

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 7]

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

28th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Monday, 22nd November, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, S.C.,
Prime Minister

Dr. Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

(Absent)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Finance

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

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Health

(Absent - on leave)

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction
(Leader of the House)

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

(Absent)

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

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Local Government

(Absent)

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

Appointed Ministers

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

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

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

The Hon. E.B. Mc David,
Minister of Information and Culture

(Absent)

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

(Absent - on leave)

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture (Absent)

Mr. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

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

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

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

(Absent - on leave)

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.M.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.,

(Absent)

Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bhola Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent - on leave)

United Force

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

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

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

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, in responses to my call made in accordance with article 70 (1) of the Constitution on the 15th November, 1971, upon the representative of the People's Progressive Party List of Candidates, I have today been informed by the Chief Election Officer that the name of Mr. Leonard Adolphus Durant has been extracted from the list as the person to fill the vacancy in the National Assembly created by the resignation of Mrs. R.P. Sahoye (Shury) and that Mr. Durant has accordingly been declared to be elected a Member of the National Assembly.

Before Mr. Durant can take part in the Proceedings of the Assembly he is required, by article 76 of the Constitution, to make and subscribe before the Assembly the Oath of Office.

As Mr. Durant is in the Chamber, I now invite him to proceed to the Table where the required oath will be administered to him by the Clerk.

Hon. Members, please stand.

The Oath of Office was made and subscribed by Mr. Durant.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Leave to Members**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Minister of Education, Miss C.L. Baird, from 21st to 28th November, 1971 and to the hon. Member Mr. Zaheeruddin from 22nd to 29th November, 1971.

Letter from Speaker of Parliament of Suriname

Hon. Members, I have received a letter from the Speaker of the Parliament of Suriname. The letter reads thus:

“Dear Mr. Speaker,

After our return to Suriname from the visit to your country, I wish to thank you, also on behalf of the members of the parliament delegation, and Mrs. Lachmon, for all you have done for us during our stay at yours.

We have very much appreciated the impressive way all authorities have done their utmost to make our stay a pleasant and unforgettable one, in which they, indeed, have succeed entirely.

During our stay we had the pleasure and honour to enjoy the contact with your people and the beautiful sights of your country with its friendly and attentive population. The similarities of our structures, I think, necessitate us to have closer contacts, which will definitely benefit our peoples and our countries.

Once more I thank you and the Members of lyour Parliament and the Honorable Ministers, on behalf of the people of Suriname for the hospitality paid to us, expressing our further wish that the bond of friendship between both our countries will ever grow stronger.

Please accept, Mr. Speaker, the assurances of my highest esteem and consideration.

22.11.71

National Assembly

2.05 – 2.15 p.m.

Sincerely yours

(Sgd.) J. Lachmon

Speaker of the Parliament of Suriname.

2.15 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Loan Agreement between the Government of Guyana and the United States of America for Improvement of Georgetown Streets and Approaches. [The Minister of Finance]

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE.

RETRENCHMENT OF WORKERS EMPLOYED ON THE SHELL OIL-RIG “SANTE-FET”

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): I wish at the appropriate time to move the Adjournment of the National Assembly to discuss a matter of urgent public importance. This matter deals with workers who have been employed on the Shell Oil-Rig “Sante-Fe” which had been operating off-shore about six months ago and were suddenly told that the operations were closing down and that they were redundant. These workers were working two shifts of twelve hours a day and were not paid any overtime. They were assured, I believe, by the Officials of the Ministry of Labour that this would be regarded as a factory, and that they should not go on strike, that they would be given their overtime pay. They heeded this advice.

Later, however, after the work was completed they were not paid and I understand the local agents refused to even discuss the matter with them. Nevertheless, they have been picketing various places and up to now there has been no result. The Government Department concerned has not taken any action. I understand in a matter like this the labour inspectorate, that is, the Factory Officer, can institute proceedings.

I feel that this matter is very urgent because lots of people are involved who are today very frustrated. I hope at the appropriate time to move the suspension of the Standing Orders to permit this matter to be discussed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I have read your Motion and I have considered it. I am not satisfied that it falls within Standing Order 11. I regretfully would not be in a position to permit you to raise this matter.

As I am on this matter, may I remind hon. Members that about two months ago we had a meeting at which it was suggested that Motions of this nature ought to come not later than 11 o'clock in the morning. I left my office at 11 o'clock and when I went back this afternoon at 1 o'clock I saw this letter on my desk. It is difficult for the relevant Minister to come here prepared at such short notice. I would ask you in future if you can, send them in not later than 11 o'clock.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 5 OF 1971

Assembly in committee of Supply.

The Minister of Finance(Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, I signify that, in accordance with paragraph (2) of Article 80 of the Constitution of Guyana, Cabinet has recommended the following Motion on the Order Paper for approval by the National Assembly.

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st October, 1971, totaling \$1,782,113.”

Your Honour, the Paper has been circulated.

Motion proposed.

The Chairman: We will now consider it page by page. Page 1. Will hon. Members please indicate the items on which they wish to speak?

Mr. Jagan: I wish to speak on items 1 and 6.

Mr. Teekah: Item 4.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Items 1 and 6.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Items 1 and 6.

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to speak on items 1, 3 and 6, but I prefer to wait. If my friends have covered the point I would not bother.

Mr. Sutton: Item 3.

Mrs. DaSilva: Items 2 and 4.

Mr. Lall: Item 1, 4 and 6.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

Mr. Jagan: I wonder if for the sake of convenience I can deal with both items 1 and 6 together. Because it would appear from the caption that both items can be dealt with together. I wonder why the necessity for having item 1 under Magistrates when under item 6 it is for the same purpose that we are asking for \$26,600. I do not see this is a matter that the Government needs to separate the amounts. Perhaps this is done to let it appear that it is not asking for too much. In effect, we are now requiring \$56,700 for this purpose.

2.25 p.m.

Your honour, I shall like the hon. Minister to tell us why it is necessary to have so much money involved in recruiting constables for the purpose of effecting warrants to collect outstanding fines. In the past, I speak subject to correction, warrants in respect of outstanding fines were served by rural constables and the person who was fined was also required to pay an extra sum, apart from what the fine was, which, I think, was paid to the rural constables. I do not know whether that procedure is still in being, or whether the person fined in court is no longer required to pay the additional sum which, in the past, he was required to pay.

If the procedure is the same, I do not see why it is that the government should need this large sum of money, unless the Government feels the sum that was collected was too small for remunerating the constables. It may be that in many cases people who are fined in court do not have any money to pay the fine, and whether a warrant is issued for their arrest or not, no money would be collected. The Government may have to go into extra expenditure to have a man kept in prison, but I wonder whether at this time, having regard to the conditions in the country, the Government feels that expending this large sum of money can really bring in any return to the Government.

In my view, the system as it was in the past should be continued, whereby the constable was given an incentive, he would be paid if he executes a warrant and if money is collected. We

might be paying these constables and yet they would sit down without even trying to execute a warrant. I feel that the old system, where the Government did not have to spend so much money, was a better system, and should like the Government to reconsider whether this sum is justifiable.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Item 1, Fees to Rural Constables executing warrants, and item 6 Rural Constables. These two items require an explanation from the relevant Minister in order that the House may be able to make an objective contribution. The first question I should like answered is: why the two separate items? Is it that constables are now to be attached to the Magistrates' Offices and these constables will come under the direction and jurisdiction of the executive clerk?

As far as I am aware, the system has been that the constables are attached to the Police. After warrants are cleared, they are sent to the police and the police pass them over to the rural constable for execution. I should like to know if there has been a change in the system, because I am of the view that the system would be more effective if it is operated from the Magistrates' Office.

There are complaints that some constables are given collectible warrants while others are given warrants that can hardly be collected. The result is, these constables become frustrated and they try sometimes to come out of this operation. I think as the present law stands, it is the Police who as the authority to execute the warrants, and since payments are to be effected by the Police to the constables, one wonders why this amount of \$30,100 appears under Magistrates.

The point which the hon. Member Mr. Derek Jagan made is a relevant point because after the warrant is executed, the person, who has been fined, pays to the collecting officer, in addition to his fine, a fee which is, I think, in the vicinity of \$4.00. The constable receives that extra sum paid by the person who has to pay the fine. This being so, the other question that comes to

mind is: Why has Government to make a provision in the estimate for the collection of outstanding fines?

Mr. Chairman, I would crave your indulgence because if I have any other contribution to make, the only way I can contribute to these items is by virtue of the answers of the Minister to these questions.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Dealing with items 1 and 6, most of the questions I intended to ask have been asked by previous speakers. I would specifically point out that the amount of \$30,100 plus \$26,600 add up to a very significant amount. One wonders about the necessity for the two heads. We are paying rural constables under subhead 21, and fees are given to them under subhead 16. We need an explanation as to how this new system will work. We need to be told what are the outstanding fines in relation to which the Government is spending a large sum of money. What does the Government hope to collect as a result of spending this money? What are the effects of the present system, and why the necessity for these two Heads?

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 3. I should like to ask the hon. Minister if he would kindly explain to the House the sum of \$16,000 which is proposed as an increased grant to the Guyana Co-operative Union Ltd. which originally was given \$9,000. Especially, (1), since the amount is nearly doubled that of the original grant, and, (2) in these days when we are hearing of so much fraud and other things overtaking the co-operative movement in this country, I would say never before in the history of our country - -

The Chairman: Are we dealing with items 1 and?

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, sir.

Mr. Chairman: You had asked to speak on items 1, 3 and 6. I am asking you to speak on items 1 and 6.

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes sir, I had indicated that if my colleagues had covered the points, I would not speak. They have covered.

2.35 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall, you will be speaking on items 1 and 6.

Mr. Lall: With your permission, sir, I should like to take item 1, Magistrates, Fees to Rural Constables execution warrants, and item 6 Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, Rural Constables, together.

First, it is inconceivable that the Government should now be asking for the sum of \$56,700 for one single month in the year.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, before you proceed. This is not so. The Government is asking for a supplementary vote, not necessarily for one month. Nowhere is it so stated.

Mr. Lall: I maintain that when the Government was farming its budget it should have known that there were fines from the previous year to be collected. Therefore, it should have projected the amount for rural constables higher than it did when the budget was brought to this House.

The other point I wish to make is that we just do not know which Ministry is responsible for the collection of fines. We observe that supplementary provisions are asked for under one subhead in the Magistrates Department and under a subhead that falls under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Is one Ministry in charge of fixing the fines and the other in charge of the collection of fines? Which Ministry is responsible for what? It is our understanding that the Ministry of Home Affairs is in charge of rural constables. Therefore, the amount voted under

the Head of Magistrates, should really have been voted under the Head, Ministry of Home Affairs.

If we take into consideration the number of courts we have in this country, the amount that is voted for rural constables is not realistic, especially when we take into consideration what the shadow Minister of Home Affairs said, namely, that when fines are paid an amount is included for their collection.

There are about 15 to 20 Magistrates Courts in this country and I am sure that nearly 50 per cent of the persons who have been fined have paid their fines. I cannot see why this large amount is voted for the collection of fines. We are really digging a hole to fill a hole.

Would you permit me to speak on item, sir?

The Chairman: No, only items 1 and 6. Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, the matters really fall under the portfolio of my colleague, the Minister of Home Affairs, and I would suggest that he be asked to answer. I think I should defer to my colleague.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

The Minister of Home Affairs(Mr. Clarke): There is a simple answer to the question. Items 1 and 6 are related, as has been pointed out. Under item 6, which rightly comes under my Ministry, there is to be an increase of \$26,600 in the provision for subhead 21 for increased salaries for rural constables. That envisages an increase in the number of rural constables who have been recruited to carry out what is a pilot scheme for the collection of arrears of outstanding fines.

