North, who are living in a squatting areas would like to have Government's assistance to build internal roads in the squatting area.

The fact of the matter is that this is one of the worst areas in the whole squatting are on the East Coast because of the fact that whenever rain falls the whole place is muddy and there are no proper roads to facilitate the residents. There is no proper drainage and irrigation.

The residents would therefore like to have the Ministry's help with materials. They went a little further to say that they are prepared to do self-help work. They are prepared to do it if the Ministry will provide the materials. I am certain that if materials are given the people will –
(*Interruption*)

The Chairman: Hon. Members, we are making rapid progress. Please let us continue.

Mr. Balchand: The second point is that the Local Authorities and District Councils have been asking the Ministry for help to build roads. In certain areas the Ministry has been granting assistance to some of the local authorities, especially in areas where the P.N.C. has political support. This is a charge which the Ministry must recognize: that in most areas that have P.N.C. support people are being given assistance but in other areas they get little or no assistance.

I do not know what is the problem, whether representations were not made by the Local Authorities or whether the Government had a priority plan. Whatever the reason, I think that all the Local Authorities must be treated alike.

Secondly, the Ministry had promised the Georgetown Municipality to provide \$25,000 for roads last year. Subsequently the Municipal District Council was informed that no money was available although this was a promised made by the then Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, Mr. Hamilton Green. (*Interruption*)

I just seek your permission, sir, to read from the agenda of the statutory meeting held on Monday 11th December, 1972, by order of the Mayor and Town Council of the City of Georgetown. Item 7 on the agenda states: A letter from the Ministry of Works and Communications (Works) re a decision made by Government that the Ministry should build \$25,000 worth of roads for the council and advising that because of their current commitments it was regrettably not possible to undertake the work this year and that the council maybe informed when the Ministry propose to do the work as soon as funds are available.

Mr. Hoyte: "Where is it said that the Ministry promised?"

It is implied that the Council has applied for help. No doubt they had information that this help would be given. They received a letter stating they would not get the help. It is clear that the Town Council wrote a letter seeking this assistance. You cannot say that the facts are not there.

I wonder whether the Minister can say how soon this sum of \$25,000 will be proved.

The third point is that maintenance work has been lacking in some areas, especially on the roads on the East Coast of Demerara. If one travels from Bel Air to Enmore one will find that the road is very uneven. This is because the maintenance work is not done properly. As a result it is creating serious problems to road users, especially those driving motor vehicles.

Secondly, the Ministry has been carrying out surveys of the road with a view to widening it. I wonder if the Minister can say whether the survey was been completed and how soon the road will be widened.

Subhead 20, Maintenance of Pure Water Supply Systems. I made the point during the Second Reading debate that this has been lagging. The Minister replied saying this is not so, but the Minister has not offered any explanation about the Anna Regina well on which the Government spent a large sum of money, more than \$90,000. The Well had to be abandoned. Surely the House deserves an answer from the Minister and a statement as to why this was abandoned.

Subhead 26, Maintenance and Running Expenses, Water Transport Overhaul, and subhead 27, Stone Crushing Plant, under the Quarries Division. The Government has been spending money over the years for the running of this Division. The Members of the Government have said on numerous occasions that whatever they do must be carried on like a business concern, that is, they must be able to make profits and show progress. The actual expenditure against this Division for 1970 was \$439,154. The issues of stones received by the Government, amount to \$171,054, leaving a difference of \$268,100. Surely the Government lost money in 1970 and has not been able to get returns from the money it spent.

2.50 p.m.

In 1971 also, expenses amounted to \$635,895. Issues of Stone was \$197,735; there is a difference of \$438,160. In 1972, the Government spent \$1,062,800. Issue of Stone was just \$744,999 a difference of \$317, 000. This year we are asked to vote \$890,000 and the Ministry expects to get \$744,999 worth in stone, a difference of \$145,000. From the expenses and the returns it cannot be said that this Division has been running as a business concern. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister can give us an explanation. Because, as one can see, large amounts of money have been going down the drain. It is necessary for the Minister to give an explanation why this is so. Is it because of the big bureaucracy that is employed there? Or is it because of the inefficient handling of this particular Department?

Mr. M.F. Singh: Sub Head 2, Lighting Seawall, Camp Road, Vlissengen Road, and National Park. The voted provision in 1972 was \$8,000, the Revised Estimate is reflected as \$50,000, and the estimates for 1973 are also \$8,000. It is a tremendous increase from \$8,000 to \$50,000. Can the Hon. Minister tell us why the necessity for this increase? What is being additionally lighted to use that tremendous amount of money? I know there is the new road, Carifesta Avenue, but one would not think that the lighting of this road can account for this tremendous increase.

Subhead 3, Maintenance of Compounds and paths. I wish merely to ask the Minister whether he thinks that this figure is realistic in view of the fact that the Revised Estimates is \$177,000. What he has asked for next year is \$150,000 and if one looks at the actual estimate for 1971 it is \$205,000. I would be very pleased to know that the Government is saving money. Are we going to get an application like we did in 1972 whereby supplementary provision was asked for?

Subhead 9, Maintenance of Plant and Equipment of Vehicles other than lorries. One notices that the Approved Estimates was \$375,000. The Revised Estimates was \$385,000, an increase, but for the 1973 estimates it is \$455,000, a tremendous increase. One realizes that as equipment gets older there will necessarily need to be increased maintenance. It is agreed, but it is not that some of these equipment may well be unrealistic to maintain? Or perhaps on a lighter vein, is part of this increase due to the fact that this Ministry's designation has been changed so often in the past? Every time they change the designation of the Ministry they seem to embark upon an operation to change letters on the vehicles also. This must cost money. Perhaps we should try and do something about changing these designations so often to fit in the particular Minister.

On subhead 10, Maintenance of River Defences – (c) Berbice \$6,500; I am reading in the details of the subhead, the total amount asked for is \$73,500 and the amount asked for in respect of River Defences is a mere \$6,500. Is this not unrealistic in view of the erosions which we know exist particularly in the Glasgow area of the Berbice River – lot of erosion taking place there? What is the Government doing about it? Is it intended to allow that land to disappear? I do not see anything in the Capital Estimates. Maybe the Minister might pinpoint something in the Capital Estimate which he is going to use to remedy the defects in defences along the Berbice River.

Subhead 20, on the next page, Maintenance of Pure Water Supply Systems. This has always been a big none of contention with the local authorities. Year after year local authorities keep complaining of the poor services, frequent breakdown and defective pumps in the area. For instance, in the Parika area right now my information is that the pipelines have been broken and they have remained broken for months now. Very often there is a connecting line put across the road then traffic comes along, and the line is broken. This results in a complete breakdown of service over on the other side of the road. What is being done in respect of this?

I am not talking about the capital works but the new works but the new works that are going on, on the East Coast, East Bank. These are rehabilitation works which started a long time ago and one wonders why it is taking so long because it certainly started sometime 1967/1967.

The position in the past has been that the Local authorities, by and large, has been in arrears in respect of their repayments for pure water supply costs. At one time because of the delicate state of affairs the Government had to convert the amounts owing into loans. Have these loans been repaid? Would the Hon. Minister say approximately how much is owing by these local authorities? Because these services provided by the central Ministry are supposed to be recouped from local authorities. My information is a tremendous lot of these are still to be paid. In addition to the amounts which were for maintenance which were converted into loans – and one sometimes has to sympathise with some of these local authorities because they argue quite

rightly that if we are buying something we must get the something, we should not pay for something that we are not getting. What is the position here? The complaints are still rampant because the complaints come to me very often. At the present time the local authorities are without pure water supply for very long periods. What is the Government doing? It is all well and good to be putting down new works and rehabilitating along two areas but what about the old works in the old areas. We must get the maintenance in these areas so that they can get some benefit also.

Subhead 21, the sum of \$92,227 is sought to be provided for the water purification plant at Wismar. I would like to give the Minister the opportunity to tell this house what is the position with respect to this water purification plant at Wismar. In addition, will he tell this honourable House whether, like the local authorities since this is recurrent expenditure, this sum of \$92,227 will also be charged against the local authority? Is this going to be recouped from the local authority or is this sort of once for all bonus to the Wismar area particularly?

Dealing with subheads 26 and 27 under Quarries Division, Maintenance and Running Expenses, Water Transport Overhaul, Pontoon Tugs, Maintenance and Running Craft, and Stone Crushing Plant, Makouria and Teperu, about two years ago, the Hon. Minister, as he then was, of Works and Hydraulics made a very impassioned speech and talked about the rapacious stone producers. He promised this honourable House that he would definitely bring down the price of stone that the Government was embarking on a programme which would bring stone to the ordinary man at a tremendous reduction in prices because the prices were really sky high, imposed by rapacious stone producers who sought to capitalize on the situation of the shortage of stone. My information is, that since that time, stone prices have gone up rather than reduced in price.

As the Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud pointed out the amount sought to be spent is \$890,000 and the issues of stone in subhead 101 at the bottom is \$744,999. Some questions arise immediately. Let me point out that this \$890,000 sought to be spent on the quarries division is

not the only sum of money, because civil servants who devote their time to the quarries division have to be paid. These salaries are provided for earlier on so that it is a tremendous lot more than \$890,000 when you take in the salaries paid under other heads. Under Capital, there is an amount provided in the capital head on page 128, I merely mention it now, Glasgow – Teperu Quarry \$190,000, so a tremendous lot of money, over \$1 million is spent in respect of quarries, and a tremendous lot has been spent in previous years on these quarries.

One wonders what the returns are. I want to ask the Minister specifically, this issue of stone, \$744,999, does it represent the price of stone sold to the public alone or the price of stone to the public and also the issues of stone from the quarry to the various Government projects and capital projects like sea defences and capital road development? I am reminded of the issues of bread in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Prisons Department, where all bread issued including to prisons is listed as issues. Have they followed the same pattern? Is this the total sale of stone or stone sold to the general public? Is stone really being sold to the public? Can any member of the public go and get stone readily available and at what price, bearing in mind what his predecessor said? I am not aware that the price of stone has gone down. The stone most used in construction is one inch minus. What is the price at the present moment? Would he care to answer or do I have to table a Question?

The corrected subhead is 39, Miscellaneous Works and Services. Will the Minister explain the necessity for this new subhead? One must presume that the Ministry was running before, and if this is something new, then it means there is some new work going on which we never provided for. Will he tell us the necessity for this subhead, what it is going to provide for? I think that is all on these two pages.

Mrs. DaSilva: The Hon. Minister replying to the Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud spoke about the pure water supply scheme, that it will be completed amongst other places on the East Coast Demerara. We have been asked to allocate \$60,000 for pumping stations. I would like to ask the Minister for information, particularly, about the pumping station at Victoria.

It is electrically operated, it has a comparatively new engine, twice within the past year it has broken down and when the electricity is not working and the diesel engine is used, the people who live far away from it in the Nooten Zuil Lowlands area do not get water. This can go on for weeks. When the Pure Water Supply Scheme is completed and they are all linked up together, will this help to increase the pressure, because apparently, the diesel engine has not got the power to push the way the electrically operated one does.

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, not only on the East Coast, will this help to increase the pressure or the water so that people who are far away from the pumping station will be able to get an adequate flow of water for their families? I would also like to ask the Hon. Minister who checks on the people who look after the pumping station, to see that they are maintained properly. It appears that for a new pump to break down twice in one year as in the case of Victoria, something is wrong, and it is not being properly serviced and maintained.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: Subhead 14. Will the Hon. Minister be kind enough to inform the House which of the rivers, including the creeks, and mainly the stellings, whether the stellings would be included, including the stelling at Hog Island and the stellings on the Berbice River?

Mr. R. Ally: I would like to speak on subhead 20.

Mr. Hoyte: I did not quite get that.

Mr. Bhola Persaud: Under subhead 14, I notice here they mention rivers, creeks, and stellings. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister which are the rivers including the creeks and mainly the stellings, whether the stellings will include the stelling at Hog Island which is in a bad condition, and the stelling in the Berbice River.

Mr. R. Ally: Maintenance of pure Water supply. Some time ago, \$1,000,024 was voted, and lately, there was a supplementary before this House for \$.5 million.

The Chairman: We are dealing here with Annually Recurrent and not with Capital Estimates.

Mr. R. Ally: I want to say that if this amount of money is not enough to give the residents the necessary facilities with pure water supply then the Government should seek another sum.

I want to point out that in many areas people are suffering for lack of pure water. For instance, at the Line path, in the eastern section of the Skeldon area, there is no potable water service. This is also happening in the Springlands Race Ground and the Duketown/Princetown area.

On the other hand, the Government is now calling on residents on the coastland to make private connections. If there is no pipeline and no main, how can the people make their private connections? In some of the thickly populated villages there is a main pipeline buy the roadside but no branch main. People who are living up to 80 rods from the road cannot make private connections. The main is far away from those who are living in the fourth, fifth and sixth lots at the back. The people are asking that Government give them the necessary branch main within these areas.

At the moment the members of the Government are going around asking people to sign an agreement. Not too long ago someone from a Government department make a statement that the people are not paying up the pure water rates, especially the rates that were in arrears. But the officer who goes to collect the rates refuses to collect rates unless the people sign the agreement.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally, you said this when we were dealing with supplementary Estimates.

