

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIRST PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA.**

21st Sitting

Friday, 25th November, 1966

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. A. P. Alleyne

Members of the Government

Ministers

Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid
The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar
The Honourable N. J. Bissember

- Minister of Home Affairs
- Minister of Finance
*- Minister of Housing and
Reconstruction
(Leader of the House)*

The Honourable R. E. Cheeks
The Honourable E. F. Correia
The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin

- Minister of Local Government
- Minister of Communications
*- Minister of Education and
Race Relations*

The Honourable L. John
The Honourable R. J. Jordan

- Minister of Agriculture
*- Minister of Forests, Lands
and Mines*

The Honourable M. Kasim

*- Minister of Works and
Hydraulics*

The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E.

*- Minister of Trade, Shipping
and Civil Aviation*

The Honourable D. Mahraj
The Honourable C. A. Merriman
The Honourable J. H. Thomas

- Minister of Health
- Minister of Labour
*- Minister of Economic
Development*

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. D. B. deGroot	- Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. G. Bowman	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour
Mr. O. E. Clarke	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Race Relations
Mr. P. Duncan	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government
Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics
Mr. C. V. Too-Chung	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair	Mr. M. F. Singh
Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley	Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker
Mr. H. Prashad	Rev. A. B. Trotman
Mr. T. A. Sancho	Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.

Members of the Opposition

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition	Mr. J. R. S. Luck
Mr. A. Chase	Mr. D. C. Jagan
Mr. Ram Karran	Mr. H. Lall
Mr. R. Chandisingh	Mr. M. Khan, J.P.
Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.	Mr. Y. Ally
Mr. C. V. Nunes	Mr. L. Linde
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson	Mr. R. D. Persaud
Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.	Mr. M. Poonai

Clerk of the National Assembly	- Mr. F. A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)	- Mr. M. B. Henry.

Absent:

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C., Prime Minister

The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State

Mr. J. Budhoo	Dr. S. A. Ramjohn
Mr. W. G. Carrington - on leave	Mr. E. M. Stoby
Mr. B. H. Benn	Mr. S. M. Saffee
Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard	Mr. M. Bhagwan - on leave.
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye	

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**LEAVE TO MEMBERS**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, leave of absence has been granted to the hon. Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation from the 26th November to the 6th December, 1966; the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Tello) from the 27th November to the 2nd December, 1966; and to the hon. Member Mr. Joaquin for one week from the 27th November, 1966.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 4 OF 1966**

The Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the following Motion:

"Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4 of 1966 - Schedule of Additional Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending October, 1966, totalling \$4,386,742."

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: We have been on this Paper for nearly four hours. Today is a very important day; we have a distinguished visitor in our midst, and we all would like to get away from here early in order to pay homage to him. I want to suggest that we

get through this Motion in the shortest possible time so that we can get away.

2.20 p.m.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS**TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS
DEPARTMENT****Net Deficit in Transport Services**

Mr. Chase: I should like to deal with item 55 on page 9. On the last occasion when the Minister moved the Report we were dealing with item 55, Ministry of Communications - Transport and Harbours Department. The hon. Minister concerned was not in his seat on that occasion and a number of questions were asked about the Transport and Harbours Department. I notice that the Minister is here this afternoon. I have no doubt that his colleagues would have told him what those questions were. I wonder whether he would care to give us an explanation of this item.

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia): In 1966 the Transport and Harbours Department raised their rates and it was estimated that the Department would collect a half of a million dollars more in this year than it did in 1965. Nearly one million dollars more in revenue will be collected in 1966 than in 1965. When rates are increased it is usual to over-estimate the revenue for the year in question. We expect to reduce our deficit by nearly one million dollars in 1966.

Mr. Ram Karran: It is not usual to over-estimate.

Mr. Linde: I asked whether the Transport and Harbours Department was making more money and the answer was, Yes. I asked, also, what was the increase in the revenue collected in the same period, comparing it with 1965. It was \$2,208.30.

Mr. Correia: The Member was asking a question in relation to a specific service. I answered what the increase in that service was at the time he put the question.

Mr. Linde: Is that to say that the people in the Berbice River have been bled because the other services are losing?

Mr. Wilson: Will the Minister say what was the unforeseen factor, at the time of the drafting of the Estimates, which caused him to over-estimate?

Mr. Correia: We took the figures of the 1965 revenue against the expected increase in 1966. From that we estimated the 1966 revenue.

Mr. Jagan: Can the Minister say whether the reintroduction of the first-class service on the Georgetown to Rosignal train has brought an increase in revenue?

Mr. Correia: On the whole the Transport and Harbours Department will show a deficit in 1966 of a little under one million dollars less than in 1965.

Mr. Ram Karran: I merely want to make the observation that it is not usual to over-estimate when rates go up. If the hon. Minister had acted in co-ordination with the Minister of Finance, whose philosophy is quite the opposite, as has been recorded in this House time and time again, he would have given us a more realistic estimate.

Page 10.

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HYDRAULICS - ESTABLISHMENT

Personal Emoluments

Mr. Ram Karran: There is one item, item 56, on this page. I think it is hitting below the belt for the hon. Minister to put up a paper like this. Hon. Members will recall that an elaborate White Paper was put up when the Works and Hydraulics Departments were integrated into one Ministry and all the posts were regraded and the salaries increased.