At the beginning of this year, the amount of fines outstanding was in the vicinity of \$1.6 million and it was because of this alarmingly large amount of outstanding fines that it was considered necessary to bring into being a special scheme designed to collect this money. This necessitated an increase in the number of rural constables. An amount for paying those rural constables is reflected at Head 20, subhead 21, \$26,600.

The scheme is one in which the Police have become involved in the collection in addition to the rural constables. I think it was the hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, who pointed out that previously this money was paid as an incentive. It is still being paid as an incentive because what we do is to pay the Police, below the rank of Inspector, the sum of \$2.15 so that they may use their off-duty periods to purchase these back fines and bring the persons before the Courts.

2.45 p.m.

It seems, sir, that between January and September the sum of \$224,000 has been collected since this new scheme has been introduced. This is all the information I have on it. I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Finance who is more knowledgeable in matter relating to item 1 will explain the matter in relation to that item.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, to supplement the explanation given by the hon. Minister of Home Affairs I wish to point out that this system is a very simple one. It is a system whereby the rural constables recruited to this pilot scheme are paid a fixed stipend; and on the warrants executed, they are paid a fee. It is an incentive for them to be diligent about their business.

Hon. Members who are familiar with the old system would know that there was a dependence on the regular ranks of police to execute these warrants. It is a waste to have a police constable trained and to have him serve warrants. Secondly, there was no real incentive for that officer to serve as many warrants as possible. This pilot scheme which has been

organized has proved to be a good one, and it does seem as if it is the answer to the problems which have been facing the courts – the execution of warrants and the collection of fines.

It was pointed out by the Minister of Home Affairs that it was something like \$1.6 million owing on unexecuted warrants. Since this scheme has come into being there has been a substantial reduction in the number of unexecuted warrants. The latest figure for September shows that some 36,000 warrants had been served and executed by these new recruits. The collection in outstanding fines is approaching a quarter of a million dollars. The pilot scheme seems to be just the answer. I hope that hon. Members will not begrudge the sum of \$56,700 that we are being asked to vote considering that we are chasing after the sum of nearly \$1 million.

Mr. Ram Karran: May I be permitted to ask the hon. Minister a question arising out of his reply?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, I am sure that you are aware of our practice, which is, that after a Minister has replied no questions are allowed.

Mr. Ram Karran: No, not necessarily, sir. At least not in the Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: I will not allow you.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister is dealing with two new items – Pilot Schemes. The Minister gives the answer that we should not begrudge the Government for chasing after \$1 million. What I am saying is that I am unhappy over the Government spending this money in this manner. The hon. Minister tells us that this is a new scheme. As far as I know, and I am sure that all hon. Members know, rural constables were serving warrants long years now. The policemen have been doing it at their leisure. Now they have withdrawn the police from this non-police duty to see that less people are choked and robbed and to keep death off the road.

Now that you have allowed me to speak so long, may I continue to ask the question. The hon. Minister tells us that the rural constables are being paid a salary. Surely the hon. Minister ought to have told us since this is a new system what salary a rural constable gets, and for each warrant he serves how much would he get. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs was kind enough to tell us that the police gets \$2.15 off duty.

Only recently we have had the hon. Minister and the Chief Representative of the Policemen in contradiction. That is another issue, and all these things come up.

The Chairman: How is that relevant?

Mr. Ram Karran: We have new items and we ought to know about these pilot schemes so that the Government might be advised whether it is going wrong or right. I should like to know what is the salary of the rural constables and whether in addition to their salary whether they have other duties. Is it to serve warrants all the time? And in serving warrants do they get an added amount? And what is the amount? That is all I wish to know.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman - -

The Chairman: I wonder if at the same time the hon. Minister could hear the question Mr. Persaud had intended to ask.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I have been trying to find out. In the legend reference is made to 21 rural constables; the legend does not speak of policemen. Therefore, one assumes that in both cases rural constables would be paid and not policemen. I did not hear the explanation of the hon. Minister so far as Magistrates are concerned – the item appearing under Magistrates. Why should there be two separate heads? One set seems to be recruited by the Police. Is it that one set would be paid at the Magistrates' Office and another set at the Ministry of Home Affairs?

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, the answer to the hon. Member Mr. Persaud is simple. The constables are recruited by the Police and fall, of course, under the jurisdiction of the Police. They are paid a fixed stipend through the Ministry of Home Affairs; but when warrants are executed those warrants are returned to the courts. Therefore, it is the magistrates courts which have knowledge of the number of warrants executed and it is the magistrates courts which pay the fees for serving warrants.

2.55 p.m.

The points raised by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, I suggest, can best be answered if raised on a proper question with adequate notice.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: The point the hon. Member is missing is that on each warrant there is a payment additional to the fine, in which case the Magistrates' Office collects that money. Why an extra provision when the person who has to pay a fine is in effect paying the fee to the collector?

Mr. Hoyte: The fee, as the hon. Member calls it, is paid back to the constable, but the fee which is paid is reflected in the general revenues; and may I take this opportunity to say that the hon. Member is quite correct when he says that this scheme makes no provision for policemen; so it has nothing to do with policemen.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 2. I am certain the hon. Prime Minister will be happy to say why there is need for an additional \$25,000 for Government Entertainment when late last year the House voted \$25,000 for Government Entertainment. It should be noted that over the years Government Entertainment expenses have been increasing considerably. In 1971 the Government spent on Government Entertainment \$7,996. In 1968 it rose to \$20,198; in 1969, \$30,510; last year, \$50,000. This year it would seem that the Government Entertainment expenses will be around \$50,000.

Surely, one expects that any Government must have entertainment expenses but why such extravagance, especially when there is so much need in the country, why spend money on certain things which do not really bring development? I am certain the hon. Prime Minister will be in a position to give an explanation as to why there is need for \$25,000 more making it \$50,000 for the year. There is need for better school facilities for children. One goes to the schools only to hear the headmaster saying there is inadequate space, there is need for furniture. One goes to the Ministry of Health, people are given inadequate medicines, and there are great problems confronting the people. The Government should be careful in spending money.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to support what the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud said, and to make my own contribution. The hon. Prime Minister keeps telling us about making sacrifices, and tightening our belts, and using black-eye peas for making dhol instead of using split-peas, all this to save the country money, but we are going on increasing the entertainment vote for the Government. I do agree that we must entertain our overseas delegates and I imagine there has been an increase in the number of visitors this year. That is why we have to approve an increased allowance. If it means more trade for Guyana, that is all well and good but to support the government in its mad rush to spend money is out of the question.

I should like to suggest that maybe when we have these overseas delegates we should not have duplicity of cocktail parties and entertainment, having a situation where for two, three or four nights, they go around meeting the same set of people and having additional food and drink. May I suggest that we have only one party where they can meet people as well as Ministries and thus use less food and drink.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I should like to assure this honourable House that the amounts expended on Government Entertainment are always very carefully looked at. In the second place, Government Entertainment covers not only entertainment in Guyana but entertainment out of Guyana. When the Prime Minister is the official guest at dinner of the Prime Minister of India, it is his duty to put on a return dinner. In

civilized society that is what is done. When the Prime Minister of Guyana is the guest of the President of Yugoslavia one night, the Prime Minister of Guyana entertains the President of Yugoslavia another night. The Prime Minister of Guyana has to entertain. *[Interruption]*

In addition, this year, subsequent to the passage of the Budget of last year, we have had at least four official visits which were not, and could hardly have been, anticipated. There were visits of teams from the People's Republic of China, a team of Parliamentarians from Surinam, which team was led, Mr. Chairman, by your alter ego, your corresponding number, the visit of two teams from Yugoslavia, one a trade team and the other a parliamentary team. There was another visit of a parliamentary team from Germany and, incidentally, the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva is aware of all these visits, because she is one Member who shows an appreciation of her right and privilege to be present on these occasions.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to say that there can be no doubt that this money has been properly and well spent. Most of the persons who have contributed to the discussion of this item have tended to emphasise local entertainment but even if one looks at local entertainment, local entertainment involves, except for a certain hon. Member, the use of all local commodities and use of local staff, so it is not a question of exporting the money. As a matter of fact, I would say that this extra \$25,000 is indeed conservative. We hope to keep it down to that between now and the end of the year.

3.05 p.m.

I should like also to attract the attention of the House to the fact that this Schedule of Supplementary Provision represents covering approval for advances from the Contingencies Fund. It is not to be mixed up with requests for Supplementary Provision otherwise.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, item 3.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 3, Ministry of Economic Development, Grant to Guyana co-operative Union Limited. I was pointing out that these are days of stringencies when there are widespread criticisms of the co-operative movement and a large number of them have come near failure. In addition to that, there is the prostitution which goes on. I refer particularly to one co-operative.

I remember that when we were dealing with the request made by the hon. Member, Mr. Teekah, to discuss the erection of a school at Black Bush Polder, there came from the Government benches the slogan, "They never hear about self-help!" One cannot think seriously of self-help when another section engaged in governmental activities takes so much money down the drain. I am referring to a section of the co-operative movement. The Greenland Co-operative has been getting - -

The Chairman: May I remind you, hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, that you are dealing with a grant to the Co-operative Union Limited?

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to take in the whole co-operative movement. *[Interruption by the Prime Minister.]*

The Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, I think there is one Chairman present. Hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, we are dealing with an increased provision for the payment of an increased grant to the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited. Please let us deal only with the Guyana Co-operative Union now.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am so dealing.

The Chairman: I am not going to allow you to deal with the co-operative movement as a whole.

Mr. Ram Karran: I want to convince you that the whole movement is unhealthy. If the Government is to provide double the amount that was originally proposed, it will make the thing more corrupt. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs said that paucity of funds is not the cause of dishonest practices in other sections of the community. The corollary to that is "The more money you give, the more thieving going on".

If you advise me, sir, or instruct me, not to deal with the whole co-operative movement then there is nothing more that I can say, except to warn the members of the Government that the slogan of "co-operative;" is not going to help them when the fall comes.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: On looking at this supplementary provision which is to provide for the payment of an increased grant to the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited, several questions of principle must spring to one's mind.

We in this section of the House are under the impression that it was clearly said when the co-operative movement was young that in time the co-operatives were expected to be run on business lines. That would seem to indicate that at some time profits would be indicated or, at least, they would pay their way with major benefits going to their members.

We note that the original sum voted was \$9,000. We note that the supplementary now requested is \$16,000. This makes a total of \$25,000. I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister would let us know what, in fact, makes this increase necessary.

We have just heard that the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited is responsible for the workings of all the co-operatives. Is it that the movement, as a whole, is operating at a loss? We notice that grants have been provided. We wonder whether, in view of the fact that these co-operatives are supposed to be paying concerns, loans could not have been granted by the Government, perhaps spread over a period of 25 years, or whether sinking funds could not have

been created, which could be repaid from profits made every year. In this way these co-operatives would gradually be put on a firm footing.

The legend states that this is a grant to the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited. Further grants are made to the Union, which seems to imply that we have no hope of getting this money returned. The Co-operative Union Limited has to be subsidized and we must look forward to a continuity of this subsidy, and possibly further increases in the grants.

If this is described as “Grant to Guyana Co-operative Union Limited”, I should like to ask whether the co-operatives are subject to law pertaining to audit as applied to limited liability companies or whether they are audited by Government and what means are used to keep a close check on them, as should be done in operations of this nature. I hope the Prime Minister will tell us how they are audited.

Finally, we were told that the responsibility for the operations of the T.U.C. Housing Co-operative was assumed by the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited. We want to know whether the loss involved by the T.U.C. Co-operative Housing Scheme is a factor requiring this additional amount.

Would the Minister be good enough to explain to us, as briefly as possible, the system under which the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited operates; why this additional grant is necessary; what are the means of audit; and whether the T.U.C. Housing Society’s loss is a contributory factor to this amount now asked for?

The Chairman: The hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, the alleged loss by the T.U.C, so far as the T.U.C. Housing Co-operative is concerned, is not relevant to the sum being asked for.