Mr. R. Ally: No, sir, I have never brought this Agreement before the House. I should like to read the Agreement.

The Chairman: The whole of the Agreement?

Mr. R. Ally: Part of it. Paragraph 3 states:

“Subject to Clause 4 thereof the Recipient shall pay the Government annual payment stated in Appendix “1” and shall comply with the conditions of payments stated therein during the continuance of this agreement for so long as the Recipient’s premises remain connected to the said system irrespective of whether or not water is actually being supplied by the said system.”

Paragraph 6 states:

“It is expressly agreed and understood that Government shall be under no liability at any time to supply water to the Recipient except when water is available and the said pressurized system is on operation. It is further understood and agreed that the Government shall not be liable to maintain the operation of the said system but may, in its absolute discretion, discontinue without notice the operation of the said system at any time....”

How could anyone sign an Agreement which starts that whether water is supplied or not he will have to pay and that the Government can discontinue the operation at any time without notice? But the residents are being forced to sign the Agreement. They have to sign before the rates are collected. I would like you to see the Agreement, sir.

On behalf of the people throughout this country I am appealing to the Minister to look into it because pure water is an item which is essential.

The Chairman: Please hurry, we have only 45 minutes.

Mr. R. Ally: I hope that the Minister will see to it and give the people pipelines where there are none and branch lines in thickly populated areas where mains are by the roadside.

I am appealing to the Government to assess the needs and see where stand pipes are necessary because these people can ill afford to make private connections. This applies especially to those who are receiving public assistance, to old age pensioners and poverty-stricken people in the areas. I am appealing to Government to see to it that there is a stand-pipe by the roadside at distances 75 rods apart.

Mr. Hoyte: The Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud has claimed that the people in the Mon Repos squatting area North are prepared to building their roads by self-help. This is very welcome change of attitude and I can assure him that the relevant Ministry, which is the Ministry of Co-operatives and Community Development, will be pleased to organize these people and provide the necessary supervision and materials. That kind of exercise is not one for the Ministry of Works and Communications, but I have no doubt that my colleague, the Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development will be interested in pursuing this matter.

I am glad that the Hon. Member raised the question of some alleged promise by the Ministry of Works and Communications to build \$25,000 worth of roadway for the Georgetown Municipality. There was a most erroneous and, possibly, malicious report in a certain section of the Press about this matter. It bore not a title of truth.

The position is quite simple. The Hon. Minister of Local Government conveyed a representation from the Town Council for an increase in the roads subvention in the amount of \$25,000. Government agreed that it would not give the Council \$25,000 cash but would require the Council to contract with the Ministry of Works and Communications to build \$25,000 worth of road.

There was absolutely no communication between the Ministry of Works and Communications and the Georgetown Town Council. There was absolutely no promise made by the Ministry of Works and Communications to the Georgetown Town Council or to any other person or agency whatever. The Council quite naturally sought to have this work done as

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3.10 - 3.20 p.m.

quickly as possible this year. It was a natural thing, but the Ministry of Works and Communications pointed out that it was not physically possible, having regard to the commitment of the Ministry's staff to ongoing work.

It is not true that this promise was made by my predecessor because this whole matter came up some time in September.

The Hon. Member also asked whether the work on the East Coast Road is about to begin. The answer to that question is, Yes. The designs are about to be completed and in the course of the next year tenders will be invited and work will begin on the East Coast Road.

This is really part of the Georgetown approaches project and the work on the Georgetown approaches has actually begun. The expansion of the work beyond Sheriff Street and Ruimveldt Avenue, which will allow people to bypass the heart of Georgetown if they come from the East Coast or from the East Bank, is already being done by the Ministry. Other works will go on.

3.20 p.m.

The Hon. Member raised a question on Quarries and sought to draw some large conclusions from the figures in the Estimates. I would point out first of all that a quarry operation which requires heavy capital investment makes a profit in the first year or, indeed, within a short time after that investment is made. It is only this year that the Quarry came on stream with a production of stone. I am not at all worried by statements to the effect that the Quarry is losing money, or is not making a profit.

I would also point out that the price charged for the stone is an administered price. It is not true as the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh has said, that the price of stone has increased, not from the quarry at any rate. We have held the price of stone, and by so doing we have influenced the price of stone produced by private operators. As a matter of fact, before the

Government Quarry started to produce, contractors in this country, who were doing sea defence and other works for the Government, were pressing Government for permission to import stone into this country. Government held the line, because we could not agree to a situation where stone was being imported into this country.

The Hon. Member raised a question on the provision of lighting which he says has gone up tremendously. The only answer I make is that the cost of lighting is very high. The Government has requested the Town Council to light certain areas with the clear understanding that the cost would be borne by the Government. In any event, the part of the Vlissengen Road which was lighted this year prior to the Non-Aligned Conference is really a road which is maintained by the Government.

The cost of lighting at the National Park is also very heavy because of the high-powered lights which are used when there are entertainments and other activities there.

On subhead 9, I would explain that the number of vehicles Government has to use has increased tremendously because of the extensive programme which is being undertaken at the moment and particularly sir, because of the works which are going on in the hinterland. The hinterland roads take a very heavy toll on Government vehicles and we will find that until we are able to upgrade those roads and perhaps establish workshops in many parts of the hinterland we are going to have to carry this heavy cost for operating there.

Under subhead 10, the Hon. Member deplored what he called the small provision for the maintenance of river defences in the Berbice area. I would merely point to the fact that this is recurrent expense; this is not to provide new works, or even to rehabilitate existing works. Those are the items which would appear on the capital side. These are the routine maintenance works which go on from year to year.

Under item (21), too, sir, Water Purification Plant, Wismar, again this is the recurrent cost to maintaining that Plant. It is not a question of a grant to the Local Authority or to anybody. I would point out that for the first time we have had a Resident Engineer at Linden who has been able to ensure that this Plant functions efficiently in all the circumstances and that people are assured of water for the first time on the West Bank at stated times of the day.

The Hon. Member wanted to know generally about the water supply project for Linden. That project will start next month. I do not propose to talk much about it or any of our water supply projects. I think that the thing to do is to make a noise when the water starts to flow in the pipes and we will certainly do that shortly.

Under subhead 39, a question was raised as to the necessity for the new subhead and the provision. I doubt that a day passes without some request by private organizations or local authorities for some form of assistance by the Ministry of Works and Communications. Very often it is assistance in the form of providing a roller to help to prepare a community playfield. Sometimes it is in the form of a request to help in materials for a road which they are doing and this kind of request happens frequently when the Ministry's work force is in the particular area. Strictly, the Ministry has no authority to provide these services and when they are provided there is a question always raised by the Director of Audit about the propriety of this kind of expenditure.

The Ministry is satisfied that it ought to give assistance to charitable institutions and to local authorities whenever it can, and this provision is put in to enable the Ministry to provide the service without having to bother too much about the strict technicality of it.

The Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva raised a question under subhead 37, Pumping Stations. That item refers not to pure water supply but pumping stations for drainage and irrigation. Nevertheless, her question was directed to ascertaining when the new system comes into being on the East Coast whether areas far afield such as Victoria will have an increased volume of water. The answer is, yes, for the simple reason that there would be a greater supply of water,

there would be a greater reservoir, and there would be a greater flow not only to people in the immediate vicinity but people who draw from the system for their afield.

The Hon. Member Mr. Bholu Persaud raised a question under subhead 14. He wanted to know whether this provision applied to certain Stelling, to which he referred. May I remind the Hon. Member again that this provision is concerned not with capital works but with maintenance. When we were doing the Communications side of the Ministry there was on the Capital Estimates a provision for rehabilitating stelling and wharves and I think we had a wide range of questions on that provision. But this provision here is merely for normal maintenance.

3.30 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: A supplementary question about the National Park. The Hon. Minister said that the high cost of lighting comes because of the bulbs. When the National park is rented out to organizations, people who stage shows there on Saturdays, not charitable organization, attract a crowd. Could the Hon. Minister say if in this rental is included the cost of lighting? Has the Ministry given any thought to charging lighting charges whenever they arrange the charges.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I particularly pointed out that the amount asked for in 1972 was \$8,000, presumably the Ministry thought \$8,000 would have been sufficient. Now the sum has gone up to \$50,000. The Hon. Minister did explain there were events such as the lighting of Vlissengen Road for the Non-Aligned Conference, and all the Carifesta activities at the National Park and one could even concede these things would carry up the cost.

In 1972, when we said on the last occasion to discuss the 1972 Estimates, rates had not gone up and \$8,000 was considered enough then, so if these additional things caused the sum to go from \$8,000 to \$50,000, will the Hon. Minister tell us whether he envisages that there will be other such events like Carifesta and Non-Aligned which will keep the cost at \$50,000? Is the

Hon. Minister saying in spite of no increase in the official rate that this sum of \$8,000 will be \$50,000 in 1973 also?

In respect of the Hydraulics Division, for Berbice, the Hon. Minister pointed out that the \$6,500 is merely for recurrent and it does not take account of any capital works. I looked at the Capital Estimates and the only thing that can carry it is, "Miscellaneous Works and Equipment", and when I look at the legend, it certainly excludes any capital works of a hydraulics nature in the Berbice area, because it has to complete Cane Grove pumps, improvements at Philadelphia, Three Friends, Mainstay, Canals Nos. 1 and 2, and to purchase two draglines. Would the Minister kindly do me the favour of telling me where there are provisions for capital works in the Berbice River area?

The Chairman: I do not wish to stifle the debate, but we have only 25 minutes.

Mr. M.F. Singh: In view of his predecessor's distinct pronouncement in this House, when are we going to get down the cost of stone which he says has been maintained at the present level? His predecessor said that the price charged by rapacious producers was enormous. When will the Ministry keep the Minister's promise to bring the price down? I asked quite a lot of questions about pure water supply particularly in respect of arrears of rates by the local authority. All these charges are supposed to be recouped from the local authority. The Hon. Minister did not say what were the arrears, whether they are up to date in their payment or whether this position satisfactory. My recollection is that all the local authorities are in arrears of their payments.

The Chairman: You will get to the position under this Head were no questions will be asked and I will just put them.

Mr. Hoyte: May I explain for the benefit of the Hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, that when the Estimates were considered and passed last year, there was no question of lighting

Carifesta Avenue or the area around the sea wall or Vlissengen Road, and therefore, the estimate of \$8,000 which appears under 1972 was quite a realistic one.

However, in the course of this year, the Government had the honour of accepting an invitation to host the Non-Aligned Conference. The Government decided therefore that it would have been necessary to ask G.E.C. to provide lighting in certain areas that is, along Carifesta Avenue, along part of the sea wall, and right down Vlissengen Road. The cost of the lighting which the Government has to pay to the Electricity Corporation is estimated at \$50,000. Next year, the cost will be the same unless the rates fluctuate.

The Hon. Member raised a question on the cost of stone. I think I have pointed out that the cost of stone would have been significantly higher in this country had it not been for the fact that the Government quarry had come on the scene, and the Government was maintaining an administered price which influenced, of necessity, the price of stone being offered by private operators.

The Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva raised the question of the cost of renting of the National Park. I would point out that there is a difficulty in pricing for this reason, that very many of the activities that place there are activities organized by charitable or religious organizations. Since those organizations sometimes get the National Park free of cost or at a very low price, one cannot properly pass on this cost to other people, but some account is taken of the cost of services, such as electricity, when the Park is being rented out.

3.40 p.m.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform Hon. Members that Government does propose early next year to set up a Parks Commission which would have authority over not only the National Park but all other parks existing or about to come into existence with a view to

maintaining them properly, exercising proper supervision and looking after such things as proper rates for renting.

Head 39, Ministry of Works and Communications (Works) Annually Recurrent - \$9,681,754, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**DIVISION XIX - MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS
WORKS**

The Chairman: There is a minor amendment. Insert subhead No. 14 against the subhead described as 'Parika/Bartica Road' and delete subhead No. 14 against the description "Essequibo Roads". Under the same Head amend code number for subhead 14 - Parika/Bartica Road to read "114,010" instead of "114,014".

Question proposed that the sum of \$38,883,650 for Division XIX, Ministry of Works and Communications, Works, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I would like to speak on subheads 7, 19, 30 and 37.

Mr. Hamid: Subhead 37.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 14.

Mr. Roshan Ally *rose* –

The Chairman: I do not think I will be seeing any more persons.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 7, Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme. The Government is for the first time seeking the sum of \$2,188,000 for the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary project. The legend states "Phase 1 of general development works in

the area". Now that the Government is thinking of starting the project will be the same as originally estimated. The point has been made by some Ministers of the Government that when Estimates are agreed upon ten years ago the cost may not be the same today.

We would like to know whether it will cost the same amount as originally estimates, that are \$10½ million.

Secondly, since the work will be done in different stages will the Minister say when the project will be completed? Will the Minister also say whether local engineers and contractors will be doing the job? Will he say whether the works will be given out on contract or whether the Ministry will undertake the job. Does the Ministry have any contractors in mind to do the job, if they agree to give it out to contractors?