This is a large department and here we have a number of posts referred to on one small sheet of paper. It makes it impossible for anybody to understand what is going on. Before asking any other question, I would like to ask a specific question. Can the Minister of Works and Hydraulics or the Minister of Finance tell us what are the qualifications for the post mentioned under (b), the Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer?

I ask this question because the post is no longer to be designated "Chief Mechanical Engineer". Is this officer an Associate Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers as well as of the Institute of Electrical Engineers? Is he a member of both Institutes?

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

Mr. Luck: I wonder whether this is not a circuitous way of raising the salaries of officers. I see that the additional provision now sought is \$32,000 and the number of people involved is a little over 40. Of these 40, 10 would hardly be drawing a total of \$2,000. It is therefore clear that \$30,000 will be divided among 30 of these gentlemen. Is this the right way to raise people's salaries? In effect, the same men will be employed and some of them will be receiving increases in excess of \$1,000 a year. Behind all this talk about redesignation of posts, the fact is that Mr. John or Mr. Smith is going to be redesignated at a much higher salary. I do not object to paying people proper wages, but most of us, particularly teachers, have not had an increase for several years. This has caused great dissatisfaction in the Association of Masters and Mistresses. Many of us have worked without a raise since 1954. These officers received increases only the other day and we are being asked again to give what, in effect, would be a rather

substantial rise in their salaries.

2.30 p.m.

If thirty people are to share \$32,000 among themselves, it is simple that some men are going to get in excess of \$1,000. The other day these same gentlemen got very substantial increases indeed, and I want to believe that this must lead to demoralization in the already demoralized Public Service of this Country.

We heard that this very Ministry has given, as its Christmas present, 600 people dismissal notices because there is no money. But the truth is that the position is even worse because this sum of \$32,000 is not a year's estimate. It is one-quarter of a year and, indeed this point escaped me, these few fellows are going to get more than \$120,000. Good heavens! From the 1st September, 1966 to, I assume, the end of the year, these redesignations will cost \$32,000, therefore, on an annual basis, we must multiply \$32,000 by four, and so we get more than \$120,000.

How can a Ministry which causes such grave distress among the people - 600 able-bodied men are to be dismissed for Christmas because no funds are available - pay thirty men \$32,000 for three months, not \$32,000 in all but an increase of \$32,000, having already received for the year what I estimate to be

[MR. LUCK]

\$30,000? This is a Government for the rich! The hon. Minister is a member of the United Force and I want him to answer how in heaven's name can he allocate for three months, for thirty people, the sum of \$32,000 as an increase, and not find the money to pay 600 able-bodied men whom he has personally laid off?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Ram Karran: These are very important observations. It appears as if the hon. Minister is not in a position to answer the questions that were asked just now with respect to the post of Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer. I wish, first of all, to repeat that unless the officer has qualifications for both Institutes - the Institute of Civil Engineers as well as the Institute of Mechanical Engineers - I think it is immoral for the Government to attempt to pay him increased salary by the redesignation of his post of Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Further, I should like to know whether these salaries that are recommended here fit in with the recommendations of the last Salaries Commissioner, Mr. Guillebaud. I notice that the note at (f) states:

"To provide for the creation of a new item 'Pensionable allowance in lieu of Consultation Practice' to

be paid to all engineering, architectural and quantity surveying grades from the special level upwards."

This is a departure from Government's policy. Government employees, as far as I know, with the exception of medical practitioners, are not allowed to go outside of their field to do private work, and from this legend it appears as if an opening is being made to allow this sort of thing.

Finally, my colleague has made the observation that a large number of people are going to be retrenched from the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics. [Mr. Bissember: "Oh, they have not been retrenched as yet?"] Some more are going to be retrenched. I wish to read copies of two letters received by an employee of the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics and to ask the Minister and this House whether, in view of matters like this, there is any justification for the spending of this large sum of \$32,000 in this way. This letter was sent to a gentleman by the name of Robert Thomas of Mahaica. [Mr. Merriman: "That is irrelevant."] I wish the hon. Minister would get up on his feet when he wants to say something. If he wants to rule that something is irrelevant, I am willing to take my seat.

This letter was sent on 1st July, 1966 to a man who has given several years' service or

"Sir,

I wish to inform you that you are transferred from the East Coast Roads, to the Sea Defence Project, E.C.D. effective from the 11th July 1966."

Now that he has been transferred to the Sea Defence Project, this is what he received on 5th November, 1966:

"Sir.

Owing to the shortage of funds, it is unfortunate that it is necessary for a number of employees to be retrenched.

You are hereby given one week's notice of the termination of your services with effect from the date of this letter to the 12th November 1966 inclusive.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your services in the past, and wish you all success for the future."

[Mr. Merriman: "Who signed it?"]
The first letter was signed by the Senior Superintendent of Roads, and the second letter was signed by the Senior Superintendent of Works.

Not long ago, when we debated the estimates for the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, we found that there was a reduction in the vote for Engineers. Today we

15 and 20 years' service are being chased out from the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics. I am sure the Minister will remember trying to give an explanation for the reduction in the vote for Engineers and the increase in the vote for Superintendents.

I could not understand, at the time, how the Government, in a poor country like this which is looking around for Engineers all over the place - the Government is getting a lot of money from the United States, from the World Bank, and from the United Kingdom - could be reducing the number of Engineers on the staff. But I now see the kick behind it. The Government is now asking for increases and for these posts to be redesignated. The last time the hon. Minister deliberately misled the House when he said that there was a reduction in the vote for Engineers. I hope the hon. Minister will get up and try to tell us something. Hundreds of people are being dismissed and there must be hundreds more to follow.