Further, the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited, which was established many years ago, is a sort of federation of Co-operatives and is supposed to service its affiliates in the same way as the T.U.C. is supposed to service its trade union affiliates. For that servicing, the Guyana Co-operative Union Ltd. is supposed to be paid affiliation dues by its members. To carry out that service it has to employ personnel, a Manager and other staff.

The affiliate shave not been properly organised, especially since certain officers have been the subject of investigation, which I cannot comment on in this House. It is expected, however, that an exercise in restructuring, which is taking place now, will make it unnecessary for Government in any way to subsidise the working and running of the Guyana Co-operative Union Limited.

May I, en passant, observe, and perhaps inform my hon. Friend, through the House, that the actual expenses of the Guyana Co-operative Union amount to something in the vicinity of \$90,000. Even if one added \$9,000 and \$16,000 one recognizes as only somewhat over 25 per cent of such expenses, the subsidy at the moment being granted, which subsidy we would expect, after restructuring, to come to an end.

3.15 p.m.

The Chairman: Item 4. The hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$100,000 is being sought to remigrate Guyanese, and earlier this year by supplementary provision also another \$100,000 was voted for the same purpose. We are against spending the taxpayers' money in this way. It is a fact that we agree with the principle of the remigration of Guyanese but we ought to look at the problem more comprehensively. The more urgent problem at present facing Guyana is to keep the Guyanese citizens at home. Because, Mr. Chairman, let us face it, let every member of this House face it, and let the Prime Minister also face it, Guyanese citizens are leaving this country in increasing numbers and this is happening every year. We must ask ourselves what are the

reasons for this exodus from our country. It is important that we get down to the root causes of this problem. Therefore if we do not look at the causes of the exodus from our country when we spend money to bring back 100 Guyanese an equal number or even a greater number we will be leaving.

Surely the urgent task is to tackle the problems, to tackle the cause for the exodus. Why do Guyanese leave our country? Why do skilled people leave our country? We must get down to the root cause for this. It is no getting away from the facts, it is not to escape the attention of the Government and all concerned that there has been a spate of violence and corruption in recent years with greater emphasis on recent months. It is no getting away from the fact that today everyone is afraid. People do not have security of employment. University professors.

There have been attempts to kidnap them.

The Chairman: Are we dealing with remigration or migration?

Mr. Teekah: We must look at this matter more comprehensively otherwise we will whittle away our fund trying to remigrate we will whittle away our fund trying to remigrate Guyanese.

That is why it is important, it is imperative that the Government should carry out a top level investigation into the causes.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, do you not think that should be a substantial Motion for debate? We are dealing here with Supplementary Provision of \$100,000 for the remigration of all Guyanese. I would ask you to be good enough to confine your remarks dealing with remigration of Guyanese.

Mr. Teekah: I was just following the footsteps of the hon. Prime Minister when he said *en passant*. I am just making a few remarks relating to the matter in passing also.

Getting back to the point having spurned the attempts of the Prime Minister to take me off the subject I want to suggest that (1) a top level parliamentary team look into this whole question of the cause for Guyanese leaving Guyana under the migration scheme (2) I want to ask the hon. Minister since this scheme commenced how many persons did the Government succeed in bringing back home? (3) What does this whole scheme entail? Is it only a publicity scheme? Are people given money, their passages are paid for the whole family unit - the mother, the father, the children? (4) Are all Guyanese asked or only skilled or semi-skilled Guyanese? How many came and how many returned to the country? When they are brought down here are jobs available for them or they are just left like that? Are there any rehabilitation programmes? I wish the hon. Minister would give us approximate figures, not to the point.

Mrs. Da Silva: Mr. Chairman, dealing with this remigration scheme we understand, and believe it to be so, that many people are brought to Guyana to work on the road. Maybe we can be told if this comes under this scheme of remigration. Is it that these persons come on holiday to work on the road, the passage is paid and back they go, and the taxpayers of Guyana foot the bill? In there a special fund set aside to pay for the people who come to Guyana to work on the road? Or is it part of the remigration scheme?

Another point I should like to make is that these people who come to Guyana are remigrated back home.

I support what the hon. Member Mr. Teekah said about this scheme. We do not know much about this scheme. But what I should like to know is this: Those that remain I take it that they are not chosen willy-nilly, there ought to be many professional men, there will be many, and there are many skilled people but are their passages paid by the Government of Guyana? Is it treated as a loan? Do they pay it back or it is just treated as a gift?

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3.15 – 3.25 p.m.

After all it is unfair to these people who went abroad and have qualified and come back to the country. They pay their own passages, why should these people have their money refunded?. I should like to know if it is given to them as a loan or whether they are asked to repay this loan.

3.25 p.m.

How many of them are coming back, and when they come back, how many remain, or how many again immigrate overseas?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend Mrs. Da Silva, with charm but with typical feminine logic, asks a question and bases her criticism on the answer she gives which, as usual, is wrong. "Is this an outright grant?" And she continues. If she could have waited, I would have answered. This is a loan which is to be repaid. The persons returning are normally supposed to serve eight years at least and, furthermore, they consist of technicians, of professionals in various fields, some are on the staff of the University of Guyana, some of them are in the teaching profession teaching specialized subjects, some of them are at the Government Technical Institute, many of them are in the various corporations, a number of engineers are to be found in the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, and the Ministry of Communications.

This year, there have been over 300 remigrants, and may I say further, once again, in answer to the feminine rhetoric that I would have thought that etymology and usage would have shown that no one who is not a Guyanese, who does not belong to Guyana, could remigrate to Guyana. That is a matter of English. Actually, persons who are not Guyanese but who come from abroad to work on the road, have their passage paid out of a fund from a Head which is relevant to the road vote, the vote for that particular road. I do not know what is the relevancy of migration to remigration. All would say is that these are Guyanese who have gone abroad

and have qualified in the United Kingdom, in various parts of Europe, and in North America and have returned to Guyana.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence to ask a supplementary question. The Government is busy remigrating Guyanese. Will the Government think of remigrating Guyanese who have studied in the Soviet Union, the G.D.R., and the like? Will the Government also consider refunding the cost to remigrating Guyanese who have earned their certificates in those countries?

The Prime Minister: So far as I am aware, such Guyanese as have gone to Eastern Universities on P.P.P. awards have had their return passages pre-paid and in those circumstances do not need or seek the generosity of my Government.

Mrs. Da Silva: May I ask a question on a point of clarification. The hon. Prime Minister kindly supplied me with the numbers of people who remigrated. He said over 300. I did ask him to specifically tell me of the ones who have been remigrated here and how many left after they had re-migrated to Guyana, to return to their country of adoption.

The Prime Minister: I would say re-emigrated. So far as I am aware, there are two such who have left Guyana in breach of their contract.

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Mr. Roshan Ally: Item 9.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 9.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12.

Mrs. Da Silva: Item 10.

Mr. Sutton: Item 7 and 13.

Mr. Jagan:

Mr. Wilson: Item 9, if the point is not taken.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 9.

Dr. Jagan: Item 12.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 7. Security Precautions. I am inclined not to speak on them together but I wish to observe that we are spending a lot of money on repression, as indicated under item 9, \$75,000 for National Registration. We are now asked to increase further, this vote for this system of repression. All these years, the amount shown for Security Precautions – the sum of money doled out to informers like Armogan and the others – has been static and it is no help to any decent society to increase it. It is certainly the wrong way to go around it.

3.35 p.m.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of Finance, said that they do not want terrorists; they have too many. That is how the taxpayers' money is being spent, that is, by increasing the provision for bribing people who may not carry correct information, but who are informants nevertheless. The Government wants to increase that number by doubling the amount which was originally provided and which has been provided in the Estimates for all these years. This is not a healthy way of going about the country's business. I wish to oppose very strongly this supplementary provision of \$45,000, and I would ask the House to divide on it because I feel so strongly about it.

If I may move on to the next item - -

Mr. Chairman: We are dealing with item 7. Hon. Member, Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: We note that the voted provision for Security Precautions in the Ministry of Home Affairs has proved to be inadequate and an extra \$45,000 is applied for. In view of the fact that this extra amount is for security precautions, it would appear that this is intended to cover preventive work whereby an effort could be made to prevent crime, hooliganism and so on, and thus lessen the incidence of the terrible things that are taking place at present, such as the shooting of people in broad daylight. In spite of policemen, in spite of mobile cars, in spite of all the equipment we have, people would travel, it is alleged, 25 miles and leave the country by plane. All the security precautions that are taken do not appear to help us.

My house is situated only 15 yards from a street light and about a month ago, at 5 o'clock in the morning, a man attempted to enter the house through a window. Unfortunately for him I woke. I telephoned the Police Station and by the time I received an answer the man had made himself scarce. I wonder if the Minister of Home Affairs will tell us if his Ministry is convinced that it is important to increase the number of foot patrols in various areas in the night, particularly in the outlying areas of Greater Georgetown where choke and rob hold-ups and break and enter crimes are so daringly done, possibly because the criminals know that by the time persons communicate with the Police Stations they will have made good their escape.

I know that the Minister cannot tell us in detail what security precautions this additional vote is intended to cover, but I hope he will tell us whether this is intended to improve internal protection, that is, whether, in view of the spate of choke and rob complaints, daylight attacks and all that sort of crime, this additional amount is intended to increase security precautions in the cities, in the homes, rather than external protection at places like the airport where passengers are searched for arms. I hope that he will confirm that this additional amount is to make some effort to improve conditions so far as the safety of the citizen of Guyana is concerned.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, there have been a great number of irrelevancies brought into the debate on this item.

The Hon. Member, Mr. Sutton, speaks about foot patrols and choke and rob and so on as if he is not aware that money is not normally provided under this subhead for crimes of that type.

The subhead, Security Precautions, is always difficult to estimate with any accuracy at the beginning of any year because no one knows exactly to what extent funds will be required for security precautions. This amount has become necessary and has already been advanced from the Contingencies Fund for security precautions. It is money used in the interest of national security.

The Chairman: Item 8. Hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to ask the hon. Minister if he can say whether the amount of \$25,000 now being sought is adequate to feed the growing population in our prisons today. A large number of persons have been sent to prison for a different offence from time to time and there has been an increase in the population of our prisons. Since this item deals with dietary, it is important that certain points are made so that the Government can consider ways and means of trying to improve the food given to persons when they are incarcerated, to ensure that it is of a high standard and that it is adequate.

A prisoner in any one of our prisons in Guyana gets one cup of coffee, 6 ounces of bread and half ounce of butter at 6 o'clock in the morning. At 10.30 in the morning, those who describe themselves as "Indians" will receive a few ounces of rice, a piece of fish and some peas, and those who describe themselves as "creoles" will get "cook-up", either fish "cook-up" or beef "cook-up". At 3.30 in the afternoon, prisoners are given one cup of cocoa, 6 ounces of bread and ½ ounces of butter. They are expected to remain in their cells from 3.30 in the afternoon with one cup of water until 6 o'clock the next morning.

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Certain members of the Government look on persons who go to prison as people who are lost, who have no chance of coming back into society. If the Government were serious in its intentions, no doubt it would have made efforts to try to ensure that the food given to prisoners was of a good standard.

It is important for the Government to look into this question because it is not only the concern of the Government to vote money to provide these amenities, food, etc., but to ensure, administratively, that the prisoners are getting what is due to them.

The officers in the prisons argue that prisoners themselves prepare the food and if they do it badly the administration cannot be blamed. During a period of 6½ months in the New Amsterdam prison I had on many occasions to return food to the prison officer because the fish was stink. It was smelling although cooked. Many times the peas are filled with weevil. When one speaks to the officers about this they show no interest.

Any decent person would ensure that better food was issued to prisoners. Diesel oil is used in the stove that is used and the food smells of dieseline all the time. Sometimes the bread is not cooked properly. When squeezed the flour appears to be virtually raw.

3.45 p.m.