On Subhead 13, East Bank Demerara Roads. I choose this subhead to severely criticise the Government on the deviation works it carried out by Grove, where it has built a bridge going to Craig Village. The bridge is so narrow that one would really think that the Government made a mistake. Because of the heavy traffic on that road where so many cars travel every day and because of the volume of traffic it was expected that the Ministry would have built a proper bridge there. But the bridge is so narrow that a car has to stop in one side of the bridge to allow another vehicle to pass. It took the Ministry many months before that project was completed. I think it is a waste of funds because the Government is spending larger sums of money on the road and therefore it will have to build a wider bridge. I think the Government made a severe mistake in building a narrow bridge there.

Subhead 19, East Bank Berbice Roads - \$2,070,000. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the Government is thinking in terms of starting the self-help project which it had in mind from Kwakwani to Ituni. Some time ago this project was listed and we have not heard anything further about it. The East Bank Berbice Road goes up to Brandwagt/Sari but from then on there is no road communication to reach Kwakwani.

There is another important point. The steamer services goes up to Ituni except for a small boat the "Parakeet", which goes once a week to Kwakwani. The steamer serviced goes up to Ituni and there is no communication except by the river for people to join the steamer for Kwakwani and other villages. If the Government is thinking of this project it will surely help the residents of Kwakwani to join the steamer service at Ituni.

I wonder if the Hon. Minister can give an assurance that this project will be started soon.

Subhead 27, Culture Centre. From the Estimates it appears that the Government has already spent \$1,597,605 on the project. Now the Government is seeking a further sum of \$968,000. This will mean that by the end of 1973, if this whole amount is spent, the Government will have spent \$2,565,605 on this project notwithstanding the fact that this project was supposed to have been finished before Carifesta. In fact, assurances were given in this House and contractors were working around the clock, it was said, in shifts to complete the project before Carifesta.

The project has not been completed and I think, with the amount of money that is being spent on it, the screw is being put on the taxpayers of our country by somebody. It is either that the contractors are not doing their job or the Government has its friends to do the contract and is facilitating them. One would have expected that his project would have been completed.

I would like to ask the Minister a specific question: Is this the last expenditure on the project to complete the works? The Minister said, No. If this is not going to be the last amount surely it will cost the nation a fantastic sum to complete the project. One would not expect a building like the one that is being put up to cost over \$3 million. I expect that the Hon. Minister will give a reasonable assurance to this House.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that the main speaker in this section of the Opposition has not been allowed to speak on this Head I wonder if you will allow me to ask questions on subheads 20 and 27.

The Chairman: If you will defer I will permit the main speaker to speak.

Mr. Sutton: I intended to speak on one item only because I have information on it. A person can only speak when he has information. On subhead 14, Parika/Bartica Road, I see that it states in the legend "to provide for the improvement of the road between Parika and Hubu". Some of the members here and also the Minister may have more than a passing idea of the detailed geography of the district.

Now, the road from Parika to Hubu was completed before the Del Conte people pulled out. It is a distance of seven miles. If this is going to be reconditioned it will be a very expensive job. I am under the impression that this Government would like to do all it can to save as much money as possible.

Now the section of the Del Conte road from Hubu to Bonasika has been completely stumped out. It has light bushes on it which the Government can start surfacing with the minimum if expense particularly if, for time being, it is made a second class road rather than a first class road which was originally intended.

The Opportunity should be taken because the area between Parika and Bonasika is among the best drained area in the country. It has first-class farmlands, and more people will go in there. But it is a well-known fact that from the Fort Island areas to Parika is among the roughest sections of the Essequibo River and the farmers who cannot help come down there by boat, but those farmers who can come by road do so. In view of the fact the section between Bonasika and Hubu is only 5 miles and it has drainage and irrigation canals actually in operation, it is hoped that Government would give some consideration to surfacing the road which has already been out through the forest because the longer they leave it in that condition the more it will cost as the trees grow up where they were before. I would ask the Government to give this serious consideration because this is the time to do it when they have machinery in the area.

There is one question I should like to ask on subhead 20, Interior Roads, \$4,400,000. We know that quite a lot of money had been previously spent on the Interior Roads on the section from Madhia to Annai both the means of self-help and special contracts. In this amount that is projected for spending, would the Minister tell us if they have reached the stage yet where it is necessary to hand this out either on contract, the engineering section is being done. Or is there still work which it is intended to hand out on a self help volunteer basis? And in the light of the cost of this operation whether it can be justified. It would be very good if they would tell us what this Interior road has cost so far.

Subhead 27, Cultural Centre. We note that the Revised Estimates for 1972 called for \$1,050,000 and it was intended for the Cultural Centre to be completed in 1972. Therefore, the fact that \$700,000 is on the original estimates for 1972 it must have been gone into in details and then it was decided to complete it would cost rather than \$700,000, \$150,000. We find that an additional amount of \$968,000 has been put down for 1973. Does that mean that the cost has further been increased by \$968,000 and this is what is now required to complete the Cultural Centre? Could the Minister tell us what proportion of this cost was for the temporary roof which was put in order for the entertainment to take place on that site?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud raised a question under subhead 7, Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme. I wish to answer him by saying that this money is to provide for the continuation of the works which have already begun in excavating the Persaud Drainage Canal from Waterloo to d'Edward and also for building the head works and conservancy dams. This work will be joint exercise between the Ministry of Works and Communications and private contractors. Obviously, I cannot give the name or names of the private contractors because the work has to go out to tender.

The Hon. Member spent some time criticizing the work which was done on the East Bank Road near to Craig but he did not really raise a question on that. The Bridge was in keeping with the Characteristic of that temporary road. That particular section of the East Bank road was extremely dangerous, and I think that the number of deaths there has been remarkably low in relation to the number of vehicles which have gone into the trenches on both sides. This has been a temporary deviation. However, in the approaches to Georgetown Programme which will be started next year all of that work will go as the intention is to widen the road and straighten it at that time. There is no particular point in building a very wide road or substantial structures which will have to go in any case very soon.

The road between Georgetown and Craig will be widened considerably into four-lane highway. Beyond Craig there will also be widening works to ensure that not only is there an adequate carriage way but that there are adequate shoulders for pedestrians and slow moving vehicles.

The Cultural Centre has always been a whipping horse. May I point out that this amount of money voted cannot build a Cultural Centre; it can only build part of a Culture Centre. What we are talking about – and this has been a source of great confusion not only in this Honourable House but outside of it - is the auditorium which is the first stage of a complex of buildings which will be known as the Cultural Centre. The former Hon. Minister of Information and Culture and the Hon. Minister of Information, Culture and Youth have both spent time in this House trying to explain the concept of the Cultural Centre. It is not quite accurate to say that the building was not completed for the Carifesta programmes, because as Hon. Members will know some of the most exciting productions took place inside the Cultural Centre auditorium.

A question was raised by the Hon. Member Mr. Sutton about the roof. The roof was purchased by the Government at a cost of something like \$20,000 and has remained Government's property.

The Hon. Member Mr. Sutton raised the question the road between Parika and Hubu. We do have a provision for building a first-class road there because there are many farmers living in that area and we want to put them in a position to get to and from their homes and farms as easily as possible.

A question was raised on the Interior road. I think that several Ministers have said in this House, time and again, that in any effort to exploit the resources of the hinterland there must be a proper road traversing the hinterland.

The Government has decided that the best route, for a number of reasons, would be the Madhia-Annai route. Work will continue on the road. The Hon. Member Mr. Sutton said that there was work done by self-help and special contract. I wish to refute that. There was no work done on that road by special contract; all the work done was by voluntary labour and after the self-helpers had completed their task, the work was carried on during the course of this year by the engineering wing of the Guyana Defence Force. Next year we hope to push on with the upgrading of that road and we hope to mount a joint exercise between the Guyana Defence Force and the Ministry of Works and Communication.

Division XIX, Ministry of Works and Communications – Works - \$38,883,650 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting is suspended for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 4.00 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 130.

**DIVISION XX - MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - WORKS
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS**

FIRST SEA DEFENCE PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,470,000 for Division XX, Ministry of Works and Communications – Works, IBRD/IDA Projects, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 3, Consultant Services. Year after year, we have been voting large sums of money to pay consultants for the services they render on the sea defence project. For many years we have been having such like construction on the sea wall and I am certain by now many of our local engineers must have acquired the know-how of the construction of the sea walls. I am certain, taking into consideration that many Guyanese who are engineers have learned a great deal from these consultants, and I am wondering whether it is necessary to have these consultants up to now.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Adding to what my friend has said, year after year, we see money voted for consultant services and in the legend we see that some of this money is spent for feasibility studies. What feasibility studies are we doing now? The legend says: “To provide for payment of fees to consultants for supervision of contracts and for feasibility studies”, bearing in mind in the past we have had a lot of feasibility studies done, a lot of the reports have been pigeon-holed. I can name quite a few. They have been stocked in various Ministries. We are embarking on a new set of feasibility studies. Will the Hon. Minister tell us what the feasibility studies will be under this Head for next year?

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, to answer the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, first of all: you cannot embark upon major engineering works unless you have preliminary investigations, which are popularly called feasibility studies. So long as we are engaged on big projects, we will have to set aside sums for the preliminary investigation or feasibility studies, if you care to use that term.

The Hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud, raised an interesting question about the utilization of our local experts. Unfortunately, whenever the funds are obtained from overseas, from any of the international financial institutions, there is always the insistence on certain procedures and a certain organizational structure. This is not referable only to the Americans, as the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran suggested, but it happens withal countries including the Soviet Union.

I am happy to report that Guyana has made a significant breakthrough as far as the execution of works financed by the World Bank is concerned. Hitherto, the World Bank has insisted on these works going out to international bidding, but we have been able to persuade them on this occasion, with respect to the second sea defence loan, that the Ministry of Works and Communications has got the expert personnel and the experience to enable us to do this project with local people. I am happy to inform this Honourable House that by letter dated 13th December, 1972, the World Bank has accepted this proposal and we will be doing the second sea defence with our people.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I merely want to know in what area and what projects. The Hon. Prime Minister last year was able to pinpoint under his Head, what the feasibility studies were for.

Mr. Hoyte: We are dealing with the first sea defence project and the feasibility studies must relate to our sea defences. I do not see what else they can relate to.

27.12.72

National Assembly

4.30 - 4.35 p.m.

Division XX, Ministry of Works and Communications – Works, IBRD/IDA Projects, First Sea Defence Project - \$4,470,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 132, Division XXI, Ministry of Works and Communications – Works, IBRD/IDA Projects, Second Sea Defence Project.

**DIVISION XXI – MINISTRY OF WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS – WORKS
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS**

SECOND SEA DEFENCE PROJECT

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 3. The Hon. Minister just said the Second Sea Defence Project would be done by local people. Here I see the same amount. Further sums are being called for consultants.

Division XXI, Ministry of Works and Communications – Works, IBRD/IDA Projects, - \$7,084,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.35 p.m.

Page 134.

**DIVISION XXIA – MINISTRY OF WORKS, COMMUNICATIONS AND
SUPPLY IBRD/IDA PROJECTS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,809,000 for Division XXIA, Ministry of Works, Communications and Supply stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXIA, Ministry of Works, Communications and Supply - \$3,809,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We will now deal with the Head, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, pages 175 and 176.

HEAD 59 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,464,045 for Head 59 – Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I am advised that we will do Ministry of Health before this Head. Page 156.

HEAD 52 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Question proposed that the sum of \$774,952 for Head 52 - Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a general remark on the Head as such and then go to items (2) and (12). I should like also to speak on subheads 4, 8, 16 and 23 on the next page.

Mrs. DaSilva: On page 156, subhead 1, items (2), (5), (8), (17), (19), (20), (23) and (24). They will be grouped. And on the next page I should like to speak on subheads 5, 8 and 22.

Mr. Chandisingh: My first remark on the Head as such is that one of the factors responsible, I think, for the parlous state of our health services is the whole question of planning and administration of our health services. I recall that the present Minister of Health even alluded to this when he spoke recently. He was reported in the Press to have referred to factors such as certain bottle-necks that were taking place. Administrative staff, he urged, should not hold up the work of technical staff and so on.

I want to refer to it in a broader sense and to say that there seems to be no planning, really speaking, in our health services. This has been so from the time the Government assumed office eight years ago. I do not know if the frequent changes in the political head of this Ministry may have something to do with the apparent lack of policy and consistency in carrying out policy.

We get changes all the time. For example, we were promised a health plan sometime ago and that plan apparently has been in draft for about a year and a half. Up to now this plan has not been formalized by this Government and officially set out as the plan for health so that the public can have a fair idea of what the Government intends to do about health.

I would like to ask why cannot the Government get down to a settled policy with respect to health. If not the whole responsibility of Government, nevertheless it is one of the first things that has to be done if our health services are to see some improvement and if a slide downward is to be stopped.

I would like also to ask whether the Ministry has discontinued the preparation of reports. We noted that there was only one report which appeared in 1969 from the Ministry of Health. I do not know whether this is the last. I should have thought that having started issuing reports, the Health Ministry, like many other Ministries, would also have continued to prepare annual reports which would be very helpful and useful in assessing the work being done in that Ministry.