First of all, the man was deliberately transferred from the Roads Division to the Sea Defence Project so that the Government's friends can be pushed to the Roads Division. After he was transferred to the Sea Defence Project his services were terminated. This is the sort of thing that goes on. We say that this is discrimination and it will take the country nowhere. We urge the Government, in all

[MF RAM KARRAN]

this House know the facts. We are willing to help and contribute. If the Government has difficulties we are willing to work with it in order to solve some of the problems which this country faces.

The Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Kasim): All over the world, there is a shortage of professional and technical people of this type. This is an inducement increase to attract qualified Engineers and people in the technical field so that they will stay in the Ministry. At this moment, we are finding it very difficult to find qualified men.

Mr. Ram Karran: If I understand the hon. Minister correctly --

The Chairman: Page 11.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister is misleading this House. If there is no staff to recruit, this money should be used to employ people who are retrenched. The hon. Minister has admitted that no people are available, therefore --

The Chairman: Please take your seat.

2.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Page 11.

Contribution to Caribbean Meteorological Service

Dr. Jagan: Item 57 - Ministry of Works and Hydraulics -

Establishment Contribution to Caribbean meteorological Service, \$7,535. The details of this item are to be found on page 22. It seems to me very extraordinary that the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics could have forgotten, when the 1966 Estimates were being framed that there was an amount of \$7,535 due to the Caribbean Meteorological Service. I should like him to explain why this amount was not taken into account.

Dr. Jacob: The Government of Guyana owes this amount. I am suggesting that the Minister of Works and Hydraulics, like the Minister of Finance, has deliberately underestimated many items of expenditure in order to present a Budget that appears balanced. However, there is another point that I want to get cleared up. He told us that the expenditure will be offset by savings on Subhead 11, Expenses Trainees Technical Institute. Are we to understand that this very necessary expenditure for training people is going to be foregone in order that these arrears may be cleared up? Will the Minister please explain to the House?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Furniture

Mr. Chase: Item No. 58 - 4-Furniture, \$35,000. Will the Minister be good enough, with regard to this item, to tell us what Government quarters will be refurnished with this money?

Mr. Kasim: Due to Independence, we had to prepare new offices for several officers and new Ministers, and that money was provided for furnishing those offices.

Mr. Chase: It seems then that the legend is misleading. However, I hope that the Minister would take every step possible to see that the equipment for furnishing these Government quarters, such as the district rest houses, is brought up to date. Moreover, I hope that when the Minister speaks of replacement of furniture he means replacing this furniture with local purchase and not with furniture imported from abroad. In this country we have furniture factories and it will be very bad policy to continue to support commercial firms which are merely importing furniture, when we can produce very good furniture locally.

Mr. Kasim: This is the normal practice, and one can observe that in this House. All the furniture that we use is locally made furniture and this is what the Ministry is doing. I will also give the assurance to the hon. Member that I will see to it that the district rest houses are well kept.

Mr. Lall: I can appreciate that the Government is making every effort to furnish offices for additional Ministers and some Parliamentary Secretaries, and so forth. But what I am disturbed about is that the Government and

the same Ministry did not take into consideration the lives and welfare of 500 families that will be jeopardised when men are thrown out of their jobs. I am asking whether the furnishing of offices should be given priority, or the retention of these people in their jobs during the festive season. If the Government had any feeling for the working-class people, I am sure it would have retained these people. I am asking the members of the Government to take into consideration the lives and welfare of all the children of these people who are going to be thrown out of their jobs. I feel that this estimate should be reduced. Item No. 58 should be reduced to \$1 to allow the unfortunate people to continue in their jobs.

Electric Power and Lighting of Buildings

Mr. Ram Karan: Item No. 59-7-Electric Power and Lighting of Buildings, \$60,600. I should like to ask the hon. Minister to give us some idea of the areas in which this \$60,600 will be spent. I recall that electricity has been extended to the East Coast, the West Coast, and the Essequibo Coast. If the original estimate was \$150,000, I cannot see that it will require \$60,600 for these areas where you just have a few offices. There is a plant operating at Triumph, and I think there is one at Enmore at the District Commissioner's Office. There are also plants at Belfield and Vreed-en-Hoop. I cannot see

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

that electricity bills will cost this large sum of \$60,600. Surely, the hon. Minister can explain the reason for this \$60,600 in so far as these areas are concerned, because all the Government offices are in Georgetown. While he is on it, would he tell us what has happened to all this equipment?

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Kasim: This provision involves the rural areas. This is due to the additional expenses involved in new Ministries. These plants are being put in the remote areas like the North West, the Rupununi, and so on.

Mr. Ram Karran: If this vote represents the additional cost for generating electricity in Georgetown, then the Minister should not include the amount under these estimates. After all the Minister should state what he means in the legend. He should have stated that this is for additional expenses in Georgetown.

Mr. Kasim: I am here to answer supplementary questions, and that is what I am doing.

The Chairman: Page 12.

Atkinson Field

Mr. Ram Karran: With reference to item 62, Subhead 29 - Atkinson Field, Maintenance of - \$224,000, the legend states:

"To provide for an increase in the General Main-

tenance of Atkinson Field. This expenditure will be offset by savings under Head 37 subhead 9 Maintenance of Vehicles and Equipment."