Therefore the Government has to be able to do something to improve the situation in Prisons. I wish to recommend to the Government that prisoners are given an additional meal per day. At the moment the first meal is given at six o'clock in the morning, then at 10.30 a.m. the second meal is given, after that the last meal and then just a cup of water when they are put in cells at 3.30 o'clock. I wish to recommend that they should be given an additional meal at 3.30 o'clock instead of one cup of water to table to then cells. It is very strenuous for four prisoners to be pout in a cell with four walls and be given one cup of water until next morning. I

appreciate prisoners are not put in prison very wrongfully, many prisoners have committed crimes.

What is it there to reform prisoners? On many occasions there are young offenders making requests to learn tailoring, carpentry and the like and the facilities are not afforded them. The only thing you hear all the time in the prisons is homosexual gaffs. Nothing intelligent! It is important for the Government to try and correct the situation because every single day it is growing worse. It is important that corrective measures be taken by the Government.

I sincerely urge that the Government set up a committee to improve the conditions in the Prisons. There is a committee called the Visiting Committee. I had occasion to see the Visiting Committee. I made requests for toothpaste to be given to me and the officer refused. I went to the Visiting Committee which Committee also refused my request. In other words, you are in prison and you are permitted to lose physically and otherwise. The fact is that the Government is not looking into these questions. The situation is serious. You may have an academic discussion on the radio and in the newspapers on this issue but that is all. The Government is not helping in anyway to correct it. I wish to urge the Government to set up a committee to recommend for persons reforms in prisons.

Mr. Ram Karran: We hear of so many social changes – political changes – but from what my hon. Friend said there are going to be no changes whatever in the Prisons. The story he recalled has reminded me of the Prisons in the 1953/1954 period when other conditions obtained.

The Chairman: You are speaking from experience?

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, sir. This is the reason perhaps why the Government has refused to put on important committees the PPP representatives. The PPP would be the first to lead in the reform. That is why the Government will make no serious efforts to get the Opposition involved in all these committees. I remember one day I was at the Office in King

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Street when the hon. Minister of Home Affairs telephoned me and later sent a letter stating that he wanted a representative of the PPP to sit on Belfield Girls' School; the name must be sent in the next day. That is no attempt to involve the PPP so that they can look at dietary, so that they can look at reform and changes and what should be taking place in the Prisons. What took place this afternoon is that we have voted sums of money to recapture the larger number of people who have been for some reason or another evading fines. People are not paying their fines because they cannot pay their fines and the natural consequences of the speeding up of the execution of warrants would mean that there will be a large number of them put in goal. Is that the positive approach to our problems of crimes?

The hon. Minister says that my hon. Friend is irrelevant because he raised the question of crimes. Most things put forward to this House are never brought for discussion.

I want to deal with the question of insufficiency and the quality. In 1933 this Chamber in the old colonial days had discussed the question of dietary for people in Prisons. This Government with all its slogans - - there is one "Co-operative Republic" - -

Chairman: Are we not definitely by statute and otherwise the Co-operative Republic of Guyana?

Mr. Ram Karran: We want to see it reflected in these Estimates. We want to see it reflected where Motions are brought to this House to be debated. It is no use shouting co-operative when co-operative is only on one side.

Since 1933 they have worked out this question of dietary and it relates not only to prisons. These things relate also to the Best Hospital, they relate to the Public Hospital. Are we not going to look into the future of solving these problems rather than to do as they used to do in the old days? If the Government is really moving from a colonial past to a modern Co-

operative Republic it ought to be thinking in the direction of modern penology; and it must not only think but to see that it is reflected in the policies of the Government, that adequate protection is made for the human beings who we have been keeping in prison because of the pass.

3.55 p.m.

The Minister of Home Affairs(Mr. Clarke): Mr. Chairman, it is precisely because Government feels it ought to provide a proper diet for the members of the prison population that it has come for this supplementary provision. I cannot understand the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran's suggestion that as a result of poor diet, prisoners end up at the Best Sanatorium. He cannot support that statement with facts or figures. I would have thought that the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have been more serious than to make such a suggestion in this House.

It is true that the prison population has been increasing, but we have also been giving attention to the reasons why it has been increasing. There have been a greater number of remands, also a greater number of persons who have been picked up for non-payment of fines. There have been a greater number of persons awaiting trial and, therefore, while in fact the prison population is increasing, it is not a real increase in terms of the number of persons who are permanently there as a result of a court order.

Certainly we would like to ensure that those who have to be kept in our prisons receive as good a diet as if they had not been so placed and this is why we are placing a great amount of emphasis on the prisoners providing more of their food needs. Prisoners have been producing a greater amount of their food and we hope this trend will continue. We are making efforts to ensure that this trend will continue.

We hope this amount we have asked for is sufficient to give a better diet, of increased nutritional value, to the persons who come under our charge.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, perhaps this is a convenient time to take the Suspension.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

On resumption - -

Mr. Ally: Mr. Chairman, I see in this supplementary paper that the Ministry of Home Affairs is now seeking another \$25,000 under item 9 for National Registration. The sum of \$50,000 has already gone down the drain and now the Government is asking for another \$25,000 to send this down the drain. This is salary for the boys and not National Registration. Since 1968, there are hundreds of people on the Upper Corentyne who have been looking out for their I.D. cards and they are not getting them.

It costs a lot of money to these hard-working people. Some people went to the office at Springlands approximately twelve times to get their I.D. cards but they could not get them. At the moment, I understand that people who go there are being asked to go to New Amsterdam so as to collect their I.D. cards. I simply cannot understand what is going on. One man went for his card. They handed him a card, but when he looked at the card, the name and the address were really his, but the picture was not his. A man was supposed to collect his card but a picture of a woman appeared on the card. They took the man's photograph and asked him to return nine days later. When he returned and asked for the card, they handed him the card but the card had the woman's picture still there. This is what is going on time after time. Instead of calling it National Registration, the Government should call it national frustration. They simply do not know what is going on they are wasting money, and wasting their time.

Of late, some registration has been done. I am made to understand 30,000 people were registered. Of that number, 13,000 pictures were spoiled. Instead of this Government

employing a photographer to do the work, it has employed a photo “take-outer”. It is like giving a child a camera to play with. Of 1,278 pictures taken at Black Bush Polder, 1,277 were spoilt. What is this P.N.C. Government doing? It is employing just the boys, people who are strong supporters, and they do not care whether they know how to do the job or not. This \$25,000 which the Government is now asking for, also will be going to the boys. If since 1968, they cannot rectify the fault, especially with those people who were registered in 1968 and who cannot get their I.D. cards, they are still going about the place wasting money and time.

4.35 p.m.

I think that if this Government is really serious in what it is doing, then, at least, it should rectify this. It should employ people who can do the job that is to be done. This Government is more inefficient than anything else and I believe that, instead of asking for \$25,000 the Government should have checked on the whole registration operation. It should remove all the people who are there and put people who can do the job. Let us have some efficiency instead of the sort of thinking that is going on at the moment.

Let the hon. Minister tell us why it is that from 1968 until today people cannot get their I.D. cards. Some people travel from Springlands to New Amsterdam to get their cards and when they get to New Amsterdam they have to have their photographs taken again. They then return to Crabwood Creek. It costs \$4 for someone to travel from Crabwood Creek to New Amsterdam and persons lose the whole day. Some of these people are very poor. They can ill afford to get three square meals a day. The Government should do something to help them. The Minister should see that these O.D. cards are sent to the people's homes instead of having them travel from Crabwood Creek to New Amsterdam to get their cards.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: When the Estimates were approved last year it was considered that the sum of \$50,000 was quite sufficient for the National Registration. We are now being asked to approve an additional sum of \$25,000. I should like to ask the hon. Minister what makes this extra amount necessary. What extra activities are being embarked on? Is any of this money being spent on overseas registration?

Recently the hon. Minister of Finance and the hon. Minister of Home Affairs went overseas. Did that have anything to do with this National Registration? Let us know.

There is a certain gentleman, Mr. Carto, who is an ex-employee of the Guyana Electricity Corporation. One hears of the registration activities of Mr. Carto overseas. Let us know about these things. Is he employed under National Registration? Has he embarked on national registration of persons overseas? What is going on in respect of national registration overseas? Let us know why this additional money is necessary. Let us know the status of national registration and the necessity for this substantial sum of money under this particular subhead which is additional to the sum of \$50,000 that was voted originally and was considered quite adequate at that time.

Mr. Ram Karran: In dealing with subhead 4, National Registration, I wish to refer, not to the incompetence of the Government – incompetence is widespread, so far as this Government is concerned – not to the failure of the photographers, nor the inability of Government to hand over identity cards. What I am concerned about is whether the hon. Minister will be in a position, whether he will be prepared or directed to answer questions relating to the elections vis-à-vis national registration.

Some time ago, when this item appeared, members of the Opposition smelt a rat and recognized that the Government was introducing a National Registration scheme which it later converted by allowing another incompetent body – I think my friend, the hon. Minister of

Finance used to serve as a silent member on the Elections Commission – to extract from the national register the names of those people who were eligible to vote.

That body was controlled by a man who holds a sinecure, who sits and draws \$1,000 a month, not to mention other allowances for serving on other commissions. My friend on this side sat on the Commission as a representative of the P.P.P. They were inveigled by the vote of the United Force, who joined in the sell-out of this country at the time of the Coalition, by my friend on that side and by the Chairman, the majority vote, to refuse to allow the Elections Commission to carry out its function and to perform the necessary examination to see that the Guyanese people were not cheated.

As you will recall, sir, that was followed by an examination later when it was found that persons registered to vote under these registration procedures were alleged to be living on a spot where two horses were grazing. Another person whose name appeared on the register, a person who was registered as a voter in Guyana, was living where a railway station had been existing for many years.

Here in Guyana, the name of a man who had been executed some 20 years ago was allowed to appear on the register. [The Prime Minister: "Reincarnation!"] But we are not dealing with the theory of Pythagoras today. We are dealing with realities; we are dealing with decency and honesty and a so-called "Government" which climbed on the backs of its supporters, fooled my friends in the corner (the United Force) that it was running a decent election until they found out otherwise. The word "rigged" has now become an everyday word in the Guyanese language.

It is my view and the view of a large number of Guyanese that the Government wants to do another rigging exercise in order to take care of a two-thirds majority on their side to make the so-called "Grenada Declaration" a reality. Let me inform the members of the Government that even that is due to fail. It is going to fail as so many projects and - -

The Chairman: Hon. Member, I think we are dealing with national registration.

Mr. Ram Karran: All their efforts are going to fail because they have failed to take the Guyanese people into their confidence. Often, when we sit down in this House, a member of the Government gets up and says, "We are smarter than you." Smartness is not going to run a Government. Smartness is going to keep you in office to draw salaries and perquisites for a time, but even that is going to let you down.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. D.C. Jagan. [*Mr. Jagan was not in the Chamber.*] The hon. Member Mr. Wilson. [*Mr. Wilson was not in the Chamber.*] The hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Clarke): The sum of \$25,000 is being sought to supplement the provision of \$50,000 which was voted last December in order to carry out the additional task of registering those persons who became eligible to be registered on the 30th September this year.

When, in December last year, we agreed to \$50,000 under this head we had not decided to do a revision in terms of bringing on the register those persons who became eligible this year. A decision was taken early this year and, as hon. Members know, the registration exercise which took place between the 20th and 30th September this year, and which is still going on, necessitated this increase in the provision.

4.45 p.m.

The hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally referred specifically to the Black Bush Polder area. He said in that area some 1,278 persons were registered. I am not aware of that. I should merely like to say that in the Black Bush Polder area only 522 persons were registered pursuant to the Order providing for those persons who became eligible on the 30th September, this year to become registered.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh enquired whether this amount of money has anything to do with overseas registration. The answer is, No. This is in respect of the registration of Guyanese locally who became eligible on the 30th September, 1971.