I would just like to go now to item (2) and refer to the post of Principal Assistant Secretary. I am wondering if that position is vacant since I noticed a very small sum provided under the 1972 Revised Estimate. I should certainly hope that this post is not vacant. I see no reason why it should be in terms of the general administration and planning that I have referred to already.

On item (12) I note that the post of Personnel Officer is said in the notes to be vacant. Here again I wonder why it is that such an important post as Personnel Officer in such a big

Ministry that that handles so many thousands on its staff should be without a Personnel officer. Short-staffing in this respect causes, I should imagine, a lot of problems with respect to the smooth functioning and satisfaction of the staff.

On subhead No. 4, Telephones, I just wondered if the Minister could give an explanation for the rise in telephone charges for 1972 and sudden drop again to the extent of \$18,000. This is just a small point but perhaps he can answer that question.

Subhead 8, Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity Clinic. Here again we note that year by year this section does not seem to be expanding. The figure being spent remains static. It is from this Head, I take it, that payments are made to the rural midwives, that is, trained rural midwives who have to do with deliveries particularly in the rural interior districts. From time to time we have commented upon this but I wonder if the Hon. Minister would confirm that over 20 percent of the deliveries that take place every year, are deliveries which are not attended by qualified staff, that is, qualified midwives and nurse-midwives.

4.45 p.m.

This is a rather shocking state of affairs. With respect to the Infant Welfare and Maternity League, may I mention that it is quite clear and I am sure that the Hon. Minister could also verify this, that very few services are rendered by doctors in this field. If we take anti-natal, natal, and post-natal service, we find that the services of doctors are hardly applied. In other words, there is much more need for improving the quality of service when it comes to infant welfare in this country. Bearing in mind particularly the incidence of the type of disease which is prevalent in our country, I should like to ask the Hon. Minister therefore what is being done to improve these services and why is it that every year we see the same amount almost being devoted to this very important section of our health services.

Passing on the subhead 16, Contribution to maintenance of handicapped children, I recall that we were informed previously that a survey was being conducted in order to ascertain the handicapped children, the number, and the location with a view to giving more assistance to such children. I merely wonder at this stage if the Hon. Minister could say whether this survey has now been completed and what are the findings? If so, what is intended to be done as a result?

On the final subhead, 23, dealing with Contribution to Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, I should like to know what actually is being done in this respect. We see a fairly large sum being spent as the contribution to the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute. Bearing in mind that it is already well known that the nutritional standards in Guyana, particularly with regard to children, are rather low and the experts have spoken about this time and again even though there are no figures on actual malnutrition as such, but we do know that many diseases or illnesses or even death of children occur as a result primarily of malnutrition even though cause of death may be attributed to a secondary disease. I should like to know what in fact we are getting from this large sum of money. Are we not doing something to actually improve nutrition in this country particularly with regard to children at the moment?

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 156, under this had I wonder if the Hon. Minister can explain to us about the staffing of the Ministry of Health, dealing with nurses and doctors separately. There are complaints that people do not get replies to their correspondence. Could the Hon. Minister explain why things take so long?

Subhead 1, items (2), (8) and (9) together. Item (2), Principal Assistant Secretary. The Revised Estimates for 1972 was \$4,320 and now we are being asked to vote \$8,640. There is only one Principal Assistant Secretary, and this post has been here since 1971. Could the Minister say if this person is away on leave, and that is the reason why the money was not used up? But even then if he was on leave he is entitled to pay.

Item (8), Assistant Accountants. A similar situation occurred here. Could the Hon. Minister give us an explanation? Item (9), there is only one Telephone Operator. For 1972 \$748 was spent under the Revised Estimates now we are asking for \$1,494. Is the Telephone Operator on the job?

We come to the other two items under subhead 1, items (5) and (17). Item (5), Administrative Assistant. There is only one such post. The Revised Estimates for 1972 called for \$8,726, why have we been only asked to vote \$4,551? Under item (17), Clerical Establishment there is 58 posts in 1973. We voted \$188,976 in 1972 why have we been asked to vote \$121,023?

Items (23) and (23), Acting Allowances and the Temporary Clerical Assistance. I notice both of these items in the Approved Estimates for 1972 only \$100 is asked for, and then when we come to the Revised Estimates the amount goes up. This was not done in 1970 and 1971. It was \$2,893 in 1970 and the Actual was \$4,038. Every now and then you ask for \$100 and a thousand dollars and four thousand odd-dollars. Can the Hon. Minister explain why this is happening?

Subhead 5, Pharmacy and Poisons Board \$33,000. These people I understand are people who are responsible for the control not only of the Druggists and so on, but they are also people who deal with control of poisonous drugs. But we have often spoken in this House about the danger to the country of people who take drugs especially amongst the young people. It appears to me it is because of the easy availability of the drugs. For example, it seems to be quite a well-known thing for some youngster to go into an unscrupulous druggist and buy a drug called Mandrex which is basically a tranquillizer but when put in beer or anything like that it has quite a different effect. Is anything being done to tighten up? I think these druggists are well-known. Is anything being done to put a stop to this?

Similarly, I should like to ask the Hon. Minister if it could be considered especially with regard to people – this is the other way round – who live on the sugar estates, sufferers of

Asthma, there are two drugs they can buy easily, one called, Tedral and the other Ephedrine which gives them relief. Could the Hon. Minister consider the case of these people when the tightening up? It is a good thing to tighten upon the sale of drugs but in the case of people who are known to be Asthmatical cases if something could be done so that they can obtain the drugs easily.

4.55 p.m.

We come now to subhead 8, Grant to the Infant Welfare and Maternity League. You, sir, have mentioned to me before, and we have talked about the problems of getting parents to take their children back when they are to get booster shots for inoculation. You have yourself said it does create a problem. There is a waste of using the drug on a child and not completing the dosage, because it is of no benefit to the child. The cost of that drug, the money the Government has spent or the donor country, the waste of that money, and secondly a waste by the child not going back to receive the booster shot and not benefiting from it.

Has the Ministry considered enlisting the aid of organizations like the Red Cross, St. John's or local authorities who are in contact with the people? They know where they live, they are willing to send maybe their young people to that address and see why that mother has not taken her child back for the second shot.

Subhead 22, Contribution to Standing Advisory Committee for Medical Research in the Caribbean. Contribution, \$4,615. Would the Minister be kind enough to give us a brief outline of what Guyana stands to benefit from contributing to this research committee?

Mr. D.A. Singh: The Minister of Health. Dealing first with the general contribution by the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh, I should like to agree with him up to a point. I have said it publicly before, I have indicated here, I have found in the Ministry of Health a lack of

communication in certain instances, between the purely administrative staff and the technical staff. We are looking at it almost daily to see how we can bridge this gap.

I do not think it is fair to say there has been no planning in the health service. What is probably more correct is that because of this lack of communication in certain areas, there has not been a proper execution of the plan.

Immediately, let me say that the national health plan has now been completed in final form, and I believed that a member of the Opposition, I do not know if it is the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh, was given a copy of the plan in draft by the then acting Minister of Health. The plan is now complete and it is hoped that it will be made public during 1973, but in the meantime, action is being taken on certain aspects of the health plan.

I can say one of the things that the plan proposes I to divided Guyana into five regions for the delivery of Health care. This envisages the setting up in these regions of five hospitals. With this in view, the Suddie Hospital is now being upgraded to that of a general hospital similar in grade to that of the Georgetown Hospital and in this regard, work is going on at both New Amsterdam and Skeldon Hospitals. In certain phases, the health plan is being implemented, that is, regionalization of the health services and integration of the services. I promise that the health plan will be made public very early in 1973. I have it here in final form and as soon as Cabinet has considered it, it will be exposed to all.

On the question of certain vacancies raised by both Hon. Members who spoke, I am advised that the post of Principal Assistant Secretary is vacant and the reason why the Revised Estimates were as low as \$4,320 is that an Assistant Secretary was acting in this position and receiving merely acting pay. It is the reason or the post of Assistant Secretary also.

The point made by Mrs. DaSilva was that more money was paid in one year and a smaller amount this. The reason for that is during the previous year, some few offices were on leave and had to be paid while they were on leave and the person acting in the position also got acting pay.

Infant Welfare and Maternity League. The grant has been criticized as being the same every year and perhaps this is a good opportunity to tell this House what has been happening. The grant remains, but we have created within the Ministry and not being paid from this grant, a maternal and child health care section, now under a Medical Officer of Health and other officers not paid from this fund. This grant is merely for the paying of the midwives in the outlying areas.

I am not in a position to agree or disagree with the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh's point that 20 percent of the deliveries are not attended by qualified staff. What I should would say to him is that we are facing a shortage of qualified midwives. We have an on-going programme for training midwives year after year, and we hope that the position will be eased during 1973, because I believe that another set of trained midwives will be taking their places in the work force. They will be paid salaries. You do not train people and promise the work if you have no money to pay them. Funds are available.

I would like to point out that the services for infants and for mothers are given at all of the health centres throughout the country and we have operational, 423 health centres throughout the length and breadth of this country, and 103 health stations. Although the heal centres provide a more comprehensive service, if you attend the clinics at the health stations you will see that mothers and infants are given treatment.

5.05 p.m.

The Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh also raised the question of doctors not giving service in these areas. To a certain extent I agree with him. Recently I did this survey personally and found that in a few areas doctors never visit the health centres. In other areas they visit for a short while and do very little. The Ministry is moving to correct this situation and we are insisting – and this has already been done – that doctors should make known to the public their programmes and should stick to their programmes and visit these areas.

The Officer in charge of the region, the Medical Officer of Health, is required to check on these doctors. I have no sympathy with the doctor who does not perform. The Ministry does not intend to carry the doctor who is not performing the job for which he is paid. But this is not general. In many areas there are doctors who work beyond the call of duty in relation to their health centres. They visit all the clinics regularly; health visitors visits, the dispensers visit and I am satisfied if we can deal with the few situations that cause the outcry, the service that is being provided in the health centres will be satisfactory.

The other question raised by my friend Mr. Chandisingh was in relation to the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute. The Institute is providing a service to Guyana. Members will remember that there was a nutrition survey done here in 1971. The final report, we hope, will be ready in January 1973. Great help was received from the Caribbean Food and Nutrition in relation to this survey. In addition, community nutrition works are trained free of cost at the expense of this institute. They are trained and return to Guyana to give their service.

This institute also recently assisted the Ministry of Agriculture in a nutrition survey. On the question of the survey for handicapped children, I am advised that this survey is not yet complete.

Now, the Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, raised the very important question of immunization. I would like to assure her that we are doing all that we can to get people to take these shots. We have an immunization committee which does not comprise only people from the Ministry of Health. There are private representatives from the Guyana Medical Association and other interested Associations and a number of suggestions are coming forward. For instance, the most recent one is that when the immunization is being done, a loudspeaker must go around and announce it in the area. We will try this. The suggestion has been proposed – and this, I understand, is done in Jamaica – that we run a lottery on the immunization ticket or whatever you get when you have completed it. Even that, I understand, has not succeeded in Jamaica.

Wherever we can get help on this we are prepared to consider it and use it because in the new thrust in medicine over the last five years the emphasis has been on preventative medicine and we have succeeded. The statistics will show to a very great extent that we are giving free of cost all that is necessary to prevent the type of disease that can be prevented by immunization.

I have the figures here and although I would not want to go through all of them I can deal with one or two. This is more general than just preventive. For instance, in 1971, 75,838 people were seen in anti-natal clinic in all areas. Infants under one year – 45,795 were seen; children, one to two years – 21,339; and pre-school children – 26,058. A total of 169,030 people were seen in these clinics throughout 1971.

I can go on and in spite of what Hon. Members may say I am satisfied that we are making the greatest effort possible within the limits of our technical staff shortage and within the limits of the difficulties that present themselves in Guyana. You must realize that Guyana is not an island. It has a population of less than a million people. This is spread throughout an area of 83,000 square miles. As a result of this the technical staff per head is necessarily higher than if that population was enclosed in a little island like say Barbados or Trinidad.

These are the difficulties that face us and I am satisfied that we are on the go to try and solve them. We have to face the situation which we have no control over, of a shortage of technical personnel. Even if we train them, they leave to go for much more money that we can pay. We cannot stop this. It is happening through the Caribbean. 6,000 Nurses trained in Jamaica are working on other countries. It is a situation that we can only try to solve by doing more massive training and until such time as we reach there we have to work out ways and means of taking health care to the people.

Now finally on Mrs. DaSilva's comments on the Pharmacy and Poisons Board. As you will see, Mr. Chairman, the amount has been increased because the Food and Drugs Act is being implemented and very shortly the Regulations will be published. There is going to be an expanded service under the Food and Drugs Act.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, may I just ask a quick supplementary question. The Minister says he is willing to take suggestions. I hope he will. Would he consider enlisting the aid of people like Red Cross and St. John's Youth Service to help with getting these parents to have their children immunized? People like to be asked. Do not wait for them to offer, could they be approached?

Head 52, Ministry of Health, \$774,952, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.15 p.m.

The Chairman: Pages 158 to 162

HEAD 53 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

MEDICAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,146,117 for Head 53, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: I should like to deal with items (14), (22), (29) and (30) on page 158. On the following page, items (35), (39), (41), and (44). Then items (52), (55) and (57). Page 161, items (69), (78), (79) and (80) taken together. Page 162, subhead 7, 14, 16, 23, and 25.