The amount previously voted for this item was \$224,000 and the hon. Minister is now asking us to vote an additional \$26,000. We are told that this will be offset by savings under Head 37 Subhead 9, Maintenance of Vehicles and Equipment. What sort of vehicles and equipment? Is he referring to the vehicles at Atkinson Field or the vehicles at Berbice?

Maintenance of Artesian Wells

Incidentally, I observe that under item 61, Subhead 25 - Maintenance of Artesian Wells and Distribution of Lines, \$20,000 will be offset by savings under Head 37, Subhead 9, Maintenance of Vehicles and Equipment. In the first place, these two heads are not related and I cannot see how the Ministry could take savings from item 61 and use the money to do work under item 62. Perhaps the hon. Minister will explain this matter.

Mr. Kasim: That question is irrelevant, because the hon. Member knows that it is normal practice to juggle with expenditure from one head to another.

Mr. Ram Karran: I charge the hon. Minister of Finance with being dishonest. This Government deliberately underestimated ex-

penditure in order to show that the Budget could be balanced. [An hon. Member (Government): "Withdraw that word."] I withdraw the word "dishonest", but I will say that the hon. Minister of Finance was not frank when he came to this House and presented the Estimates. I wish to advise the hon. Minister of Finance that it is wrong to mislead the country by underestimating expenditure in an attempt to show the world that he has balanced his Budget when in truth and in fact the Budget cannot be balanced.

The amount of \$224,000 is far less than what was estimated for 1964 and 1965. In 1965 the amount was \$290,000. Since then Atkinson Field has grown older and the equipment and installations have got worse, and I am sure this amount cannot do what is necessary to be done. Will the hon. Minister of Finance or the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics get up and explain this matter?

Mr. Luck: The observations of my hon. Friend on item 62 are reinforced when we come to consider item 63. My hon. Friend made a valid point when he pointed out that in 1965 the Revised Estimates provided, in relation to Atkinson Field, expenditure in the sum of \$290,000. In 1966 the amount budgeted for is \$224,000, and the Government is now asking for an additional \$26,000. If this is absurd, what is the position with item 63?

In 1965 the provision for Yard Wages was \$210,000 and that

amount was spent. In order to bring some semblance of economy into the Budget the hon. Minister concocted some figures, and instead of spending \$210,000 he budgeted for \$97,000. That was done at a time when he knew that wages would increase. It is no wonder that the hon. Minister of Finance has come to this House six times already to ask for supplementary provisions.

On page 87 of the Estimates for the year 1966 it is stated:

"Provision would be reduced as some of the employees paid through this vote are now shown under Establishment."

Today this Government has the effrontery to come here and tell us why it wants \$111,561 more. This is what is stated in the legend:

"It was proposed to transfer some of the employees. However as the transfer has not as yet been effected the voted provision proved inadequate."

3 p.m.

When the hon. Minister spoke in this House a short while ago he said that he did not work by "guesstimates". I want to tell the Minister of Finance and this Government that it is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs to be coming to this House constantly for supplementary financial provisions. This becomes a thousand times worse when it is

[MR. LUCK]

clearly revealed that the Estimates were deliberately concocted to give a semblance of economy while the Government knew that the figures were false.

Can we approach other countries and ask for money based on our Estimates, when it is daily revealed that these Estimates are deliberately fraudulent? From an estimate of \$97,000 this becomes \$111,561. The note says that it was proposed to transfer some of the employees paid from this vote to the Establishment, but the proposal did not fructify. I should like an honest answer from the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics or the Minister of Finance. Were they in league to mislead the public on this matter?

Mr. Lall: I should like to make an observation.

The Chairman: Please give the Minister a chance to answer the question.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): By the same amount the token vote was underestimated the vote for the Establishment was over-estimated.

Maintenance of Artesian Wells and Distribution Lines

Mr. Wilson: I should like to ask a question on item 61 and then on item 66 on page 12.

With regard to item 61 I notice that the note says it is

"To provide for the increased cost of maintenance works consequent on the establishment of more Pure Water Supply Systems."

I should like to know whether the additional Pure Water Supply Systems will be extended to squatting areas where a large number of people are without water supply.

Mr. Khan: I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics if the additional requirement under Head 61 is to provide for Pure Water Supply Systems in the Fairfield-Cottage area and on the East Bank between Craig and Friendship.

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RACE RELATIONS

Training Officer

Mr. Nunes: Item 65: It strikes me that there is clear evidence of discrimination here, because the salary scale of the Training Officer was regraded as from 1st January 1965 along with the salary scales of other officers in the same category. I should therefore like to receive some assurance from the Minister that it is intended to redress this discrimination by regrading the salaries of the posts in the same category, with effect from the same day.

The Minister of Education and Race Relations (Mrs. Gaskin): I do not think that my hon. Friend's eyes are in any way affected and he will see in the note that the regrading is to take effect from the 1st October. It means exactly what it says.

The Chairman: I am not staying on this page any longer. I am going on to the next page, page 13.

Berbice High School

Mr. Luck: I should like to speak on item 69. Like yourself, Mr. Chairman, I am very anxious to meet His Excellency Dr. Kaunda. My greatest regret is that arrangements were not made for that gentleman to address this House.

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) (Mr. Bissember): What item are we on now?