The Chairman: Item 10, the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to withdraw my comments on that head.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 12.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 12, Assistance for Pakistan Refugees in India. This pittance offered, not by the Government but by the people of Guyana, seems to me so much difficult to describe. This sort of thing is what causes or encourages the repression in that unfortunate country. When I spoke to a Senior Member of the Government – absent from his seat – I urged that the Government should express itself, and if it does not wish to do so, it should allow the Opposition to introduce a Motion and the Government can second it with a view to condemning the attitude of President Khan and his repression in Pakistan. The Government spokesman said, “We do not wish to interfere with the internal affairs of another country”. I merely wish to mention that when something occurs in other places the Government spokesmen are allowed in their condemnation without the - -

The Chairman: We are talking about the assistance to Pakistan.

Mr. Ram Karran: This is merely to salve their conscience. This is the sort of thing that encourages the repression. Because if all the nations of the world were to do as Guyana – offer a pittance to the refugees in India – then some nations, undoubtedly, will offer more. But then the refugees will be encouraged to run from the terror that has been unleashed in Pakistan.

I wish to call upon the Government not only to offer \$10,000 which when measured by another standard when you take into account how much it has spent on entertainment, when you take into account how much was used for rigging and so on and how much was used for a

budget, that \$10,000 is merely a token payment. I wish to urge the Government to increase not only that but to join in the world protest against what is happening in that unfortunate country and to go further to support the Government of Bangladesh.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Teekah. The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture (Mr. Salim): Mr. Chairman, all I wish to say is that apart from the leader of the Peoples National Congress and the Peoples National Congress party making donations, the Government has also donated \$10,000 to the Pakistan Refugee Fund. I should like to know why neither the Peoples Progressive Party nor the leader of the Opposition has made any contribution.

The Chairman: Item 13. The hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, I notice that the supplementary provision asked for the Ministry of Trade under "Exhibitions and Fairs" is \$8,250.

The legend states:

"To meet expenditure on the Surinam Trade Fair. This provision is off-set by contributions from local business firms/companies".

The Surinam Fair, as all we know took place some time ago and I wonder if the hon. Minister would be so good enough to tell us if this amount has been completely offset. How much has been contributed by local firms and whether this trade fair did cost any money? Could the Minister also tell us whether what it expected came to pass?

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$8,250 was contributed by local business concerns. This amount of course is paid into revenue and an equivalent amount disbursed in connection with the Trade Fair in Surinam I think by now all Guyanese will have learnt through the various media and through the businessmen who participated in the Fair and other Guyanese who were present, that for Guyana that Fair was a resounding success. Not only was the

Guyana booth quite a good one, but on Guyana Night the Guyanese artists did put on what was widely acclaimed to be an excellent performance.

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On the more material side, there has been a substantial increase in exports because of this trade fair. I think the people who participated did report to the press – it is not a government matter but a matter coming from the private sector – that not only did they receive very many orders in the course of the fair but that many of the items which they had on display there were sold out.

Mr. Ram Karran: As I indicated when I was speaking on item 7, Security Precautions, that I will move its deletion, also with respect to item 9 National Registration, I would wish with your permission sir, to move the deletion of items 7 and 9, \$45,000 and \$25,000 respectively, Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Chairman: I will now put the Question, that item 7 stand part of the Schedule. Those in favour say, “aye”, those against, “no”; the “ayes” have it.

Mr. Ram Karran: Division!

Assembly divided Ayes 22, Noes 16, as follows:

Ayes

Mr. Cheeks
Mrs. Willems
Mr. Van. Sluytman
Mr. Safee
Mr. Jordon
Mr. Fowler

Noes

Mr. Sutton
Mr. M.F. Singh
Mr. Teekah
Mr. Durant
Mr. Remington
Mrs. Branco

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Mr. Corrica	Mr. Ambrose
Mr. Correia	Mr. R. Ally
Mr. Chan-A-Sue	Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Budhoo	Mr. Lall
Mr. Bancroft	Mr. Hamid
Miss Ackman	Mr. Jagan
Mr. Aaron	Dr. Ramsahoye
Mr. Wrights	Mr. Chandisingh
Mr. Thomas	Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. Salim	Dr. Jagan - 16
Mr. Joaquin	
Mr. Clarke	
Mr. Ramsaroop	
Mr. Hoyte	
Mr. Kasim	
Mr. Burnham - 22	

Motion affirmed.

The Chairman: The Question is, that item 9 stand part of the Schedule. Those in favour say, "aye", those against, "no". The "ayes" have it.

Mr. Ram Karran: Division!

Assembly divided Ayes 22, Noes 16, as follows:

Ayes

Mr. Cheeks
Mrs. Willems
Mr. Van. Sluytman
Mr. Safee

Noes

Mr. Sutton
Mr. M.F. Singh
Mr. Teekah
Mr. Durant

Mr. Jordon	Mr. Remington	
Mr. Fowler	Mrs. Branco	
Mr. Corrica	Mr. Ambrose	
Mr. Correia	Mr. R. Ally	
Mr. Chan-A-Sue	Mr. M.Y. Ally	
Mr. Budhoo	Mr. Lall	
Mr. Bancroft	Mr. Hamid	
Miss Ackman	Mr. Jagan	
Mr. Aaron	Dr. Ramsahoye	
Mr. Wrights	Mr. Chandisingh	
Mr. Thomas	Mr. Ram Karran	
Mr. Salim	Dr. Jagan	- 16
Mr. Joaquin		
Mr. Clarke		
Mr. Ramsaroop		
Mr. Hoyte		
Mr. Kasim		
Mr. Burnham		- 22

Motion Affirmed.

Mr. Hamid: Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that the counting is wrong, there is one number short. *[Interruption]*

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Mr. Lall: Item 14. I have noticed here \$154,580 requested to provide for payment to the Guyana Sugar Producers' Association in relation to 1970 refund of import duty paid by Canada. We feel that the Government should see to it that this amount is included in the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund for developing the extra nuclear housing schemes.

Over 5,000 sugar workers are in need of houses right now. They need plots and loans to build houses, but they cannot get any loans. When enquiries were made we were told that the Government had borrowed over \$5 million from the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund Committee. This was projected in a report submitted by the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund Committee. This money should be refunded to the Fund so that the workers could get more houses. Over 5,000 workers are badly housed. They have to go into squatting areas and the sugar producers get policemen to kick them out. [**The Prime Minister:** "Where?"] At Wales and at Mon Repos on the East Coast. We are saying that if the Government did borrow the money it should be refunded to the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund so that houses could be built for the sugar workers.

Roads in the housing areas are in a miserable condition. At times little water is available. Sugar workers at - - - have to be content with two buckets of water per day. There are improper sanitary conditions in the housing schemes, because money is borrowed by the Government. We are asking the Government to repay the money and let the people get houses. Let them get better sanitation, a better water supply and better roads.

We also wish to ask the Government to look into the question of the distribution of the fund. The sum of \$13.20 is used for rehabilitation: sugar producers receive \$7.20; sugar workers get \$4.80 and \$1.20 for the price stabilization fund. We are asking Government to review the whole question of distribution to see if the sugar workers do not deserve a larger portion.

Sugar workers now get \$1.4 million a year. How is this expended? An impotent union, which the sugar workers do not wish, is there to represent the workers. [**The Prime Minister:** "Who put it there?"] Government appointed them. Many contracts were given out. Let an enquiry be made as to how many roads were built in the housing schemes and see what was charged for building those roads. Do not expect the people who are running hotels to look after the interests of the workers in the extra-nuclear housing scheme. Almost all the factories in this

country have been rehabilitated. Split the money and let the sugar workers get houses. Over 5,000 are in need of houses.

I am therefore asking the Government (1) to repay the loan that was taken from the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund as quickly as possible in order to save the lives of the sugar workers; (2) to review the distribution of the money received from sugar exported; and (3) to set up a Committee which will truly reflect the choice of the workers.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, may I crave your indulgence? Much as the humour of my hon. Friend is always engaging, in view of the fact that he has made a statement that the Government borrowed money from a sugar fund. - - - *[Interruption]* This is a sum of money that the Canadian Government pays to us and we have to pay it to the Sugar Producers.

In view of the statement made by my hon. Friend, Mr. Harry Lall, I should like to make a public statement that Government has not at any time, between the 14th December, 1964, and today borrowed any money from any sugar fund or from the sugar producers or from any sugar producing company in this country. I would ask my hon. Friend to retract the remark in view of the categorical statement I have made.

Mr. Lall: I would not say that the Government borrowed the money directly but indirectly it was borrowed. *[Laughter]*

The Chairman: Order!

Mr. Lall: The Minister of Finance is in charge of this Fund and when the money was put in bonds and securities –

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall, you made a statement accusing the Government of borrowing money from the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund. The Prime Minister has made a statement, which is categorical, denying such borrowing from December 14th, 1964, to

the present time and you stood up and said that you have no such information. Will you please, therefore, withdraw that remark?

Mr. Lall: If I did wrong to the Government and to the Prime Minister I beg to withdraw the remark, but I wish to explain what was projected in the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund report.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall, I have not called upon you to make a statement. [*Mr. Lall remained standing.*] As an old and experienced member of this House I think you should know that when I stand you should take your seat. You have apologized and the matter is at an end.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence because in this honourable House we have to air our views. This is a democratic Parliament. We are here and because of our right to be in the Opposition we think it is also our democratic rights to expose what happens to sugar workers' money.

The Chairman: Not to be untruthful, though.

Mr. Lall: I am saying that the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund Committee purchased securities and bonds to the amount of \$5 million.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall!

Mr. Lall: It was the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office - -

The Chairman: Purchasing is a different matter from borrowing.

Mr. Lall: I withdraw the word "borrowing".

The Chairman: The matter is at an end, I said.

Dr. Jagan: I should like to crave your indulgence, sir. Clearly my hon. Friend was trying to say that the Government has the use of this money.

The Chairman: With all due respect to you - -

Dr. Jagan: He said that the Government borrowed it. Whether the Government borrowed it or not, it is in Government securities. *[Interruption by Mr. Hoyte.]*

The Chairman: Hon. Minister Mr. Hoyte, I will not have you make those remarks to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

5.15 p.m.

The point is that the Government has control over the Committee which manages this fund and it has a great say in the vesting of this fund. Let this Government deny that over \$5 million has been spent from this fund invested in the securities of the Government which it is using. *[Interruption]* The Prime Minister is merely quibbling and splitting hairs. We are saying that the Government has used this Fund and we are asking that this fund be put back to its legitimate purpose – for the dire needs of the sugar workers.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, when this Government came into office the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund was invested in Government securities some of which have not matured. Therefore, it is my predecessor in office who was borrowing, if you could call it borrowing. I do not know how purchases can be equated with borrowing. I do not see why if there is an investment in Government securities – long-term securities taken before the Government came into being – that this Government must be called upon to anticipate those securities. I do not see where we are getting at this rate. This is cheap politics I submit, sir.

In any case all of these funds have to be invested to yield money to service them. Will I now go and say that it was my predecessor in office who lent \$12 million out of the Stabilisation Fund to Bookers to set up the bulk loading station? I thank you, sir, *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, I would have thought that after the sound and fury there is nothing for me to say.

The hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall did not really ask any questions. But I just want to make one point for the record. He did say that I was in charge of the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund. He is totally wrong. I think hon. Members know that the Fund is a statutory Fund and will be aware of its composition and will know that the Minister of Finance is not in charge of the Fund, to use the words of the hon. Member.

The Chairman: Section "B" Capital Estimates. Will these hon. Members who wish to speak please indicate?

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 6.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 1, 4 and 5.

Dr. Jagan: I should like to speak on item 1.

Mr. Wilson: I should like to speak on item 6.

Mr. Teekah: Item 2.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Items 3, 4 and 5.

Mr. Sutton: Item 1.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to withdraw from item 1.