Mrs. DaSilva: Page 158, items (2), (8), (11), (12), (14), (15), (21), (23), (24), and (27). On page 161, item (76). Page 162, subheads 16 and 24.

Mr. Wilson *rose --*

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Wilson if time permits.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, sir. Page 158, item (13) if my colleague does not deal with it. Then on page 162 subheads 14 and 18.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mt. Chairman, Item (14), Surgeon, Ear, Nose and Throat. My point here is we have only one such post. Apart from that, I notice there is a supernumerary surgeon but I think there is only one person, and I should like to say that there is need for more than one such specialist. This specialist is stationed at the Georgetown Hospital and there is none, for example in New Amsterdam. I am sure there is need for other similar specialists in other hospitals where the need is very great. When one goes to the Georgetown Hospital one notes that the number of people attending clinics is very large. I dare say that the Hon. Minister is aware that when there is a scarcity of specialist this only opens the way for various abuses. I should like to urge that the Government seeks to find another at least one or even more such surgeons and to expand the establishment in this field.

The same thing applies in the case of item (22), Obstetricians. Here again we note there are only three posts provided and it is absolutely necessary that there should be more such posts of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The population growth rate is very high and various diseases, disorders associated with child birth come into question here. We feel that the number provided is not adequate. When we have such few persons, the way again is open to abuses. For example, in New Amsterdam they have a situation there and in other parts of the country we have situations where the women seek consultation and are being forced to pay very high charges. The question also of abortion arises. I am informed that many of these operations are being done, but to get the operations done it entails in many cases very high charges.

In this connection Mr. Chairman, seeing that I referred to the question of abortion, even though I am a member of the Committee which is responsible for bringing up proposals for amending the legislation with respect to abortion, matrimonial causes, and so on, I should like to note that this Committee should get on with its work. Since June there has been no meeting and

I wish to urge the Hon. Minister to urge his colleague who is Chairman of this Committee to have the Committee meet in order to speed up the work in this respect.

Item (25), Psychiatrists. I should simply like to make the point that although there are a few beds provided for psychiatric cases at the Georgetown Hospital there is need for a real psychiatric unit to be set up at the Hospital. I am not referring here only to a few beds but a real unit where cases can be hospitalized and given treatment right there in Georgetown for a start

5.25 p.m.

anyway so that many cases would not have to go to New Amsterdam in order to secure treatment.

Another aspect of it is, it seems that the Psychiatrist cannot handle the many cases which come his way and Doctors outside have informed me that when they refer patients to the Psychiatrist for consultation they have to be turned away, they cannot take any more patients because their programme is crowded. Seeing that in Guyana today there are so many pressures placed on people, the mental strain is so great that they have to face life, what with unemployment and all the other pressures on people, I think that the Government should do something to treat these people properly.

Item (29), Medical Officers. We have heard in the past and perhaps the new Hon. Minister may maintain that position of his colleagues that the complement of doctors, that is G.M.O.s, is quite adequate.

Well, sir, we have made this point and again that there can be no substitute for doctors properly trained and qualified. Over the years, we have heard from the Government side that doctors are not needed in many areas such as the riverain areas. We were told such illnesses as occur in these areas could be treated by dispensers, and one Minister of Health earlier on

suggested that porters would be trained to treat the mental cases at the mental hospital, but be that as it may, the fact is that doctors are in short supply.

The Government cannot excuse the position by saying that we do not need more doctors, that we need some more medical auxiliaries, more para-medical staff. This, as I pointed out sometime ago, could be accepted if our country was at the stage of development in its health services where doctors were not available at all, in which case; one could understand the need to start with para-medical personnel before one can think about qualified doctors. Our country is in a different position. We have at least a base on which to work and so we can train more doctors who would be able to service all our areas.

The position, as we understand it, is that there is one doctor to about four thousand to five thousand of the population, and furthermore, the distribution of doctors is not been according to population. There are vast areas where people need to see a doctor, the Berbice River for example, and many other areas doctors hardly ever visit, and we would urge that the Government seriously considers the establishment of a medical school in Guyana to produce our own Guyanese doctors at a fairly good rate.

We have heard them speak about regionalism and that we will co-ordinate the training of doctors in the Caribbean. We still maintain that this will never meet the need of Guyana and we should and can establish a medical school in Guyana. It is not such difficult operation but it has to be given priority and certainly a Government that spends so much money on what we may call trivial things, squandermania, can devote money to such an essential service as the training of doctors for our country.

I would like also to ask the Hon. Minister what proportion, roughly, since he may not have this information immediately, is there between Guyanese doctors and foreign doctors, both in the cases of G.M.O.'s and the category of consultants.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to move to item (30), Dental Surgeons. I note that the establishment lists 10, and we were told earlier on that there were 5, and 5 were expected. I presume that these posts are now filled. The point I would like to make and the Minister to make his comment on, is that it seems that so far only extractions have been done even in the case of school children, by and large, wherever dentists have been visiting certain of the schools, but in view of the fact that the general care of the teeth has quite a lot to do with the general health, particularly the health of children, is the Ministry now in a position with so many more dentists available, to devote more attention to the general care of the teeth of children, for example fillings, to save teeth at an early stage rather than merely yanking them out when they become rotten?

Item (35), Public Health Nutritionist. I just wanted to know what this person was actually doing, what functions are actually being carried out at the present time.

Item (39), Public Health Inspectors. I would like to observe that sanitation standards seem to be very low, and one wonders whether the Government's programme envisages an expansion in the category of Public Health Inspectors, or what is being done to improve the work with respect to sanitation in our country. In many areas, sometimes one cannot even see a sanitary inspector. One lady in general conversation asked whether there was a sanitary inspector in New Amsterdam, because she has not seen one for such a long time. In view of the very poor sanitation in our country, efforts should be made to expand the work of this sector.

Item (41), Nursing Welfare Officer. I presume that this Officer is there to look after the welfare of nurses. I merely wonder why is it that with a nursing welfare officer, we continue to have such dissatisfaction expressed among the nursing staff with respect to various things, food, uniforms, etc. Is this officer looking into these questions to try to nip in the bud the problems that arise from time to time? On a previous occasion, I said that a lot depends on the satisfaction of the nursing staff because if they are not satisfied, then the result, is their grouses and so on tend to show themselves when they are dealing with patients.

With respect to item (44), I would like to know if there is a full complement of health visitors and school nurses, or whether this category has been depleted with respect to the other categories.

I turn now to item (52), Personal Pensionable Allowance in Lieu of Consulting Practice. Here, as I understand it, this allowance came about at a certain time in order to give consultants an opportunity to receive a sum of money, \$200 per month in Lieu of receiving certain portions of the fees for their consultation. I would like, in connection with speaking on this item, to say once again that the Government's act in introducing another sort of perk, as it were, of private practice has been one of the banes in our health services and I urge the Government to reconsider this whole question of private practice.

5.35 p.m.

We feel that even though doctors and consultants are very scarce, nevertheless, if the members of the Government had taken a stand at the very outset they would not have found themselves in the position today where they can hardly extricate themselves. We had taken a firm stand on this question despite pressures from certain quarters and we feel that this is one of the things that have to be tackled in order to prevent some of the abuses which arise as a result.

We feel that the Doctors concerned should be consulted, they should be spoken with and a proper basis for salaries should be arranged which would eliminate this necessity, so to speak, for private practice to be allowed.

And furthermore, not that Hon. Members do not know of this, but I raise it again because from time to time previous Ministers of Health have cast aspersions, one may say, on allegations made from this side about the fact that patients, poor people, are having to pay a lot of money which they can ill afford in order to secure medical attention. I hope that the present Minister of

Health will not take such an attitude because it is only when one recognizes a problem that one is able to tackle it and find a solution. It is no good hiding one's head in the sand. I refer, for example, to two cases recently at the New Amsterdam Hospital. A person was taken in unconscious on a Friday and was not seen by a doctor up to Monday. No X-ray was taken. The Doctor had to be paid \$60 in advance. He asked for \$40 more, making it \$100, but the person could only pay a further \$20 and then the X-ray was done.

There was another case of a man who was asked for \$200 by the Doctor before attention could be given to him. This patient or his family could only pay \$100. Then the Doctor got the people concerned to write saying that they had offered the Doctor the money and it was not that who had asked for the money. The Doctor must have felt that if a report was made to the Ministry he would be able to show prima facie evidence that the people themselves offered him money. More likely the feeling must have been that if the person had signed something, that person would not be too inclined to go and give a report to the Ministry concerned.

We have been told that the people should report the cases when these things occur. There have been several people who would like to report the cases but we face again the overriding question of fear when people know that they themselves or their relatives or friends may have to go before the person concerned and a knife may slip here and there. If people know that the Government means to take action well, then I am sure that you will find many more cases of people who are ready to bring to the attention of the Ministry cases of malpractice such as this. And we come back again to the point that more Doctors are needed. There is no need for the Ministry to try to excuse the position and say "We have enough Doctors. We need auxiliaries now." What we need are more Doctors. That is the only thing that will break the monopoly, so to speak, that is enjoyed by some in this respect.

I move on quickly to item (55), Staff Nurses. I note that the amount in the Revised Estimates is just about half of the approved provision. I wonder if the Minister can say whether

the 22 posts of staff nurse are filled or whether there are any vacancies in this respect. If so, I wonder why this should be the case.

Similarly with respect to (57), Audio-Visual Technician. I see a very small amount under the Revised Estimates. I would like to know whether that post is vacant or not.

I now turn to item (69), Nurses Midwives (Training). Here I must observe that \$5,000 was provided in 1972; nothing is shown as having been spent for 1972 actually but again for 1973 we see another sum of \$5,000. Does this mean that no nurse midwives were trained or nothing was spent for training during 1972? Will the Minister offer an explanation for this in view of the great need which he himself has admitted just now for training more technicians, more midwives etc.

I take item (78), Night Duty Allowances: Medical Officers, Item (79), Additional Medical Assistance and Item (81), Overtime together. The main point seems to me that the estimates seem very unrealistic since it seems that the actual amount spent in 1971 for Night Duty Allowances, Medical Officers, Additional Medical Assistance and Overtime ranged from \$51,000 to \$103,000 and yet in each of those three cases of Additional Medical Assistance \$100 and in the case of Night Duty Allowances; Medical Officers we see a very small sum of \$35,000 compared with the actual amount spent - \$85,000. This is just a small point to show that the Government seems to be underestimating its expenditure.

I would also make the point that in the case of the provision for the Night Duty Allowances for Medical Officers and Additional Medical Assistance, if you take the sums together you will see that in the first case, Night Duty Allowances, this sum of money amounts to the equivalent of what one would pay to twelve full-time G.M.O.s. In the case of Additional Medical Assistance, \$108,000, this sum is the equivalent of roughly the pay of 15 full-time G.M.O.s. If we add them up we see 27 full-time G.M.O.s. could be employed for the additional medical assistance funds that are being used. This is another point that I have used to show that

there is need for more G.M.O.s. in our service and that only a medical school in Guyana can help us to begin to get over this problem.

We come to the last page of this Head, page 162. I refer to subhead 7, Training and In-Service Education for Public Health Inspectors, Health Visitors and Rural Midwives. I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us how many rural midwives are in training and what is the experience in terms of losses, if any, in this category of rural midwives.

Subhead 14, Dental Treatment for School Children. I have already commented about dental treatment for school children. I only wish to note that a very small amount seems to be spent. As a matter of fact it is even less than what was voted. This does not indicate a very good trend in terms of dental health for school children.

Subhead 16, Milk and Food Sampling. Here again this amount has been very low all the time and one wonders how the funds provided here will be affected by the administration of the new Foods and Drugs Act and particularly with respect to milk and food sampling. It seems very little is being done in this respect from the amount that is provided.

Turning now to subhead 23, Health Education. This is another field in which very little is being done, but it is a field which, if properly utilized, can result in improved health. We see the sum of only \$2,500 under the 1972 Revised Estimates although \$3,500 was voted.

5.45 p.m.

That itself is a very small sum. But apart from that, my query to the Minister is: Why is health education not pushed? Why is it that we do not have more posters displayed in various public places? Why is it we do not have at least more short films being produced in the first place and being shown on the screen? Why is it we do not have more radio time given to these things instead of the very lavish Government publications that pass for propaganda? I would feel if more publicity is given and more campaigns are done in this respect it would lead to more

protection for our population and it would be a very useful expenditure and effort. Would the Hon. Minister indicate why so little is still being done in the field?

May I take the opportunity of asking, since we are talking about health education, why is it that the Government has not seen fit to take any further action with respect to the Resolution which Parliament passed some time ago dealing with the question of cigarette smoking? I think this was in the previous Parliament and we were promised from time to time that some action would be taken. But up to now we can see nothing coming from the Government on this matter. Would the Hon. Minister explain?