Mr. Luck: I am following the lead of the Chairman. I would have liked to have had a proper opportunity to meet him. Why did the Government find it neither proper nor expedient for that gentleman to address a full meeting of this House? It is the first time that an African head of state has come to this area. It is amazing that this should not have been done. I agree with you, sir, that we should try to expedite this matter.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Luck: Under item 69 we see for the first time expenses

in connection with the take over of the Berbice High School. I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Education whether she does not think it right and proper that this House, the teaching profession and the whole country, should know what are the terms and conditions under which this institution, the Berbice High School, has been taken over. I should like to see the terms to find out whether something is in it for me in relation to another place. This is surely unprecedented. The Berbice High School is a very important school, and the taking over of this school may well be a valid and proper precedent for the taking over of other schools. It is therefore incumbent on the Minister to let this House, the teaching profession and the general public know what are the terms and conditions under which the Berbice High School has been taken over. [Interruptions.]

It is not enough to say that the school was taken over under an agreement. We want to know what are the terms and conditions of such an agreement. Too much is done in this country in secrecy and stealth. I wonder why. Surely the agreement between this Government and the Berbice High School is not like the agreement with the Reynolds Metals Company that has to be done in secrecy and stealth. It is not necessary to observe secrecy. Surely, in her answer the Minister will give some reason why she has asked for \$11,000 to meet expenses for

[MR. LUCK]

three months, September to December. I should like to know the terms and conditions and I am sure my hon. Friend (Mr. Sancho) who is also connected with the teaching profession would like to know.

Mrs. Gaskin: The terms and conditions are still being negotiated.

Mr. Luck: May I be given the answer again please! I cannot believe I heard correctly.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Nunes: Can the Minister tell us the major items concerned in this expenditure of \$11,000? Will the Minister also say whether the policy of free secondary education initiated by the P.P.P. Government now obtains in the Berbice High School?

Mrs. Gaskin: It is only because I feel some kind of deference is due to the hon. Member, in view of the fact that he once held the post that I now hold, that I rise to answer his very stupid questions. It is common knowledge that there is free secondary education already in existence at the Berbice High School. To the other question as to how we will spend \$11,000, I have already said that this is being negotiated.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Grant to B.W.I. Board of Examiners, Royal Society for the Promotion of Health

Mr. Luck: Item 72: I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Education and Race Relations would not come to this House - because we on this side would freely vote for it - for money for further subventions towards the conduct of the London General Certificate of Education. Here we are paying money for examiners, and the local fees charged for the London General Certificate of Education are extortionate, beyond belief. In view of the greatest possible extortion being practised in the London G.C.E. - local fees: \$1.50 for each subject - I wonder whether the Minister would not consider voting money under that Head as well?

Mrs. Gaskin: Item 72 comes under the Ministry of Health.

[An hon. Member (Government): "Apologize."]

The Chairman: Page 14.

Contribution to Virus Research Laboratory Trinidad

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 73: I notice that the Government is contributing to the Virus Research Laboratory in Trinidad. Will the Minister say what stage has been reached with respect to the transformation of our laboratory into a laboratory capable of performing the type of research done by the laboratory in Trinidad? I

make this point because I read in the newspapers that, as a result of the recent epidemic, the Central Laboratory here has undertaken almost all the examinations.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Mahraj): The facilities available at the Trinidad laboratory are not available at our laboratory. This Government is trying to establish three additional laboratories to take care of all works. As soon as the facilities are provided, there will be no necessity for external assistance in laboratory works.

Mr. Chandisingh: Will the Minister say how soon he expects that this country will no longer need to be a member of the Trinidad Virus Research Laboratory?

Mr. Mahraj: If the Government's programme is allowed to continue without any interference, the Government should be able to commence building additional laboratories about the middle of next year.

Mr. Chandisingh: The hon. Minister does not seem to follow my question. I have been following this line because when the Members on that side sat on this side a few years ago, they were very critical of the need for our country to contribute to the laboratory in Trinidad. Recently, I noticed in the Press, as I said before, a considerable amount of propaganda - which I see now from the Minister's reply

has been false, has been misleading - to the effect that the Central Medical Laboratory here is equipped to carry out most of these research investigations. Furthermore, the Minister has not been able to say when he estimates that this country will have the facilities. I did not ask him when the Government will begin to construct buildings.

Personal Enrolments

Mr. Jagan: Item 74: Will the Minister say whether the creation of this post is in respect of Mr. Suri whom the Government engaged lately; whether the person who occupies this post will be permitted private practice; and whether it is not true that the contract signed by the Government and this person was that he would be in charge of the department, that he would be permitted to have private practice, and that he would be given free quarters also? Is it also true that, on the arrival of this gentleman, no living quarters were provided, that there is some dispute as to who should be the head of this department, and that to clear up this dispute this post is being created?

Mr. Mahraj: It does not seem as if the hon. Member has exhausted the reservoir of questions he has in mind. But let me put him at ease. At the moment, Dr. Hahn, an expatriate like Mr. Suri, is the head of the department. Accommodation for Mr. Suri was probably not available at the time he arrived, but he is entitled to accommodation, which I think he is now provided

[MR. MAHRAJ]

with. You will bear in mind that I just came back from abroad and I was not here to make arrangements. You were honest with me and I am going to be honest with you.

With regard to private practice, I must say that this is being examined by Government. With regard to being allowed to practise in hospitals other than the Georgetown Hospital, I must say that this will not be allowed.