Dr. Jagan: I have noted that Government has put this supplementary sum of \$904,113 in addition to the sum of \$1 million under the head "Industrial Development". This certainly in my opinion could not be called industrial development. This is merely to build up the propaganda machine not of the Government, but of the P.N.C. The Government is giving the impression to the whole world that this is a democratic society, that there is freedom of dissent,

that there is freedom of association, etc. If there is to be freedom of the press, then clearly one must assume that there is no pressure exerted by the Government. It must not squander public funds to buy expensive equipment which its opponents cannot purchase. And secondly, the Government must not use divisions methods to suppress others who will compete with them.

We have heard that businessmen have been called and threatened not to give their advertisements to the Guyana Graphic. We know apart from the *Daily Chronicle*, the PNC's paper, the New Nation, gets Government's advertisements regularly. I have sent letters to the Prime Minister showing the column inches etc. Advertisements make up as much as one-third to one-half of any newspaper's income and surely one cannot talk of freedom of the press when there pressures are used. *[Interruption by an hon. Member.]*

Not every paper to be subsidized; we are talking about pressures used by the Government to destroy those who may want to express a contrary view while the Government parades around and says that there is freedom to dissent.

5.25 p.m.

We have seen even one of their members Mr. Archie Codrington, yesterday in the Graphic, issue a statement that it is disgraceful for the Government to pressurize the Library Committee to withdraw their subscription to the Graphic. Such mean dodges they are using to destroy their opponents. No doubt, Mr. Codrington belongs to the Library Committee. Does it mean that only the Chronicle will be read in the Library? I wish to ask whether it was necessary, in view of the grave unemployment situation in this country, the need for industrialization, the need to have industries and factories, whether this Government can consider expenditure of nearly \$2 million as being in the public interest, as distinct from the P.N.C. interest.

If the Government wanted printing machinery, there is printing machinery in the country. Lithographic has a lot of machinery. Surely, any sensible Government will try to maximize the use of equipment which is available in the country, whether by nationalization, whether by private arrangements etc. The Minister of Finance must tell us why the Government is trying to bring new equipment. The hon. Member must know, he has knowledge of everything that is going on, of the state of the equipment. He must also know that in times past, it was almost impossible to get the other presses to print for other people, but that is by the way. The main point I want to make is that this expenditure was not in the public interest and this House should be given the facts what is the feasibility because the Government does not go into any proposition unless studies are carried out.

Cement, glass, bicycle tyres, which one factory has the Government established to give people work in Guyana? No, it is going to spend \$2 million on capital equipment. But apart from this, this House will be called from time to time to vote supplementary sums as subsidies for this newspaper. I am asking whether the Government explored the possibility of nationalising, because if the Government goes into competition with the existing printeries, Graphic, Lithographic etc., it is likely that some of these presses will have to be closed and there will be retrenchment. Is this the Government's way of solving this problem?

I know when the Chronicle closed down, that the workers set up a co-operative. They came to the Government to ask for assistance. I do not know what assistance was given but we do know as a fact that the Chronicle did not continue as a daily paper; it was only a Sunday paper, which means it was not an economic proposition. The previous owner would not have stopped publishing it if it had been an economic proposition; and the workers too would not have stopped continuing it as a daily paper. Therefore, I ask the Government whether, like so many things in Guyana, this is another exercise in which the public is to subsidise another arm of the P.N.C. These facts must be given to this House. We see a lot of rackets being run in other directions. One so-called co-operative gets a lot of contracts. And on this occasion, something

which is a party press is going to be run at the taxpayers' expense. What will lose money will be run at the taxpayers' expense as the propaganda machinery of the P.N.C.

Nobody is saying the Government must have no voice, but look at the methods. Coercion. No wonder all over the Caribbean today there is fear expressed about people like those who now run the Government. This can by no stretch of imagination be called economic development. It should be put under the head of propaganda for the P.N.C.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, this supplementary provision asked for by the Government, to meet expenditure on the Chronicle project, is described as industrial development. We wonder whether it can be described as development resuscitation and the resurrection of something which was considered in most business circles to be dead. It is expected the Government has sought on a number of occasions – and no great controversy can be created by making such a statement – to go into those sectors of the economy which seem to be the plums of the private sector.

5.35 p.m.

It has been noted inside and outside this country that serious attempts have been made by the Government to take control of important sections of the news media. Concern has been expressed because we wonder whether this is the creeping death that took place in other countries of the world and whether it will in fact stop at the point of meaningful participation and not complete absorption.

We remember the statement attributed to the Minister of Finance, namely, that this country seems to have need for only one daily newspaper. We know that only daily newspaper in this country, the *Guyana Graphic*, has been very popular. It has made no secret of the fact that it has been making money but the point that is being made now, if this report is correct, is that when the Minister of Finance said this an examination was being made to see whether the

prices of the shares of the *Guyana Graphic*, which were being put on the market, were just or unjust.

When this report was made, the newspapers also reported him to have said that there is room for only one daily newspaper. In view of the fact that there is a popular and successful daily newspaper, does this mean that we have to come to the conclusion, if that report is correct, that, owing to the fact that the Government is taking a major share in this new daily, in order to make it successful it is going to suppress the other daily newspaper?

I would presume, if the Government is to publish a daily newspaper, it will do its best to make that paper successful. In view of the fact that the Minister has been reported as saying that there is room for only one newspaper, one wonders what steps the Government is going to take to eliminate the other.

The financial difficulties of the *Daily Chronicle* have been a song for several years and businessmen, who are admitted not to be beginners at the game of making money at business, have tried with it and found it very difficult to put this newspaper and printer in a viable position owing to the strong position created by one of the world's strongest publishers, the Thomson group who own the *Guyana Graphic*. The serious question must be asked: Is it in the public interest to take over a printer when it has to compete with one of the biggest, if not the biggest, publishing group in the world? Is this what Government is for?

If the Government intends to suppress the *Guyana Graphic* and publish one newspaper, let us know this. The owners of the *Guyana Graphic*, not being neophytes at the game, have decided that since the Government is pressing them they must make the newspaper largely a locally-based operation. They have made shares available on the local market, they have the labour union involved in it by having the workers buy shares. The Government, they feel, will find it has to suppress its own labour movement if it has to take over the *Guyana Graphic*.

Owing to the fact that the *Daily Chronicle* has failed over the years, in spite of the injection of money, how does the Government hope to make it a viable proposition and thereby justify the statement that the investment of this money is in fact in the public interest?

If it is difficult to make out a case that the investment of this money is in the public interest, owing to the stranglehold that another competitive paper has on the public and owing to the fact that the Government has not stated that it has no intention of suppressing the news media, it seems that an explanation is necessary so that we may understand how, and by what thinking, the Government considers this investment to be in the public interest and not, as stated by the Leader of the Opposition, just an arm of the P.N.C., which I supported by the Government to an extent which the P.N.C. as a party would never be able to afford.

In the light of these well known facts, it would appear that the members of the Opposition and the people of the country should be given a few more details. What is the projection? Was a proper feasibility survey taken? What will result from the investment of so much money? The Government should say, "It is expected to make a profit of X dollars and therefore the shares of the Chronicle will be worth so much in a year or two."

In other words, this is a business operation into which public funds are being injected. It should be handled in a business like manner. This should be understood by people interested in business. Let the Government prove to the investors exactly how it intends to make this expenditure a proper investment in the public interest.

The Government owes it to the people of Guyana, not only to the Opposition, to have a proper examination so that we may know how it hopes, in the light of the circumstances by which we are surrounded, to make this an investment in the public interest.

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, before the hon. Prime Minister rises to reply may I crave your indulgence to refer to a statement made by the hon. Member, Mr. Sutton. He alleges that I

was reported in the Press as having said that there was room for only one newspaper in this country. I have never made any such statement at any time and was never reported in any newspaper in Guyana or elsewhere, as far as I know, as having said that.

I wish the hon. Member would be more accurate in making statements of this sort. I repeat: he cannot produce any newspaper which attributed to me such a statement.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, may I assist my hon. Friend, Mr. Sutton, by admitting that he would have seen in one of the newspapers a statement that there could be only one morning newspaper in Guyana but that the person who made that statement was one Mr. Lupton, one of the employees of Lord Thomson and it was not the Minister of Finance or anyone on the Government side.

I should like us to consider some of the points that have been made. First of all, it has been suggested that businessmen have been pressured to withdraw their advertisements from the *Guyana Graphic*. Of that fact, I am completely unaware. So far as newspapers are concerned, I understand that the advertising section canvasses advertisements in one way or another and if there is a persistent canvassing of advertisements perhaps, to the feeble-minded, that may appear to be pressurizing.

An allusion was made to the fact that Government advertisements have been directed to the *Daily Chronicle* and the *New Nation*. Of course, I can understand why the hon. Leader of the Opposition makes this point because he did seek to have some Government advertisement directed to the *Mirror*. However, Government has not found it economically possible or financially feasible to advertise in so many newspapers and/or media.

When, however, Government finds it advisable and feasible, let the owner of the Mirror rest assured that he will get further advertisements provided he is able to persuade the advertising agency of the Government, Designs and Graphics, that his newspaper is read widely enough and that the quality of the printing is such that its legibility cannot be questioned.

It does not lie in the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition to be speaking in the tone in which he has been speaking, for two reasons. The rump of the united Force now here will vividly remember that in the early 1960's when the *Daily Chronicle* was owned by one Mr. Peter St. Stanislaus D'Aguiar, leader of the united Force, the Leader of the Opposition then Premier of the colony of British Guiana, issued a dictat that the *Daily Chronicle* must not be bought by any Government office or agency and secondly that no Government advertisements should be placed in the *Daily Chronicle*. In our parlance we say "Do so, nah like so." In English we say, "Do as you will be done by."

Furthermore he suggests that the Government is entering into the printing and newspaper fields. I distinguish them and I shall show later why I distinguish the two fields. He indicates that it is the desire, on the part, of the Government to control absolutely the news media and to remove all opposition in these fields. Now it does not lie in the mouth of a soi-disant Marxist to object to the Government going into the printing and newspaper fields.

In the first place, Government is not attempting to pass any legislation which will prevent any other newspaper or company from publishing. In the second place, the leader of the Opposition sometimes even occupies the front page of the *Daily Chronicle* when his notorieties come to the attention of the newspaper. It cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be said that the Government has taken any steps to suppress any newspaper in the country. The Government does not find it possible to put advertisements in every bit of rag. It has been said that Government advertising accounts for only 17 per cent of the advertising revenue of any good daily newspaper. It therefore means that if the *Mirror* has to be dependent upon 17 per cent of

the advertising obtained by a normal newspaper, it is not doing good business anyhow and the P.P.P. will have to continue subsidising it.

The *Guyana Graphic* has not complained that it is not getting Government's advertisements. Let us be very frank: are we as a Government to indulge in the hypocrisy, so far as dailies are concerned, when there is a limited amount of money available for advertising, of placing advertisements in another daily rather than in a Government owned daily? Hypocrisy is not one of the virtues of this Government, and we will not do it. If Government advertisements account for only 17 per cent of the advertising revenue of the average morning newspaper certainly the *Mirror* can live otherwise as the *Graphic* seems to live.

It is not the Government that says that there can only be one morning newspaper: it is Lord Thomson's agent. And a word about Lord Thomson! I never thought I would have lived to hear this Marxist, this good Communist, align himself with Lord Thomson of Fleet, Canadian by birth, British by adoption, *cum* British honours, who controls all over the world 183 daily newspapers 70 of which are to be found in North America. And, amongst the newspaper she controls, are to be numbered all of those in the Eastern Caribbean.

If Lord Thomson, a foreigner, Lord Thomson, a capitalist newspaper tycoon, has a right to control newspapers in the United States, in Malaysia, throughout the Caribbean, certainly Government has a right to own and control newspapers. The Government has not stopped Lord Thomson from publishing. He can go on publishing as long as he finds it a paying proposition, and as long as he adheres to the laws of Guyana.