Mrs. DaSilva: When we were discussing the Private Hospitals Bill I had said that that Bill could be described as a “do as I say, but do not as I do.” But I want to ask the Hon. Minister a question on page 158, because of the complaints one hears most often about the Public Hospital Georgetown apart from the 2 in a bed, is the lack of medical officers, the lack of doctors, the lack of specialists. There are many questions on page 158 with staffing. Can the Hon. Minister maybe good enough to explain. I should like to group items (2), (11), (12), (14), (21), (23), (24), and (27) together.

Item (2). There is only one Principal Medical Officer. Was there not one during 1972 that only \$4,040 was asked for? Has it now been put right by asking for \$10,080?

Mr. David Singh: The post has recently been filled.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item (24), Junior Ophthalmologist and item (27), Registrars, \$86,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain whether any of these posts were vacant and are now filled?

Page 161, subhead 1, Item (76), Institution Allowance to G.M.O.s. I should like to ask the Hon. Minister to give us an explanation about the duties of a G.M.O. When I spoke about this some time ago I said that the people complained that these G.M.O.s no longer run the districts.

Mr. David Singh: “In some cases.”

The Hon. Minister said they must go to the health centres, but this is not always possible. Have they got regular office hours like other people? I think of an instance in which I was personally involved because I had to take a woman with head injuries because she had no means of getting to a doctor. I had to take her from Nooten Zuill to the G.M.O. was not in. Eventually the woman had to go all the way to Georgetown. What are the duties? Are these doctors supposed to be there at regular time? Are they allowed private practice?

The Chairman: Hon. Member, we have started to exhaust out time on this Head and we have five more heads on this Ministry.

Mrs. DaSilva: I will hurry, sir. Page 162, subhead 16, Milk and Food Sampling. What are these officers supposed to be doing? The amount being asked for is \$200; it has gone suddenly down to that amount. In 1971, \$500 in the Approved Estimates, and it went down in the Revised Estimates to \$200. Is this enough money for these people to do their duties properly? We have so many items banned and we get items from Carifta countries; an important item like milk we are allowed to bring in a brand from Barbados which I understand the Barbadians complain about, the poor quality of condensed milk made in St. Michael, Barbados. Are the milk sampling people doing anything about it?

5.55 p.m.

One other item on that page, sir: I turned over the page by mistake.

The Chairman: You have to give the Minister an opportunity.

Mrs. DaSilva: Sir, you said one speaker for each side.

The Chairman: If you take up all the time, the Minister will not answer

Mrs. DaSilva: Well then, sir, what is the point of our being here if the Hon. Minister is not going to answer? What I want to know about the polio rehabilitation centre, recently a country that is twinned with Guyana sent some braces and medical equipment to help make braces for children in Guyana. Two parcels came. One was held up at the post office, the other one got through. The child could not get the braces. Could the Hon. Minister say if things like medical equipment coming for the polio rehabilitation centre could not have priority treatment through the post office?

Mr. Wilson: I would like to deal with item (30). Ten Dental Surgeons. The population is \$750,000. I asked my colleague Mr. Harry Lall what is the number of the work force. He says 240,000. How much of that belongs to the low income group? He said 85 percent. It works out to about 25,000 people. I want to point out that this Government claims to be socialist, that it wants to look after the masses, farmers and low-income persons. Sir, if you divide the 250,000 by 10, you will see each dental surgeon has 25,000 persons. I would like to know whether the Minister thinks this is adequate in relation to the Government's claim to socialist.

About forty years ago, when I took the R.S.I. examination, a very eminent public health officer, quoting Mansonbar, said that the sound nutrition of the individual is the foundation of the public health, and sound nutrition cannot be got if you do not have sound teeth. Do you really believe that \$4,000 can take care of the \$65,000 children in the population? That is 2½ cents per child for the poor people's children. Some time ago, the question was raised about fluoridation of water. The Government talks about prophylactic treatment. What steps is it taking to take care of the children's teeth? Give them something on the water to prevent dental caries.

Mr. D.A. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I will deal very quickly with the various points raised by the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh. I agree with him that we need more than one Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon. The question of recruiting is an exercise we are carrying on all the time. I am sure he knows that it is a post-graduate qualification that takes a longer time to acquire. We

have a Guyanese who is now filling the position and we hope to be able to recruit more of these people as quickly as possible. There are certain scarce disciplines in the hospital service. We have a certain number of G.M.O.'s, but we have other scarce areas, Ear, Nose and Throat specialist, pathologists, anesthetists, and we are trying to fill these posts.

On the question of obstetricians, we have on the Estimates three, and two supernumeraries. We have at work throughout Guyana, five such people, who are qualified. We have one at Suddie, one at New Amsterdam, three at the Georgetown Hospital, fully qualified Obstetricians and Gynecologists. As stated here, we have the full complement on the staff. One is on leave at the moment, four are operating.

I cannot disagree that we need more doctors. We are recruiting doctors all the time but we cannot as yet pay some of the doctors what they would ask for to come and work in Guyana. Recruitment of G.M.O.'s is an on-going exercise and we will have to keep recruiting, and offering facilities for training which we do every year under the Guyana Scholarship or a conditional scholarship.

I do not agree with the statement by the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh, and I think it is one of his out of character statements, when he made the statement that a large number of people in this country do not see a doctor. It is a general statement that is unfair to what we are doing. There are areas, I admitted this here and outside, where the doctors do not perform, but if he

6.05 p.m.

were to look at the statistics, not only of some of the Caribbean countries but of Latin America, and do a comparison, he will surely agree with me that that statement is not for Guyana.

On the question of item (30), Dental Surgeons we have eight on the establishment at the moment. The statistics show that we have eight appointed. Statistics show, that is, perhaps in

1971, that the only service dentists give outside of Georgetown or in the rural areas is extraction service.

In the schools there is a programme for teeth going on all the time. We now have at the Suddie Hospital one complete dental unit. Another one is to be installed. We hope to provide very shortly a full dental service at the Suddie Hospital.

The next point raised was in relation to item (35), Public Health Nutritionist. I understand that this person has resigned and is no longer on the staff.

My Hon. Friend dealt generally under item (39), Public Health Inspectors, with the question of sanitation. I think he must know that, with the limited staff we have, great effort is being made to improve environmental sanitation in the country. We have a situation where the complement, I think is 45. There is a shortage we of 26, I think with the re-employment of nine, the shortage is 17. We have in training now, and I am told that there will be available next year, about 20 or 25. But they are in training and if they all succeed it will have an impact on the staff at the Public Health Officers level.

I am acting on advice on this because I do not know. Item (41), Nursing Welfare Officer. I am advised that the Hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh, put the emphasis the wrong way. The Officer is for the welfare of nursing as a service not nurses themselves. I do not know the answer from my own knowledge.

In relation to item (44), there is a full complement of Health Visitors and School Nurses. I should explain that the health visitor and school nurse is a single person, trained to do everything.

With regard to the private practice of consultants. We can talk around this, I believe, on either side but what we have to appreciate is the situation that faces us. A consultant is not a person who becomes a consultant after five years in medical school. A consultant is a post-

graduate situation. We have in Guyana – and I speak for the majority of consultants – some of the finest in the Caribbean. They perform a service beyond the call of duty. They get \$200 a month in Lieu of consulting practice and they are allowed private practice. The fact that they get private practice shows that there is a need for this level of medical expertise. Until we can get more of these people within the service those that we have will have to carry the weight both within the public sector of medicine and in the private sector.

The important point is that they are giving a service to the people of Guyana. I take the Hon. Member's point that some of them – and I would say a very few of them – abuse the ethics of the profession. There are very few who do this. I asked the Hon. Member to call their names and he would not call their names. Like him I get complaints, allegations are made; they are investigated but what I would like to say to him is that the moment the Ministry proposes to take one of these defaulters before the medical board which has the power to discipline, there is no evidence forthcoming. No one comes up to give evidence. It is not that we do not look at these things. We get the complaints we look at them. But I would like it to be known that the great majority of our consultants – because I can name the defaulters – provide an excellent service to the people of Guyana.

If you have the time you can look at the statistics and see that as many as 1,200 people per day get a service at the Georgetown Hospital and that is only the Georgetown Hospital. One of the various clinics at the Georgetown Hospital gives this service.

I think the question asked on item (55), Staff Nurses, was whether we had a full complement of Staff Nurses. I am advised that this is so. What happened there is that the vote for 1972 was about half what is estimated for 1973. That was the time when we did not have this complement. Some of the nurses came out of training and some came from outlying areas where they had reached the status. From 1973 we will have the full complement of staff.

Item (69), Nurses Midwives (Training). This is \$5,000 for the training only of midwives. I do not know what the number is but on the other page we have the training of rural midwives which is a different type of person. In relation to a trained midwife, it is para-medical. This is to give people within the area some training to deal with these cases.

Item (76) is related to the question of consultants. It deals with the payment of Institution Allowances to G.M.O.s. This is paid to the G.M.O. at the Georgetown Hospital because he is not entitled to private practice. He gets \$100 a month the first year, \$125 a month the second year and \$150 a month during the third year. This is not paid to G.M.O.s in the rural areas because that G.M.O. is entitled to private practice after the working day ends at 4 o'clock. That is the rule. It has been there for a long time.

On the question of health education I would ask my Hon. Friend Mr. Chandisingh to look at page 159. The money on the item that he dealt with is really for the posters and so on. I agree with him that possibly it could be more, but the health education sector was established during this year. We have the post of Health Education Officer which is filled and two Health Education Assistants. They are really gearing now to get on with the programme.

6.15 p.m.

Medical Superintendent, Fort Canje. This post has not been filled but there is a doctor acting. The question of filling the post is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission. Filling of the post of Medical Superintendent, Mahaica Hospital. The person being trained for this is on his or her way to Guyana to fill the post.

A question was asked with respect to milk and food sampling. The sum of \$200 here is indeed for this purpose. This money is really for the Public Health Inspectors buying perhaps a tin like the one displayed when they do spot checks. When they have to do the checks on the fresh milk a check is done there, and then with an instrument. If the milk is bad well they deal with it straight away.

Interruption

When we examine Head 57, Analyst, we will see that there is money provided for this research and this type of thing. This is the Department which is really going to implement the Food and Drugs Act.

Head 53, Ministry of Health, Medical, \$3,146,117, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I propose sitting until half past seven if necessary at which time these Heads will be finished. If not, I will put them en bloc. Tomorrow we will do Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, Ministry of Finance and, of course, the Appropriation Bill. We will now deal with page 163.

**HEAD 54 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH
BACTERIOLOGICAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$434,358 for Head 54, Ministry of Health, Bacteriological, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: Items (1) and (2).

Mrs. DaSilva: Subhead 1 Item (7).

Mr. Chandisingh: Item (1), Senior Government Bacteriologist and Pathologist. We note that this Department seems to be in a rather difficult position since the substantive person is unavailable for reasons of which we are aware. Although someone else is acting, we understand this person is acting only part-time, and it is not very good that we should be for any long period of time with a part-time person doing this work.

For one thing, we understand that tests seem to be taking rather long being done and forwarded to practitioners outside, and we are wondering how long it will take before the Department is properly headed.

Very quickly I should like to refer to item (2), Junior Government Bacteriologist and Pathologist. We note that this post has been vacant for a very long time. In the past, we have been told that it is not very necessary because Microbiologist and Bio-Chemists were to be used to do the work that would normally be done by a Junior Bacteriologist and Pathologist. I wonder why, therefore, these two posts continue to be left in our Estimates. Is the Government still planning to fill these vacancies? Or is that it is just left there by mistake?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, item (7), Technologists. I should like to group that with training of technologist's subhead 11. We have been asked under subhead 1, item (7) to provide \$102,327 for 38 technologists which would be the same number in 1971, 1972 and 1973. But I notice that in 1972 the Revised Estimates we only used up \$65,280. Was there such a great shortage of technologist during 1972? Does the Hon. Minister hope that the number will be greatly increased almost double to take up this amount that we are being asked to vote?

The Chairman: The legend says "Anticipated filling of posts."

Mrs. DaSilva: I would be glad if the Minister can tell us how many vacancies there are to be filled. When we talk about the training of technologists there is a drive in Guyana for the early detection of cancer in women. One of the tests they propose to do as well as the test for breast cancer is cancer of the cervix and the need for the Paps test to be done. We understand that there are not many technologists at the P.H.G. qualified at the moment to carry out this test but there is one man who has been trained. I do not know if he is back. Would the Hon. Minister say in view of the big drive for this cancer detection how many technologists they will have and would they have the facilities to be able to carry out this Paps test effectively?

Subhead 10, Blood Transfusion Service. I think it is only in today's newspapers I read there is a shortage of blood at the Blood Bank. I know of an instance where a Doctor at the P.H.G. refused to do an operation on a patient unless she produced the two pints of blood. I happened to know the person and I was able to get her the two pints of blood. What about the poor people who have no means of contacting persons to provide blood? Could the Hon. Minister say what is being done towards the establishment of a Central Blood Bank where I could be continually built up and kept and also not just for one hospital but where everybody contributes into a central blood bank with proper refrigeration, and all the rest of it, and that any hospital could call on the blood bank to get blood? Also, could they make any use of plasma to help out the situation where they cannot get blood?

6.25 p.m.