Mr. Jagan: I did not ask about being allowed to practise in other hospitals. Is it not true that the contract signed by the Government and Mr. Suri was that this doctor would be permitted to practise privately and also that he would be the head of the department? Is it not true that the contract that was signed in London was that this gentleman would be given permission to practise privately?

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: Surely, the hon. Minister was misleading the House when he said the question of private practice is being investigated.

Contribution to Virus Research Laboratory - Trinidad

Mr. Wilson: Item No. 73 - Ministry of Health - 18 - Contribution to Virus Research Laboratory Trinidad, \$888. I should like to

ask whether the Minister thinks that the Central Laboratory can undertake the necessary virus research?

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

The Chairman: Page 15.

Mr. Ram Karran: One more question, sir.

Mosquito Control Service

Mr. Ram Karran: Item No. 75 - Ministry of Health - Medical - 18 - Mosquito Control Service, \$6,000. It is stated that the voted provision is inadequate because of a sudden outbreak of malaria in the North West District. What I want to know is why they had stopped issuing chloroquinised salt which was being issued by the previous Government? Why did they stop it and why is it to be increased now? The taxpayers are now to be saddled with additional funds for spraying operations. I should like the Minister, even though he is now on one of his short visits from abroad, to explain.

The Chairman: Ask a question.

Mr. Bissenber: He was speaking on the Minister's trip abroad, sir.

The Chairman: Page 15.

Post Mortem Fees, Laboratory Attendants

Mr. Ram Karran: Item No. 79, Ministry of Health - Bacteriolo-

gical - 10 - Post Mortem Fees, Laboratory Attendants, \$400. Have they increased wages —

The Chairman: Are you searching for something there?

Mr. Ram Karran: I have my notes here. I consider this matter very important. Why should hospital porters do post mortem work without getting any allowance? [*Interruption from Government Members.*] The hon. Ministers continue to heckle because they do not want the question answered. Why are they paying these people ordinary wages while they have to do post mortem work?

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

The Chairman: Gentlemen, let us get through this Paper.

Mr. Ram Karran: We cannot get anything from the Ministers. I consider this matter very important and I am going to put questions to every one of them. If the hon. Ministers try to help us by answering the questions, we shall be able to get through the Paper. The Ministers must not treat this House with contempt and try to railroad us because Dr. Kaunda is coming here. Let us postpone the Paper for Monday. [**Mr. Merriman:** "Stop being insulting."] Will they seriously attempt to answer the questions?

The Chairman: Is there anything in the Standing Orders to compel the Minister to answer questions?

Mr. Ram Karran: Your Honour has appealed to hon. Members to get the Paper through. But I have valid questions which I have written down here. I have done my homework. If the hon. Ministers have not done theirs they ought to get out of here. I am prepared to ask my questions and if the hon. Ministers will not answer them, then I must seriously try to get some answers out of them. They owe it as a duty to this House and to the country for us to have a thorough explanation of the expenditure. As far as policy is concerned, they sit down and make their decisions and nobody hears about them until they are presented to the House. I refer to Agreements such as the Agreement with the Reynolds Metal Company. At least, money which the taxpayers put in their hands to spend ought to be properly explained when it comes to the House, if not, let us disband the House. Throw the Mace outside! That is what the hon. Ministers want! You do not hear a word from them. They sit there squandering the taxpayers' money. In many instances they spent money where they ought not to have spent it.

Mosquito Control Service

Item 75: The United Force claims that it represents the Amerindians. But it is a criminal offence to cause people to get malaria when a law was passed by the previous Government that no salt should be allowed to cross to the North West District without being medicated. [*Inter-*

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

Minister of Health who is on one of his rare visits to Guyana recognizes that there is a strong possibility of malaria spreading along the coast of Guyana.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Mahraj: I have listened to everything said by my hon. Friends over there. Whenever any action is taken by the Ministry of Health on malaria control it is done in consultation with the Pan American Health Organisation. That organization was satisfied that malaria was controlled in the North West District and advised that it was no longer necessary to use chloroquinised salt. We withdrew it, and a certain number of Amerindians were infected. The Pan American Health Organisation are the experts, but my hon. Friend is no expert.

Mr. Ram Karran: I apologize to the hon. Minister, if he believes that I was telling him what to do. I was merely trying to obtain information regarding this matter. It was the World Health Organisation who recommended to the previous Government that a supply of medicated salt should be sent to the interior areas where malaria was rampant. Today the hon. Minister is talking about the Pan American Health Organisation instead of the World Health Organisation. I hoped that the hon. Minister has not jumped to the Pan American Organisation merely because of this

Government's policy and its association with the U.S.A. If the hon. Member is willing to listen -- [Interruption.]

The Chairman rose —

Mr. Ram Karran: It does not need an expert to know when there is an outbreak of malaria in this country. If the hon. Minister says that the Pan American Health Organisation advised him to discontinue the supply of medicated salt, he should have said so long ago so that the blame would have been placed in the right direction. [Mr. Mahraj: "You are wasting time."] I am not wasting time, and I resent that suggestion by the hon. Minister.

Mr. Wilson: The legend states:

"This expenditure will be off-set by savings on Sub-head 19, Training and In-Service Education for Public Health Inspectors and Health Visitors."