It is a little short of cheap politics for a soi-disant Marxist like the Leader of the Opposition to complain that we are fighting the tycoon of tycoons in the newspaper world. It was not considered undemocratic that Lord Thomson should control the whole of the Caribbean including Guyana, that Lord Thomson bought and sold the *Mirror*, that Thomson closed the *Daily Argosy* and pushed the *Daily Chronicle* into bankruptcy. Lord Thomson's only creed is

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making profits. He has the temerity to threaten the Minister of Finance and this Government with breaking this Government.

This solicitude for employees is misplaced because the result of the *Chronicle* becoming a daily newspaper has mean that more people have been given employment and those who were employed on a weekly production by Chronicle are now paid wages and salaries commensurate with a greater amount of work they now perform. There is also the misunderstanding that the only operation of the Chronicle is newspaper printing of publication.

5.55 p.m.

It is not only a newspaper; it is also a printing company.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, some time ago, asked a question about Government's banning certain printed materials printed outside Guyana. Textbooks are not printed in Guyana. Most of the receipt books are not printed in Guyana. This will now change. The laws of Guyana have to be printed now in Guyana, as also Christmas cards, post cards and greeting cards. Furthermore the Daily Chronicle, since coming into being, has become printers to a certain publishing house in the Caribbean. One can find the whole web of activities beyond the activities associated with the publication of newspapers and when they come into being, so to speak, they will provide more employment and give an opportunity for the use of more skills on the part of the Guyanese people. So, this unmeant solicitude for the unemployed has absolutely no basis when one studies what is going to be the operation of the Daily Chronicle.

I repeat that he who banned the Chronicle from Government offices cannot speak. He has this to satisfy, because he who is to qualify for Government printing must disclose his interests; we are not only publishing a newspaper, we are going to be a printing organization. We are not closing any newspaper by any law. May the fittest survive, and I have no doubt about our fitness.

Mr. Teekah: Speaking on item 2, Specialist Assistance, I want to make a very brief observation as to the request. First of all, Guyana, says the Government, is a Co-operative Republic and that the emphasis is on the co-operative movement to establish socialism here. Therefore, one would expect that a specialist to be employed by the Government should have been oriented in countries with a history of co-operatives. I should like to ask the Government if it sought socialist assistance from those countries, for example, the Soviet Union and China, Bulgaria where the co-operative movement is very old and whose assistance would be of tremendous help to this Government.

I want to make the point that there is a difference between the experience of the co-operative movement, for example in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, and the experience gained in the co-operative movement, say, in Israel. These are two different types of co-operatives, one is socialist and one is capitalist. If we are aiming at socialism, obviously, we must make a study of the movement in socialist societies. Does the Government have any plans to recruit socialist assistance from such countries? Has all the money been spent on specialist assistance, the \$368,000 shown for this year?

Can the Government through the hon. Prime Minister, say how early the new 10-year Development Programme will be implemented, because it has been a long time since the Government has been talking about this 10-Year Development Plan. I am told the 7-Year Development Programme is not now in existence. We await the word of the Government as to how early the new 10-Year Development Programme will be finished and ready to be implemented.

The Prime Minister: This vote has to do with counterpart staff to technical personnel in relation to engineering projects. For instance, the U.N.D.P. programme with respect to forestry has little or nothing to do with social science, with co-ops, just with technologists, as for instance U.N.D.P. staff with the forestry survey, which we did, and the topographical survey which we are doing, so the hon. Member's comments really are not a propos of this item.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 3. I know this is a new subhead, Assistance to Agricultural Development Activities. The sum of \$100,000 is being sought to meet the initial expenses in setting up agricultural schemes. We on this side of the House would like to have some details of these schemes. What are these? How will they be set up? How will they be serviced? And we think of places like Matthews' Ridge where there are state farms and we recollect the fiasco of Global-Agri. Therefore, we ask for details of these agricultural schemes so we can be satisfied that the Government is not embarking on another of its money-wasting bits of party propaganda.

Mr. Hoyte: This subhead relates to the use of PL 480 funds. The funds generated by that scheme are lent to the Government for various projects. This particular project under the Ministry of Agriculture relates to a number of small but important projects for agricultural development. At present, there are about ten of them and, especially for the benefit of the hon. Member Mr. Singh, I will describe them quickly, so that hon. Members may have an idea of the sort of activity which is being funded by this money. Of course, what has happened here is that since the agreement was made, Government, out of its own funds, advanced the sum of \$100,000 but this sum would, of course, be refunded from the PL 480 sources.

6.05 p.m.

There is one project costing \$30,580 for a Quick-Service Soil Testing Laboratory for which equipment has been bought, for example, the shaking apparatus, Photoelectric colorimeter (Klett Sumerson type), Automated Centrifuge, Analytical Balance and that kind of scientific equipment which is necessary for quick service soil testing.

Then the second scheme is an Animal Nutrition Laboratory Building which has been established to house the equipment which has been supplied by the University of Florida. The cost of that building is \$20,000.

The next scheme relates to the expenditure of \$33,000 to acquire Equipment for Expanded Crop Research Programmes at Ebini. There are things like small mechanical equipment, Weedicides, Fungicides, Insecticides, Irrigation Pumps and expenditure for fencing the research are and things like that.

The fourth scheme is one for \$18,000 to purchase facilities for and expansion of a Seed Production Unit at Mon Repos. Again you have a list of equipment which is necessary for that type of activity.

The fifth scheme is a scheme for Assistance to Cane Grove Farmers where \$32,000 has been expended to replace a 45-year old steam engine with a diesel engine to power drainage pumps and also to help the farmers. There is the cleaning and de-silting 2,400 rods of drainage and irrigation trenches which had become clogged up and which were not serving the farmers efficiently.

The sixth scheme relates to a plan to provide additional Water Transport for Extension Officers in Remote areas. For \$79,000 the following equipment was bought for officers serving in the Rupununi, North West District and Bartica areas a 40 H.P. Johnson outboard engine and boat, launches, and spare parts for boats and engines.

The seventh scheme is a mobile unit for Teaching Farmers and that unit cost \$12,000. It is a mobile communication unit with all the necessary accessories – films, slides, projectors, transformers and things like that.

The eighth scheme is a scheme for which 430,000 was set aside and used to purchase small stock to encourage people, especially in areas where there are facilities for this, to rear small stock. There has been the purchase of pedigree sheep and goats for people, particularly in the Rupununi, North West District and international Savannahs.

The ninth scheme, a small one, for \$4,000, is for the completion of the Abattoir at Lethem. For example, two 100-gallon tanks were bought and a hot water heater for sterilization purposes, an incinerator for disposing of animal waste products, two power meat saws and linking of overhead rails between the killing and hanging floors.

The tenth scheme again is a scheme for the hinterland areas, particularly in the Amerindian villages of Aishalton, Kamarang, Annai, Kurukkubaru and Kamana, where \$18,800 was expended to purchase peanut digger-shakers and peanut shellers for those Amerindian farmers who are engaged in peanut production in that area.

The eleventh scheme is one for \$72,000 for the purchase of a Multi-purpose Canning Equipment which I understand is on order and is to arrive, soon. This equipment will be used to process and can agricultural products – peas, tomatoes, pineapples and so on. I understand this cannery will be set up in Essequibo to serve as a pilot project to show farmers what can be done in the way of preserving their fruits and other products.

That gives the kind of operations which this money is going to finance.

Mr. Feilden Singh: Just a point of clarification, Mr. Chairman. The hon. Minister has given us these schemes in great detail but from a rough calculation it would add up to a lot more than \$100,000. I take it this sum of \$100,000 is for one or two schemes or for a part of one or two projects. He has given use the whole lot of things but only \$100,000 is being requested here.

Mr. Hoyte: The answer to that is Yes, sir. Under this document there are 25 schemes of the same types I have described adding up to \$580,658. This amount relates to money which has to be paid or which has been paid. I pointed out that the canning equipment has not yet arrived. The order has been placed but the question of payment does not arise now. The bills for much of this equipment which has been ordered, will come in next year. There is no point in voting the money this year, as it will lapse.

Mr. Chairman: Item No. 4. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: The Government seeks supplementary provision of \$90,000 and in the legend it is stated that this sum is “to provide for the purchase of land for coconut cultivation”. There are several things wrong with this. In the first place, if one were following the advertisements in the newspapers, one would have seen that for years and years the sale of this estate has been advertised. This estate is near to Mr. Budhoo’s land on the East Bank of the Essequibo River. It is a place which I am personally acquainted with as I served in that constituency for some time and I have some knowledge of the valuation of land.

I am at a loss to know how any self-respecting Government could spend a sum of \$90,000 for plantation Krakow. It is a place which, in the driest weather, is flooded. What is more, a large section of this land has recently been empoldered by the drainage and irrigation scheme. A large part of Plantation Krakow is what used to be called Crown land. I should like the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, when he rises to reply, to tell us how many acres of bona fide property, how many acres of empoldered land, are held as state land.

6.15 p.m.

I remember we used to hear about a story, in fact, I know a little about it. There is a property not far from the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics. When I used to be in that office, a certain Mr. R.B. Gajraj questioned me about the purchase of that property. My reply was that the Minister does not acquire property for Government and he should approach the appropriate officer. The property was offered for something like fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars in those days. Recently, the same property was offered to Government for a fantastic sum like \$50,000 but the sale was stopped when it was exposed publicly. I heard that with the demise of Mr. H.B. Gajraj, an ex-Town Councillor and a convicted blackmarketer his estate was valued at the sum of \$2 million. But with the removal of Mr. Gangadin as Commissioner of Inland Revenue his estate duty dropped to \$800,000 from \$2 million; so there is a difference of \$1,200,000 to play

with. It was seen that soon after that, the Government took an interest in Gajraj Limited and I wonder whether the same thing is happening at "Look out". This is a disgrace. This is a place which I know cannot in the open market fetch \$90,000.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Singh on item 4.

Mr. M.F. Singh: The Chairman, Item 4 again is a matter of detail. This is in respect of Plantation Lookout. I should like to know the acreage of this Plantation. The legend states:

"To provide for the purchase of land for coconut cultivation." I should like to know how would this land be put into coconut cultivation. Would it be given to the P.N.C. supporters? Or would it be given to co-operatives? Would it be given to the P.N.C. Youth Corps? Will it be loaned as a State farm? Is it, say for the farms at Matthews Ridge? Let us have the details in respect of this estate for which this fancy price has been paid.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, this estate has some 300 acres of transported property. Having regard to land values I think it is quite absurd for anybody to say that that is a high price or an extraordinary price. It works out to something like 300 per acre which in any part of Guyana is a relatively cheap price. It is regrettable that every time the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran has to make a contribution that contribution is full of suspicions which seem to be part of his nature.

The legend is inaccurate. For the benefit of the hon. Member this is a coconut estate and it is remarkable that he claims to have knowledge of the estate when from his statements he shows that he is either not being honest or he does not know. There is no half way house in this matter. Plantation Lookout is a coconut estate. It has been acquired by Government as part of the Government's general programme of training young people in agriculture and encouraging them to settle on the land. Since the acquisition of this estate Government has put in the necessary facilities and will next month settle twenty young men to do mixed farming. These

will be young men who have had their initial training as part of the Government's programme in agriculture and next month will see these twenty young men on this estate demonstrating to their colleagues throughout this country what the prospects and opportunities are in agriculture for young people.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 5. I wish on this occasion to refer to the Annual Report of the Transport and Harbours Department for the Year 1969 in relation to the goods ship "Ambrosio". They call it "Ambrosio" for what reason I do not know. But this Report shows that the goods ship the M.V. Ambrosio has done 76 miles per year, steaming hours $8\frac{1}{4}$, average speed 9, hours under steam 179, Bunker C oil and Diesel oil 1,501 gallons, number of days available 59, number of days in service 2. These are the sums which were expended for its service in two days: Fuel \$1,921,88; wages \$51,628.84; Stores \$40,547.85; Miscellaneous \$9,776.70; and repair \$105,935.41. We are asked today to find the additional sum of \$100,000 to provide for the reconditioning of the M.V. Ambrosio. I wonder if the hon. Minister has been listening. I am sure that had any other hon. Member been in his seat he would have tendered his resignation.