Mr. D.A. Singh: Government is taking the necessary steps to correct the situation at the Central Medical Laboratory as far as the Bacteriologist and Pathologist is concerned. In fact, the Public Service Commission has been asked to recruit the person who has applied for this post and it should not be a long time before this position is filled. Additionally, we will require under the health plan to fill these two vacancies of junior officers and perhaps do a little more than that. Suddie will be having laboratory facilities the laboratory facilities in New Amsterdam will be improved and we are trying to recruit junior people to get into these positions.

On the question of technologists raised by the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, we have doubled the money that will be available in 1973 as against that available in 1972. The position is, we are training these people, they are in training, and we put up the money to employ them as soon as they come out of training.

I can only at this state accept the suggestion that we need to do some little more work on the question of blood collection and perhaps a central blood bank might be the best thing. On the question of plasma. I do not think they use it. There have been some people from Suriname

with a proposal for producing plasma. The position is, they have to put their proposal in writing. We do not have the equipment to do it ourselves. Mr. Chairman, I think that is all.

Head 54, Ministry of Health, Bacteriological - \$434,359 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 55 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

X-RAY

Question proposed that the sum of \$221,355 for Head 55, Ministry of Health, X-Ray, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 55, Ministry of Health, X-Ray - \$221,355 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 56 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES ETC.

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,338,859 for Head 56, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries Etc., stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 165 to 170. The Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh will be allowed 20 minutes, the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva 15 minutes and 15 minutes for the Hon. Minister to reply. Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: Items (10), (51), (58), (65), (66), and (84), subheads 11, 14, 23, 27, and 33.

Item (1), it seems that only one hospital administrator has been appointed although there are two posts. What is there as on the second one has not been appointed?

Item (51), Foreman Mechanic, Mobile Dispensary – Launch Service. From time to time we have made some remarks about this and more often than not it would appear that the launch service was not in operation. Why has a Foreman Mechanic if the launch service is not in operation? When we asked a question on this matter, we were told that steps are being taken to repair the boat or provide a new one, but so far, the people in the North West are suffering. I would in this connection draw the Hon. Minister's attention to a communication which I received recently, which indicates the feeling of people in that area with respect to the facilities provided by the Ministry, and reference was made also to this boat. On Saturday 9th December, 1972, residents of Arrow River and Aruka River picketed the District Administration offices at Mabaruma with placards and there are several slogans mentioned here. One of them demands medical service in the rivers now. Others are:

“Resume the mobile dispensary service now.
If medical boats are unfit, borrow or hire other boats.
Promises don't cure sickness.
We are taxpayers we deserve good medical service.
We suffered long enough, Government must do something now.
1972 – Over 100 children died from fever, colds, measles and whooping cough.
P.N.C. Government makes the small man a dead man.”

It says also, and my information is, that the majority of pickets were Amerindians who travelled from as far as Hotoquai Mission and the Bakrimani Creek area to express their grievances. The residents pointed out that for over seven months no medical boat visited their district and the entire area is now infested with sickness. Whooping cough dominates actually every home where there are children nine years old and under. The mobile dispensary, *New Guyana*, incidentally, the naming and launching of this boat was one of my official acts in 1961.

“The mobile dispensary (“New Guyana”) is grounded at Kumaka for about seven months it is left to be seen if it will ever go back in service again. The speedboat (“Doc Talbot”) is most times out of order.

Presently there are two dispensaries at Mabaruma. One of them is supposed to be serving in the rivers but because of no boats he cannot visit anywhere.

There is much talk about getting a new boat, but when? In the meantime the people are suffering.

It is the firm opinion that if the medical boats are unfit the department should rent, borrow or hire other boats to continue the service.”

I will stop at this point because of the time but I think it is a good indication of the type of service that is now being given to the people in that area.

I would like to ask specifically when the Hon. Minister considers that the boat in question will be brought back into service and the people have their services restored.

On item (58), Food Supervisors, I would like to take the opportunity to suggest that perhaps there is need for Food Supervisors because very often patients in public institutions do not get the diets that are actually provided for them. Patients suffering from certain ailments and requiring special diets find themselves not receiving these diets. In some cases the patients who cannot fend for themselves do not get the food; it passes them by. You need Food Supervisors to see to it that the diets provided actually go to the patients.

Item (65), Staff Nurses and item (66), Student Nurses. I would just like to refer in passing to the figure which the Hon. Minister himself announced and which I quoted when I made my remarks on the Budget Speech. I do not think it is necessary again to repeat those

figures but I wish to say that it is a very shocking situation that up to now no solution has been found for this drain of our trained nurses and for the wastage which takes place in the category of student nurses.

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is prepared to see to it that recruitment does not take place on the basis of political favouritism; whether he is prepared to see to it that recruitment of nurses takes place according to aptitude and qualifications.

I would think that this is one of the things which have to be done if we are not to have such losses, particularly in the case of student nurses. The staff nurses who are trained and are lost is another question. In view of the fact that when the Hon. Minister made his famous speech he is reported in the *Guyana Graphic* to have asked the regional nursing body for some sort of suggestion as to what could be done to meet this problem, I wonder if the Hon. Minister or the Government has now found a solution to this problem. That is apart from the first point which I mentioned, the action that has to be taken. There are other considerations that need to be taken into account if we are to improve the status of our nurses and preserve their services. This is one of the questions which the Hon. Minister asked. I would hope that he now has an answer to that question.

In the same connection I would like to ask why it is that in the Private Hospitals Act and the Regulations to that Act the ratio of nurses for patients is 1:20, which means 3:20 for a 24-hour day. It is stipulated in the relations that there should be one auxiliary nurse to every five patients. The ratio seems very high. It is well and good if you have the staff. Would the Hon. Minister say if the public hospitals apply those criteria? If not, what is the ratio of nurses and auxiliaries to patients per shift? This should be very revealing, Mr. Chairman.

On item (84), Assistant Nurses, we see a complement of 42. I would like to know again what is the position with respect to those posts. Are they actually filled?

I got now to subhead 11, Clothing and Bedding. We note that there has been a separation between clothing and bedding and uniforms. With this money being used for clothing and bedding, I would like to ask why is it that we still have the disgraceful condition in our public hospitals where there is not a sufficient supply for simple requirements which are necessary for the care of patients in any hospital such as sheets, pillows, pillow-cases and so on. These things are always in short supply, it seems. Persons have to carry these things in many cases if their relatives who are patients in the hospitals are to be in any state of comfort.

This is a very glaring situation and hope that something will be done to bring about a change.

On the question of drugs and medical appliances, subhead 14. Here again we see a large amount being voted. I would like to know if the sum shown here is actually being spent on the purchase of drugs, in particular. In other words, would the Hon. Minister indicate whether the sum shown under the Revised Estimates was actually spent in the purchase of drugs during 1972. I ask this question because I have been informed that actually rather smaller sum has been used in the purchase of drugs. I notice that later on there is provision for deductions of issues of drugs and medical appliances and so on. There seems to be room for manoeuvre here. It may be what is called a suspense account. That is why I ask whether all of this money has actually been used for this purpose because we still find there are shortages of drugs and particularly certain types of drugs.

In the same connection may I also ask whether the instructions issued to doctors, and about which there was a strike, on the issuing or counter-signing of prescriptions for certain types of scarce drugs are in force at the moment or whether they have not been put into practice. We would like to know what the position at the moment in this respect is.

Finally, I would like to ask if the Government has tried to secure supplies of medical instruments and drugs from countries such as the German Democratic Republic and other socialist countries where the supplies may be available. We understand they can be secured at lower prices than from the normal sources in the capitalist west.

I should like to move to subhead 23, Renewal of Bedsteads at Public Hospital. We see a very small sum being voted, \$3,000. At the Skeldon Hospital in the past there used to be a special Children's Ward with children beds but now we find that this Ward seems to have been broken up and one or two beds are just lying around misused. Why is it that beds are not provided especially at Skeldon Hospital? What is being done to renew these bedsteads at the various hospitals? Furthermore, why is it that additional beds cannot be provided for such cases where more than one person is in a bed? We know there have been cases in the Georgetown Hospital where not only maternity cases are involved but surgical cases where more than one patient is in a bed. What is being done about this?

Subhead 27, Medical Facilities, Orealla. A very miserable sum is being voted. The sum spent is only \$1,000 as shown on the Revised Estimates for 1972. The previous year it was \$92 and I think it is a very good reflection of the medical services provided for the people in this area. What about a doctor to visit there? Mr. Chairman, this is a very shocking case and we urge that the Government do something to rectify this position immediately.

Subhead 33. This is the last subhead I have indicated. Medical Services Matthews Ridge/Port Kaituma. This is a rather fishy one because at first the amount provided was in the nature of ... for medical services. When it was taken over by the Government we were told that that sum was absolutely essential in order to run the health services and the hospital in the interest of the people. We are interested in the health services of people in that area as much as we are for other places. We see the sum being reduced over the past couple of years, \$94,000 in 1970, \$27,907 in 1971 and then in 1972 the Approved Estimates show \$100,000, Revised Estimates \$94,000 and here again we are voting \$100,000 for medical services at Matthews

Ridge/Port Kaituma. This led me on a previous occasion to post the question whether the sum of money was not being used for certain non-medical services in order to give assistance to people by way of wages, foodstuffs and so on. I wish the Hon. Minister could give us some explanation on this.

The Chairman: You have finished exactly at 20 minutes. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Page 167, subhead 1, item (43), Dental Mechanic. We have been asked to provide the sum of \$2,352. When the Hon. Minister spoke a little while ago I understood him to say we have eight Dental Surgeons. I think the Minister also said that these dental surgeons only extract teeth they do not do filling. First of all one dental mechanic is hardly sufficient to do the work of making dentures and so on. Is the Ministry considering training another dental mechanic? I would urge the Government that it is the accepted practice to try and save teeth not to pull them out.

Page 169, subhead 14, Drugs and Medical Appliances (a) Drugs and Dressings for all Institutions, \$900,000. When I spoke earlier about a blood transfusion service I asked the Hon. Minister whether the Government would consider the use of plasma, and he said he was discussing the matter and is making arrangement with someone. I want to ask the Hon. Minister, first of all, if we have not got sufficient blood to do blood transfusion where are we going to get blood to plasma. This is an expensive operation. Could the Hon. Minister not find out the cost of plasma and go into the matter and see if we could import plasma into the country.

We go to page 170, subhead 19, Travelling Facilities for relatives and visitors, Best Hospital, \$1,500.

I noticed that under the Approved Estimates for 1972, there is the sum of \$3,000, the Revised Estimates show that only \$700 has been spent, now we are spending \$1,500, and the legend states: "Reduced visits."

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to tell us what is the position at the Best Hospital. I understand that the incidence of T.B. among patients is lessened and this is due to the new approach to T.B. I suggested many times, that we use part of the Best Hospital to make a cottage hospital for the West Coast and West Bank for use by the residents. I know that babies do not wait until the ferry is ready there, to cross, to be born, and people across the river, on the Bank and on the Coast, cannot get medical attention easily. Sections of the Best Hospital were falling apart because of lack of use. I would like the Minister to tell us about it.

Subhead 23, Renewal of Bedsteads at Public Hospital, \$3,000. The Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh spoke about the Regulations given in private hospitals and I will not repeat what he said, but I would only say that the Government's motto seems to be: "Don't do as I do. Do as I say." I take it that these beds are falling apart from the weight of two or three persons at onetime, or is it that they are collapsing because of age? They do not have to comply with the regulation which has been promulgated for the private hospitals. Can the Minister use some of this money to cut down on this matter of two and three people in a bed?

As I said two or three weeks ago, a man walked out of the hospital after he had been admitted because he found he had to share a bed. He was asked to share a bed with another man. His family had to scrape the money together to get him into a private hospital. (*Interruption*) I would be most grateful, sir, time is against us, and it would help if we do not have silly remarks from the backbenchers of the Government side.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, please let us hear the speaker.

Mr. DaSilva: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what rationale is used to give these people \$100,000, an increase of \$6,000 on the Revised Estimates for 1972. Coming to things

like surgical appliances, subhead 26, they get \$3,000 more than last year, that is, if they are going to spend it. If we go through Allowances to Patients and Discharged Inmates for the Mahaica Hospital subhead 21, they are receiving more. Subhead 27. At Orealla, only \$2,000 is being spent there. What rationale is used in allocating this money to the different hospitals in the area?

Mr. D.A. Singh: The first point raised by the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh on the question of Hospital Administration, we have not been able to fill this post because on the qualification that had been set, we have not been able to improve. However, we have put certain proposals to the Public Service Commission with a view to resolving the situation.

Foreman Mechanic, I think it was under this Head that was raised the question of the Mabaruma story based on a document which was prepared by the P.P.P. and the picketing exercise which was sponsored by the P.P.P. We have the names of the people. We do not mind them picketing but what was put in that document and publicised was a pack of lies. There was some trouble with the launch, and throughout this debate I was admitting that officers fell sown on the job. The engine came down for repairs and was returned and sent back, but the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh suggests there is indifference where the people's health is concerned, so they picketed. But they went further and claimed that 100 people died. They cannot prove it. (*Interruption*) You will forge the death certificates.