Post Mortem Fees, Laboratory Attendants

Mr. Jagan: With reference to Item 79 - Subhead 10 - Post Mortem Fees, Laboratory Attendants \$41,500, I observe that an additional sum of \$4,500 is needed. I should like to know whether this money is needed to pay porters who are required to do jobs other than porter's work? I understand that they have to assist in post mortem examina-

tions. I also understand that the porters have to cut the dead bodies.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

The Chairman: Page 16.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Maintenance of Government Housing Estates

Mr. Chase: With reference to item 91, subhead 9 - Materials for Maintenance of Government Housing Estates - \$200,000, I see that the additional expenditure sought is \$104,770. Does this amount include the cost of the maintenance at Wismar? What is the decision as regards the water supply? [Interruption by Press Reporters.]

The Chairman (to Press Reporters): Only Members of this House can speak in this House; you are not permitted to do so.

Mr. Chase: Visitors to the Rest House at Wismar suffer great inconvenience so far as the water supply is concerned. Will the Minister tell us whether this sum will take care of the water supply?

Mr. Bissember: That is a reasonable question, and I am prepared to answer it. Pure water supply is not one of the responsibilities which come under my portfolio. The Ministry of Housing contributes about \$18,000 a year towards the Wismar Purifi-

cation Plant. I agree with the hon. Member that the water supply system is very bad over there. However, the Minister of Works and Hydraulics has the matter in hand, and every effort is being made to get the Plant in proper working order so that water will be supplied to everybody concerned.

The amount is to meet arrears in the sum of \$40,000 which we contribute every year because of the housing estates there. The Engineers at the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics are working on the project at the moment, and very soon the Rest House and other places will get a proper supply of water.

Mr. Chandisingh: I should like to go back to item 85 - Subhead 18 - Conveying sick persons from Interior to Hospital - \$20,000. I observe that an additional sum of \$10,000 is needed because of the increase in the number of sick persons to be conveyed from the Interior to the Georgetown Hospital. It is rather alarming to note that the health of the people in the interior districts has deteriorated. I should like to know whether the system of having doctors and dentists flown out periodically to the various districts in the Rupununi which was initiated by the last Government is still in force? The last Government used to send doctors

[MR. CHANDISINGH]

and dentists to the interior districts to attend to patients.

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

The Chairman: Page 17.

Mr. Ram Karan: The Minister should indicate when he does not intend to give answers to questions, so that Members on this side will be able to get up in time to ask other questions.

The Chairman: What is the point of asking, if the Minister is not going to answer your questions?

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Government Housing Estates

Mr. Luck: I should like to speak on page 16, items 90 and 91. These two items refer to the supply of additional materials, water and electricity to Government Housing Estates in suburban areas and the maintenance cost of Wismar Purification Plant as well as the wages for Government Housing Estates. These two items do not run logically, and we are entitled to know how this money is being spent.

3.40 p.m.

You say additional provision of \$104,770 is required. How much of it is for the Purification Plant and how much for cost of labour and materials? I

should like to know what is the exact cost of maintenance of the Wismar Purification Plant. By subtraction I would find out the cost of labour and material.

I should like to comment on the very high cost of wages, \$79,000, under item 90. I remember that when this item was discussed during the Budget debate I drew the attention of hon. Members to the fact that the maintenance of Government Housing Estates in 1964 cost \$237,000, but since this Government has been in office the cost of labour alone rose from \$237,000 to \$400,000. We now see that \$479,000 is required. In 1964 a large sum of money was spent on materials; in 1965 the same amount was spent on materials and in 1966 very little more is required for materials. One wonders at this. One does not object when employment is found for workers, but I want to warn this Government against finding employment for strapping, able-bodied men who do no productive work at all, who merely dig holes and fill them again.

In no way am I attacking the workers. They do the work given to them, but I wish that this Government would show some sense and find useful work for all the men for whom they are finding work. It is ruinous to the economy of this country to employ men in the housing schemes to do nothing. There is much to be done. I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to the road leading into Campbellville,

which has to be maintained by the Government. It is in a state of disrepair while overseers are having the trench cleaned five times a week. All through the week nothing is done but the cleaning of the trench while the road is causing people's cars to fall to pieces.

I hope that the hon. Minister of Housing will take what I have said in good spirit and that he will do some work for the large salary that he draws. Put the workers to do productive work! Even the comrades objected. Some of them refused to be digging roads all day.

The Chairman: Is there any observation to be made on page 17?

Uniforms for nurses and servants

Mr. Persaud: Item 94 concerns The Palms. I notice that the note reads -

"Voted provision inadequate owing to an unanticipated increase in the number of uniforms to be supplied."

As far as my memory goes, there is a fixed number of nurses and servants at The Palms. Why, therefore, is it necessary to vote for an increase in the provision to buy uniforms? I take it that this item is in relation to The Palms?

Mr. Bissember: That is a reasonable question. My answer is that the provision is inade-

quate because of the increased rate at which uniforms are condemned. In the past, under the P.P.P. regime, nurses used to be supplied with two or three uniforms a year. Nurses are now given more uniforms so that the patients may see properly clad nurses when they perform their duties.

Meals for Nurses

Mr. Luck: Item 96 relates to meals for nurses. The sum voted was \$14,000 and an increase of almost ten per cent is now sought. The reason given is -

"Voted provision proved inadequate owing to the increase in the prices of foodstuff."

Here we have it from the Government that the prices of foodstuff have gone up by ten per cent, yet the hon. Minister of Finance in presenting his Budget predicted - and I do not want to say he did this falsely - that his proposals would occasion an increase of only one per cent. Now the Government comes for an increase of ten per cent in the vote because of the increase in the prices of foodstuff alone. I hope that when Mr. Sancho and the school-teachers go to negotiate their salaries these points will be put forward.

Mr. Bissember: My hon. Friend is making a speech. He is not asking a question in relation to this. He is making a statement and I do not propose to answer him.

Mr. Wilson: Will the Minister say whether the prices of foodstuff have increased?

The Chairman: Which item are you dealing with?

Mr. Wilson: The same one, item 96. Will some Minister say whether the prices of foodstuff have been increased by ten per cent? If they have not been so increased, why is this additional provision required?

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

The Chairman: Page 18.

Mr. Persaud: There are two important items on this page (page 17) items 97 and 98 which deal with Old Age Pensions and Public Assistance. These are social services to the people of this country.

The Chairman: Page 18.

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE
ACCOUNTANT GENERAL**

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to deal with item 102.

3.50: p.m.

The Chairman: Page 19.

Mr. Lall: We are not finished with page 18.

The Chairman: Nobody is volunteering an answer.

Mr. Ram Karran: Page 18, item 102: I wonder if the hon. Minister will tell us how much this charwoman is getting. Is this a typographical error?

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

Mr. Ram Karran: This is probably a typographical error but the hon Minister is so clumsy and incompetent that he will not even get up and say so. If the hon. Minister wants to sit down, it is all right.

Crown Agents' Charges

Item 103: The hon. Minister of Finance, both inside and outside of this House, has been critical of the Crown Agents. Is it Government's policy to continue dealing with the Crown Agents, or will it buy from local merchants? [**Mr. Jordan:** "Do you want us to buy from GIMPEX?"] The hon. Minister had indicated that the Crown Agents have been charging higher prices than those available through private merchants and I wish to ask him whether it is Government's policy to continue to purchase through the Crown Agents, or whether it will change and purchase from private merchants.

Mr. d'Aguiar: The Government's policy is to purchase where the price is cheaper. If the Crown Agents provide us with better bargains, we buy from them.

Mr. Ram Karran: Is the Minister saying that his earlier

criticisms against the Crown Agents were unjustified?

Dr. Jagan: I wish to say that, on this very question, the practice in the past has been for the Government to automatically put through orders to the Crown Agents. This has led to a great deal of criticisms by the members of the Chamber of Commerce who complained that prices, invariably, were higher than what could be obtained from other sources. I should like to ask the Minister whether, in making its purchases, the Government will inquire from the business community here --

[**Mr. Jordan:** "Do you want us to buy from GIMPEX?"] It is not a question of buying from GIMPEX; the hon. Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines should keep quiet on some occasions. What I am saying is in the Government's interest.

When we were in the Government an investigation was carried out by the Hospital Administrator and a few other persons and it was established that, in the medical services alone, if the Government did not automatically buy from the Crown Agents, it would save \$½ million per year. We were told that preference would be given to local business men because they are paying the taxes here, and I want to have a simple answer whether the old practice has been varied, or whether the Government is examining this with a view to changing it.

Mr. d'Aguiar: The simple answer is "yes".

Dr. Jagan: "Yes" what? Are you changing the practice? [**Mr. Bissenber:** "Wherever is cheaper."]

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Grant to Trades Union Council

Mr. Lall: Item 100: I should like to ask the Minister of Labour if two Sugar Conferences were held in 1965. I should also like to know who attended these Conferences. I should like to pose some other questions after the Minister has replied.

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

Mr. Lall: I am made to understand that this is gross deception on the part of the Government because the note states:

To assist the Trades Union Council in defraying expenses in connection with representation at the Sugar Conferences held in the United Kingdom during April and October 1965."

But this is not so. I was made to understand that two members of the T.U.C., namely Mr. Carrington - I do not see him sitting here - and Mr. Blair, who

[MR. LALL]

went to the Constitutional Conference were paid from this amount. I am saying that if a political party asked them to attend the Conference, then the expenses should be borne by that political party. This is gross deception! The Minister cannot answer because two Sugar Conferences were not held last year. The hon. Minister knows this. I should like to know if it is not true that Mr. Carrington and Mr. Blair were paid out of this amount.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Merriman): I should like to say to the hon. Member that his information is incorrect.

Mr. Lall: Let the Minister tell me what is correct. I want to know what is correct.

[*Interruption.*]

The Chairman: Page 19.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Ministers are disturbing the business of this House. If they want to have a "free-for-all" —

Dr. Jagan: On a point of order. Members on the Government side are turning this place into a fish market. One cannot hear what is going on. Please appeal to them.

The Chairman: They are noisy.

Dr. Jagan: That is what I mean, they are very noisy.

The Chairman: Page 19.

4 p.m.

Mr. Jagan: Under Standing Order No. 36 (4) I would ask, following what the Prime Minister did the other day, that the Chairman do report progress of this Committee and ask leave to sit again, because it seems that we will have to leave here just now. Under this Standing Order, any Member can move the Motion.

Mr. Bissenber: Mr. Chairman, I had asked Mr. Chase if he would mind going five minutes more so that we could stop -- [*Interruption.*] I would ask that the House resume in order that I could move the Adjournment.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Friday, 2nd December, 1966, at 2 p.m." [**Mr. Bissenber.**]

Adjourned accordingly at
4 p.m.