The Chairman: We are dealing with the Ministry of Communications and the construction and/or reconditioning of ships.

6.25 p.m.

If we were to glance lower down the line, we would find the specific performance of the R.H. Carr, for which we did a similar exercise, where we spent \$418,.96 on fuel, \$10,119.35 on wages, \$2,135.13 on stores, and \$549.45 and \$27,833.67 for various services. If we were to total these amounts, we would find that the sum is \$349,967.24, a large sum I respectfully submit, which could have provided a suitable vessel to ease the situation and to assist the Guyanese people and the Guyanese economy.

These two gifts, the pay-off from the Manganese Company when it went out of existence, and from Sproston as a result of the kind heartedness of the Government, are a millstone around the Government's neck. Sir, if only you were to go on the Berbice River and see. That is why the Government has refused to discuss the situation in the Berbice River. The M.L. Parakeet, built by the P.P.P. Government, not built by this Government, is a bateau-type river vessel built particularly to negotiate the Canje River, is used to go to Kwakwani. On its way back it is filled with empty aerated bottles when farmers are producing food that is hard to obtain in New Amsterdam.

We want to see this \$465,000 properly spent, not used to create show-pieces. With all this talk about cement, why is the Ambrosia not used to bring in cement? How much more money is needed to be spent in order to make the Ambrosia sea worthy? How long is it going to sail after we have spent so much on it? What is going to happen to the R.H. Carr?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9(2)

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) Mr. Ramsaroop: I respectfully move the suspension of Standing Order No. 9(2) which would permit us to go beyond the statutory hour of 6.30 p.m., in order to enable us to complete this Financial Paper and the Pensions (Consolidation) (Amendment) Bill, which is on the Order Paper. This would obviate the necessity of having to come back at 8 o'clock.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I will not repeat what the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran said. He has told us what service we do not get out of the good ship Ambrosia. The sum voted originally was \$365,000 and the sum requested now is \$100,000. Like him, I repeat, what more money is required to put this ship in order and what use can we expect out of this ship?

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran has given the figures and he said the Ambrosia gave 76 miles last year. I think he

is misleading the House. Last year, the ship was chartered by the Carib Cement Carrier Corp. company for six months for use in the West Indies and it brought income of nearly \$300,000. That ship also brought a shipment of cement for the Guyana Government, so what the hon. Member is saying here is completely incorrect, that it gave only 76 miles.

The Government is handling cement and all our supplies are being brought in on charter and at times we find it difficult to find bottoms to bring it in. Government has decided to completely recondition this boat, which we are doing now using our own engineers at the Transport and Harbours Department, and when they have completed the internal work, it is going over to Trinidad to be docked so we can look after the plates. Those that are bad, we will change. When the work is completed, we shall make full use of the ship, bringing in cement and transporting cargoes to the various countries in the Caribbean.

Mr. Ram Karran: May I thank the hon. Minister. If I said last year, it was an error. I refer to the Annual Report of the Transport and Harbours Department for the year 1969, and may I observe that the hon. Minister did not reply. He did say that this boat made \$300,000, but that is no confirmation that the Government is not going to spend \$1 million in repairs. Perhaps if the hon. Minister would give us the situation at the end of 1970, then we would be satisfied.

The hon. Minister offered no reply.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 6, Environmental Sanitation Programme. The legend states: "To meet the payment of an outstanding account." I would merely wish to observe that it is regrettable indeed that the Government should have abandoned this entire environmental sanitation programme. No money is being continuously voted for this very admirable programme which was started to reduce the incidence of disease which still causes havoc in our countryside. It has been shown even recently that diseases such as gastro enteritis, dysentery, account for a very great proportion of the illnesses which, to a large extent, also affect children, our greatest asset, as we very often say.

I should like to deplore the abandonment of this programme and suggest that Government would do well to consider reintroducing this Environmental Sanitation Programme which has not yet really been completed even in areas such as Essequibo Coast where it was started. I think that money that Government was spending in other fields much of which, in my opinion, is wasted, could well be diverted to programmes such as these which are in the interest of the health of our people.

I would also like to ask the Government why should it be necessary at this late stage to have such a large amount as \$8,000 outstanding, when the programme itself was discontinued for some time now.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: I would like to join my colleague the hon. Member Mr. Ranji Chandisingh in condemning the Government for abandoning the Environmental Sanitation Programme and to point out that there are certain areas of the East Coast of Demerara which really need implementation of such a programme. The hon. Prime Minister goes up and down the East Coast to and from Belfield and I think he must be aware – the Minister of Housing too must be aware – of the very distressing conditions sanitarywise which obtain in the displaced areas. When rain falls you have faeces floating about the place. Children have to wade in the faeces and I think the Government should think very seriously on the conditions there. That is one of the areas where perhaps this programme could be reintroduced with as much speed as possible.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Mines and forests.

The Minister of Mines and Forests(Mr. Jack): There was a provision voted in 1970 for certain works to be done, but at the end of the year some of the accounts were not in yet. That caused overlapping, which is now being put in order at this time. We did not have the provision this year because it related to amounts which should have been paid at the end of 1970, which were not paid because all the accounts were not in.

With regard to the solicitude shown on the other side of the House concerning this programme and the fear expressed that Government has abandoned the Environmental Sanitation Programme, I wish to say I think hon. Members have been reading too much into the fact that provision was not made this year. It is a fact that there is no provision voted this year but that does not mean that Government has abandoned environmental sanitation.

The Chairman: hon. Members this completes consideration of all the items. I will now put the Motion which is that the Committee of Supply approve the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st October, 1971, totaling \$1,872,113.

Question, put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Hoyte: I beg to report the Committee of Supply has approved the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5 of 1971. I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in this Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS
PENSIONS (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL

A Bill intituled:

An Act to amend the Pensions (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1967. [*The Prime Minister*]

The Prime Minister: I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill intituled:

The Pensions (Consolidation) (Amendment) Bill of 1971.

This Bill seeks to amend the Pensions Ordinance in so far as members of the Civil Service are concerned. Previously pensionable service started at 20 years. The minimum age for entry was 18 years. Now it is proposed that the minimum age for entry should be 16 years and pensionable service should start running from the age of 18 years.

Then you still have, until the job evaluation exercise, with proper fixing of categories, is completed, a group of workers called Open Vote workers, who for pension purposes, when they got on the Fixed Establishment, could only get credit for two-thirds for their service as Open Vote workers. It is now proposed that their entire service, even as Open Vote workers, should be counted for purposes of pension entitlement.

Those specifically are the purposes which the Bill seeks to achieve. It seeks also to correct certain anomalies with respect to acting service qualifying officers for pensions. Acting service will now be counted for superannuation purposes. It seeks also to straighten out the problem that sometimes arises when a man who is under suspension on a disciplinary charge, is cleared of a disciplinary charge and does not automatically have the period during such suspension counted for pensionable purposes. That will no longer be. Once a man is cleared of a disciplinary charge, the fact that he was suspended will not preclude him from relying on the period of suspension as a period of service for the purposes of drawing pension.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: I think a large section of the public service will be happy about the amendment which has been moved by the hon. Prime Minister in this Bill but there still are a number of questions that one who is interested in the welfare of the public servant would like to

ask. For instance, why follow in the tradition of the colonial masters of the past to allow two years to elapse before pension age is counted? You allow entry into the service at 16 but why do you wait, as the imperialists waited, when they allowed them to come in at 18 but made pensionable age start at 20? Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister would explain to this House why we hark back to the past.

I understand that people who eventually reach the pensionable service, that is, the Fixed Establishment would be credited with the service they give even though they were Open Vote employees and the term Open Vote employees means daily paid, weekly paid and monthly paid. These are questions.

And then again the Prime Minister said that the whole of the service is credited. I wish to ask a question. I was given the assurance by the former Minister of Finance, the then Minister Mr. Peter d'Aguiar, very early in the marriage between these two opposing forces, that the people who were working at the Drainage and Irrigation Department and who unlike their colleagues at the Sea Defence Board, were regarded as non-pensionable, and were not entitled to superannuation benefits, would be brought under the scheme. In fact a start was made in the time of the P.P.P. but time did not allow it to be completed.

6.45 p.m.

I would therefore wish to enquire from the hon. Prime Minister who has charge of the responsibilities of personnel to tell us whether this category of workers is taken into account.

I wish to point out the general principle of pensions. Those who are in the upper tens, the big shots, are all well off at the age of 55. I would ask the hon. Prime Minister and the Government to think of those people who never reach into the pensionable scales – the A, B and C grades – what you call the open vote people who are either daily, weekly or monthly, who on retirement might get a small gratuity and they have to eke out an existence and wait until they

reach 65 to benefit under the National Insurance Scheme. It is for that reason I argue very strongly for the bringing down of that age so that the Government employee and those on the sugar estates would benefit early rather than waiting until they reach their death bed.

I can see no reason why this should not be so. This is a Government which talks about making the small man a real man and I would feel that it would see the early justification of this category of workers than those who are on top, although we strongly support the Government's measure. In the colonial days in the days of Governor Gurgisburg wholesale retrenchment had been taking place. I refer to the Transport and Harbours Department. What was done in those days was that if an employee of the Government did not have enough service to qualify for pension a Bill was introduced when adding to his service the requested number of months or years to make pensionable so that even though they were sent on the road before reaching retiring age they were sent with something in their pockets. If this Government is bent on making the small man a real man then it would hark back on what existed in the old days at the Transport and Harbours Department. Such a situation would meet the fullest support from the members of the Opposition and everyone in the Government Department in the country. I hope that the hon. Prime Minister and the Government will give some consideration to these points I have raised.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I wish to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for bringing such a Bill before this House. But I should like to ask whether it is the policy of the Government to help those who are more fortunate than those who are less fortunate. When I say so, sir, I mean that due consideration should be given to the open vote workers; they also should be pensionable because some of these workers are playing an important role in Guyana. Therefore, some thing should be done to protect them when they are not able to work and when they reach pensionable age.

I want to draw to the attention of the Government that when the PPP was in office a Motion for severance pay was moved in Parliament. That is way back in 1963. This

Resolution was unanimously passed. All of us will remember when our City was plagued with vandals who brought down the lovely buildings by putting fire to them, when this Government joined with certain capitalists and walked as bride and bridegroom. Anyway it is a holy thing, it is a blessed thing to the Lord who caused the divorce. *[Laughter]*

During that time after the Resolution was passed it had to go to the Tripartite Committee. The Tripartite Committee was made up of Government officials, trade union officials and officials of C.A.G.I. This Tripartite Committee finished its deliberations in 1966 and it okayed the resolution and sent it to the Ministry of Labour.

6.55 p.m.

After then, year after year, I was reminding the Minister of Labour and Social Security to make this Resolution into law. Up to last week I was told that the draft is now at the Attorney-General's Office. I am hereby asking the Government through you, the Prime Minister of Guyana, to see to it that this Resolution is made into law and becomes a reality. If the Government wants to make the small man a real man, then let us not only have words, but let us have deeds. It is our duty to protect the unfortunate of Guyana. I am therefore calling on this Government to make those open-vote workers pensionable and to bring the severance pay law and place it on the statute books of Guyana. Thank you.

The Prime Minister: The remarks of the two hon. Members on the opposite Benches have been noted. In the circumstances I ask that the Bill be read a Second time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

22.11.71

National Assembly

6.55 – 7 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 24th November, 1966, at 2 p.m.” [Mr. Ramsaroop]

Adjourned accordingly at 7 p.m.