On the question of clothing and bedding, subhead 11, to which the Hon. Member Chandisingh referred, I would like ere again to say that this is not satisfactory. It should be better. It is however, interesting to know that the laundry service in the Georgetown Hospital alone puts out as much as, in an average month, 50,000 pieces of laundry. We have a human problem. I am not going to accuse anybody but it is a fact that linens are lost. Then you have the question of dealing with those that go bad. It is an exercise that I recognize. We need in 1973 to pay a lot of attention, but at the same time we have to pay attention to some of the people who are involved. Over 10,000 pieces go to the Palms and this is the type of exercise that goes on.

There are 3,500 people employed. It could be an administrative problem. We have to improve the service.

On expenditure on drugs, during last year, we far outspent what was allocated, and the fact of the matter is that we spent under this Head for 1972, over \$1.5 million. I can assure Hon. Members that the money allocated for drugs and medical equipment is being spent. Through our buying, we supply places like the Police, the Army.

7.05 p.m.

The question of the restriction of the dispensation of scarce drugs is a matter that is being considered by the Hospital Management Committee. Let me repeat what happened at that time. There was no restriction. There was a discussion going on, on a proposal to the pharmacists for such a restriction and those who read it called it a directive. In my presence that work was withdrawn. The matter is being considered now by consultants who comprise the medical committee of the Georgetown Hospital.

Subhead 23, Renewal of Bedsteads at Public Hospital, Georgetown. This money is used merely for repairs of certain articles. Under another heading, subhead 6 on page 169, beds are provided. In fact we are now changing the beds. We have \$50,000 provided under that subhead. We are providing new beds. In the early days beds with springs were provided and sometimes the springs get out of order. This is what the money is concerned with.

Subhead 27, Medical Facilities, Orealla. Here again this sum of \$2,000 is for the purpose of furnishing the nurses' house and keeping it furnished. It is put there incase that situation arises. This is not, as it says, medical facilities. This is not money for supplying drugs and all that for Orealla or to pay the nurse or the doctor. It is merely to look after the accommodation there.

Subhead 33, Medical Services, Matthews' Ridge/Port Kaituma. The Nurses want a refrigerator at Matthews Ridge. I am very happy to see that my Hon. Friends are very concerned about the health of the people at Matthews Ridge and I would like to assure them that the Government will provide excellent medical service for the people at Matthews Ridge. We have a hospital, we have a Doctor, we have a Dispenser, we have a Laboratory and we have a Dispensary at Port Kaituma.

The provision is \$100,000 because originally it cost the company \$200,000 for the provision of medical services to the entire complex. There is a large staff on the general vote of the Ministry. A lot of the equipment which was there will come out of the general equipment for Mabaruma. So, all of that is not included. This sum of \$100,000 is really for running the service at Matthews Ridge. We provide the bodies to go there, we provide equipment. We do need \$100,000 for what we are doing with the money. It is part and parcel of the general health service.

Finally Matthews Ridge/Port Kaituma is an agency like any other agency. I would like to correct a misapprehension made by the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva. She stated that I said that the dentist only pulled out teeth. I did not say that. I said that because of the lack of equipment in some of these rural areas they can only do extractions and then I alluded to the fact that we have set up a complete and comprehensive dental unit at Suddie and another dental care unit is going there very soon. One is working now. We have a dentist stationed at Suddie. We will have the same situation at Skeldon. Equipment for caring teeth is there. We are getting quite a lot of this equipment during 1973, that is, equipment so that dentists can do more than extract.

7.05 p.m.

(Interruption by Mrs DaSilva.) I was dealing with the statement which you said I made because it was inaccurate.

As far as the Best Hospital is concerned, if you look at the Capital Estimates you will see that it is hoped that Best Will be completed this year and will then be a general hospital and not a specialist hospital. Work is going on here now on reconditioning the wards. The money has been voted to complete this work.

Head 56 - Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries - \$8,338,859, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 57 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ANALYST

Question proposed that the sum of \$147,655 for Head 57, Ministry of Health, Analyst, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: I would just like to ask the Hon. Minister a general question: Where is provision for the staff which will operate the Food and Drugs Act?

I understand that this is about to come into being with the Regulations. I wonder if he can indicate whether the staff will be under this Ministry. If not, what provision is being made?

Mrs. DaSilva: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what progress is being made about the Bureau of Standards? How soon is it hoped to see it established? In the meantime what could Guyana do with regard to the milk spoken about? Are the people supposed to accept this substandard milk and use it because we have not got a Bureau of Standards? Can the Analyst Department go into these matters?

You told me, that this comes within the scope of the Analyst. I was asking how soon we will get a Bureau of Standards?

There is an ancillary question I want to ask the Hon. Minister. I hope you will grant me permission to ask him because I notice that it does not strictly belong to the Ministry of Health. I have just looked at the *Evening Post*. It talks about the serious position at the blood bank at the Central Medical Laboratory. An official of the Ministry of Health:

“pointed out that although many donors had turned up at the institution it was not possible to accept the blood as many of the donors had alcohol in their system.”

A couple of days ago I read a report from the alcohol people urging the use of a breathalyzer. I crave your indulgence to put in this question on a breathalyzer because it is a form of analysis and does concern the Analyst Department. Could the Minister of Health work in co-operation with the Minister of Home Affairs to urge that as soon as possible we implement the use of the breathalyzer test?

Mr. David Singh: In relation to the question asked by the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh. I said earlier the Poisons and Pharmacy Board is being expanded. Staff will be added there because they will be required to do the Food and Drugs inspections. I am satisfied that the Analyst Department itself is well staffed with nine graduate people and other very highly qualified technicians.

I would like to say also that the Head of the Department has recently been sent on a scholarship to further qualify himself to deal with this job. I do not have any problem in my mind about the staff to carry this on.

The actual inspection will be done by the Poisons and Pharmacy Board and the analysis will be done at the Analyst Department.

Question put.

27.12.72

National Assembly

7.05 – 7.15 p.m.

Head 57, Ministry of Health, Analyst - \$147,655, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.15 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 172.

HEAD 58 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PALMS

Question proposed that the sum of \$554,557 for Head 58, Ministry of Health, Palms, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: A general point. We understand the Government is to set up a geriatric unit. Because of the great need for more accommodation in such an institution as the Palms which caters for old or chronically ill people we would like to suggest that Government should begin thinking along the lines of re-siting the Palms in a more spacious area, perhaps along the East Coast where elderly persons will be able to go for strolls, find themselves in pleasant surroundings rather than being cooped up in the busy area of elderly, chronically ill people in the Public Hospital who are really taking up space which is needed by other people.

The Chairman: Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I should like to support whole-heartedly the suggestion by the Hon. Member about the geriatric unit and re-siting of the Palms. I hope all the Hon. Members on the Government side would see that the Opposition is giving useful suggestions.

No Credit is ever given to the Opposition for making suggestions. I want to put this suggestion in addition to what the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh has made. Through the

Ministry of Health there can be a census to ascertain the number of chronically ill and disabled persons to see how many of that type of persons there are and from this survey the Ministry may be able to find out how these people can contribute to the country in some way and also to help themselves. This could easily be done.

Mr. David Singh: Mr. Chairman, a few weeks ago we started looking at this situation and the approval by the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh to a certain extent is what we are working on, and similarly the proposals from the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva. Very shortly a committee will be set up to examine in the first place, separately the geriatric as against the social cases. The second exercise is to rehabilitate the social cases. This is an exercise to which the Government is committed and is working on it now. We hope we would be able to start doing something in 1973.

Head 58, Ministry of Health, Palms, \$554,577, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 173.

DIVISION XXIV - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,373,500, for Division XXIV, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subheads 1, 3, 7, 9, 11 and 13. It will be brief as possible. Under subhead 1, there is provision for extension to the Skeldon Hospital and the erection of certain centres. I should like the Hon. Minister to give us an explanation. We understand that the Kalkuni Mission Health Centre has been completed and is still closed. Why is it not in operation? It is much needed. I should like under this head to ask the Hon. Minister why is it that at the Skeldon Hospital there are only about nine beds in the Mental Ward when previously there used to be thirty? Generally speaking –

Mr. D. Singh: “There are healthy people now.” I should like to know why is it that this Ward has been reduced. We feel if proper facilities are placed in these hospitals it would cater for the large number of people who would not have to go right down to the Town of New Amsterdam. I should also like to ask in passing why is it that Health Centres are to be constructed at Suddie? I thought that where there were no facilities there was priority to establish Health Centres. Could Suddie Hospital not be used as part of the Health Centre?

Subhead 3, New Hospital Georgetown. Our observation is that this construction has been going very slowly. We know that places are being constructed for Doctors. But on the whole we are providing for a new hospital for a twenty-year period which will not fill the needs of Guyana and eh Greater Georgetown Area. By the time this Hospital actually gets off its feet the whole plan would be obsolete. ... With a view to speed up construction plans to provide a new hospital with much enlarge facilities and bed space even 1,000 beds now is not sufficient much more \$10, 15 and 20 years from now.

On subhead 7, Environment Sanitation Programme, we know that \$50,000 is over provided. Why is it up to now the programme has not even been completed? My information is that there are many homes without such facilities. We urge Government to go back and complete this work which is much needed in that area, particularly with the type of disease generally, fly borne and airborne, etc.

7.25 p.m.

Equipment General, subhead 9. We see that a large amount is provided. I would like the Hon. Ministers to tell us please, what amount is for the telephone system and what is for equipment, because the whole is lumped into one. If the foreign loan that is anticipated does not materialize as happened last year in the Ministry of Health, what will happen to the equipment? Subhead 11. The Hon. Minister mentioned something about a geriatric unit. I wonder if the Hon. Minister would tell us, what the size in terms of accommodation is. Where will it be accommodated?

Subhead 13, Construction of a new Medical Training Centre at U.G. Once again, we would wish to know whether this is the total amount or whether it is the first step, whether that will be the beginning of medical training locally, and training in preparation for what level. Is this in relation to para-medical training? We would like to warn the Government that in thinking only in terms of auxiliary personnel, they can get into very serious difficulties because such personnel have to function under the supervision of Doctors. If you train them and loose them, it would be going backwards, not forwards. We urge the Government quickly to establish a medical school.

I asked about the nurses' training. At least part of the answer, in relation to the establishment of a medical school, could be a higher status for our nurses, because if we had a medical school in Guyana, in the sense of people being able to go to the medical school, we would be able to allow our nurses, head nurses, the technical service, to have an opportunity to attend medical school in Guyana and qualify as doctors. This is being done in other countries. It is being done in socialist countries where nurses, largely women, are given the incentive to know that if they serve well and efficiently, they would have a chance of being sent to medical school. We would be able to provide greater status not only for our nurses but our women, which means an additional profession which can absorb a large number of Guyanese women here in Guyana. Any solution in terms of a regional centre will fail because of the environment, travelling, cost, etc., whereas, a medical centre locally will succeed with one stroke, so to speak, and we urge the Government to look at it.

Mrs. DaSilva: I would like to add to the hon. Minister's information. Perhaps in addition to saying how much will be used for the P.A.B.K. and how much will be used for general equipment he will confirm what type of equipment the Government intends to buy.

Under the subhead dealing with the geriatric unit, when the Hon. Minister replied on the previous Head, he recited a story about the moving of the Palms, and he talked about the rehabilitation of the patients. This is only dealing with certain people, categorizing them but I

would like to know, when this Committee is finished, would the Government not consider expanding it further to take in people who can make a contribution to the country and help themselves and not become a burden?

The construction of a new medical centre. I should be grateful if the Hon. Minister would give us a few details as to what type of training will be given, what they would be trained in, and what aspect. I understand the Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh said para-medical training. And talking about taking party people and not having it working properly, it could do a lot of damage because it has to be under the supervision of qualified people. Would the Hon. Minister tell us something about the training?

Mr. D.A. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I will look into the question of the Kalkuni Mission which, my Hon. Friend said, is to be opened and finished. I do not know about this.

7.35 p.m.

On the question of the Suddie Hospital, I am not sure that the legend is totally accurate, that this is really for additional work to be done. On the question of medical training at the University of Guyana, this is the first phase. The project is estimated to cost \$1 million. This is at the stage of the architect's drawings and so on. We are doing this in order to be able to train nurses, dispensers, pharmacists, technologists, medical auxiliaries generally, not only for government hospitals but medical staff for all the hospitals approved in Guyana. We have a situation at Linden where we are being asked to train people in our training programme. We are doing this because we are limited by space in our training programme, and that is why Government has decided to expend this money for a training centre at the University of Guyana.

We are not training these people to lose these people to do as they like. They are medical auxiliaries and according to the English language, I understand it to mean that they will be working with somebody else.

27.12.72

National Assembly

7.35 – 7.40 p.m.

On this question of equipment generally, the estimate for the P.A.B.X. system is \$150,000. We have based this on that figure, but the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation is having another look at it and the indications are that the estimate will go down a bit for the whole system. That is the position as it stands.

The rest of the money is for equipment generally. The most I can say to my Hon. Friend on the other question of what will be the position if the foreign loan anticipated is not realized is that we will deal with that matter when the time comes.

Division XXIV, Ministry of Healing - \$2,373,500, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Thursday, 28th December, 1972, at 2 p.m." (Mr. Ramsaroop.)

Adjourned accordingly at 7.35 p.m.
