

**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**

30th Sitting

2 p.m.

Friday, 26th 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

(Absent)

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

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 (Absent – on leave)

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 (Absent)

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

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

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

(Absent)

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss M.M. Ackman, Government Whip

Mr. K. Bancroft

Mr. N.J. Bissember

(Absent)

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.

(Absent - on leave)

Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

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

Mr. Ram Karran

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Absent

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 (Absent - on leave)
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P. (Absent)
Mr. L.A. Durant (Absent)
Mr. V. Teekah

United Force

Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. M.F. Singh (Absent)
Mr. J.A. Sutton

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks (Absent)

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**LEAVE TO MEMBER**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh for the day's sitting.

APOLOGY FOR LATE COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

I wish also to apologise for commencing the sitting half an hour late, but I was in consultation and deliberations with the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS**TOILET FACILITIES – GOVERNMENT PRIMARY
SCHOOL AT JOANNA**

Mr. R. Ally: I wish the hon. Minister of Education to answer Question No. 19 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (i) Will the Minister say whether she is aware that because of the condition of the toilets at the Government Primary School at Joanna, Black Bush Polder, neither the teachers nor the Children are able to use them?
- (ii) Will the Minister say how soon it is proposed to carry out repairs to the toilets?

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture(Dr. Reid): The Answer to the Question is, the last effort to repair the toilet facilities was done to carry out water supply improvements. But again the District Engineer has advised us that whenever the work is done there is destruction of these said facilities and so it is difficult for them to stay in a state of good repair for any long period of time. However, the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply and

the Community Development Department are now involved in the entire exercise and it is being impressed on the residents that their willingness to do some of this work by self-help might prove a useful way to prevent the destruction by people.

Mr. R. Ally: Is the hon. Minister aware that the water container at this school is some twelve years old and is leaking? This is not due to vandalism. These things deteriorate. I wish the hon. Minister will say what is the Government's intention in regard to these water containers.

Dr. Reid: In respect of water containers, if the pipes are not destroyed, then the water facilities will go right in the school from the taps. But if the pipes are destroyed it is not always practicable.

Mr. R. Ally: I wish the hon. Minister to say whether he is aware that there is no water pressure at these schools in the area, therefore water cannot reach to the bottom flat unless they have the water container, where they can pump the water up to the school. They cannot get the water.

Dr. Reid: Sir, as I indicated, if you have broken pipes, they will help to reduce the pressure.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Dr. Jagan *rose - -*

Mr. Speaker: May I draw your attention to the relevant Standing Order 19, which indicates that with the leave of the Speaker, a Member may make a personal explanation at the time appointed under Standing Order 12, although there be no question before the Assembly; but no controversial matter may be brought forward nor any debate arise upon the explanation.

The Leader of the Opposition(Dr. Jagan): Sir, on the last occasion, I observed in this House that according to an article written by Mr. Archie Codrington in the Guyana Graphic of Sunday last the Government had apparently issued a directive that no more copies of the Graphic should be placed in the Public Free Library. This is the relevant quotation from the newspaper:

“As a member of the Free Library Committee, I was shocked to learn that the Minister of Information and Culture had issued a directive that no copy of the Guyana Graphic must be bought for the public using the Library.”

The Prime Minister in his reply observed that the P.P.P. could not with any justification refer to such a decision on the part of the Government since the P.P.P. Government was itself guilty of such an act in the past. In the Graphic of 23rd November, this is what is written:

“However, said the Prime Minister, it was not for people like Dr. Jagan, who, as Premier had ordered the banning of the Chronicle, then owned by Mr. Peter D’Aguiar to criticize the Government for wanting to have its own newspapers and printing establishment.”

To the simple minded, this may appear as very sound logic, and since the Guyanese people are not aware of all the facts, I thought I should take the opportunity at this time in this House to put the record straight.

From 1962 to 1964, the Daily Chronicle had carried out not only criticism of the then Government, but had issued vicious statements which were intended to create, and directly aimed at creating, incitement in the country and which were contrary to the public interest. In fact, in this House, a Motion was brought after the Chronicle had carried lurid headlines about Cuban warships in the Guyana waters on the horizon, and a completely untrue report that 250 firearms, consigned to the Guyana Import-Export Limited, had been seized by the police, the implication being that these were imported by the P.P.P.

In this House, a Motion was passed, with only Mr. D’Aguiar assenting, a Motion which was supported by Mr. Burnham, condemning the report as irresponsible and prejudicial against the interest of Guyana.

As I said, this Motion was passed criticising the *Daily Chronicle* for that. Previous to that, the *Daily Chronicle* carried such statements as these. On 3rd February, 1962, Mr. Phillips, a businessman, in an open letter to Mr. Burnham and Mr. d'Aguiar, wrote:

“I would like to suggest therefore that both of you should appear on one platform and explain in detail, in every constituency in this colony, what this budget means to the people, and if this is done I have little doubt that there would be a general uprising against this budget and will force Dr. Jagan's Government to either amend their ideas or resign.”

On February 4th, 1962 there was an editorial which contained this statement:

“But the vindictive and malicious spirit which prowls through the budget . . .”

On February 11th of the same year this appeared:

“If we could fight together at the barricade and hold back the gathering storm, we should be able to make the country safe for our children.”

On April 30th, 1963, a year after, this was contained in the front page comment in the *Daily Chronicle*:

“The Premier seems to wish to drive the masses to the point of desperation. Once past that point anything can happen.”

Mr. Speaker: May I remind you, Dr. Jagan, that this is a Personal Explanation.

Dr. Jagan: I am reading these statements from the *Daily Chronicle* to show why the Government at that time withdrew subscriptions to the *Daily Chronicle*. This was the contest in which it was done.

The manner in which the Prime Minister badly made the statement in the House would make it seem that “The P.P.P. did this, therefore the P.N.C. Government has the right to do the same thing.” By no stretch of imagination can it be said that the *Guyana Graphic* has taken the same position towards the Government of today that the *Daily Chronicle* took to the Government of the past.

Therefore, I do not see that the two things are on all fours and can be compared. That is why I draw the attention of the House to this matter at his time.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON
DEFINITE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
TOLL GATES ON THE CORENTYNE HIGHWAY**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Dr. Jagan.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, I wrote to you today about a matter which I regard not only as urgent but as a matter of definite public importance and that is the decision of the Government to construct toll stations on the Corentyne Road and to charge tolls from those who make use of this road.

After I had dispatched the letter to you, the Leader of the House communicated to me the information that the main spokesman on the Motion, which I propose to move, would be the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, who would be absent from today's sitting, and asked whether I would agree to taking this matter on Monday.

In a spirit of co-operation, I readily consented, but then, at midday, as I was listening to the radio, I heard that the said Minister would be in the Corentyne district and would be discussing with organizations concerned this very matter.

Now, sir, you may not be aware of the fact, but from time to time we have had good reason to complain that on important issues like Global-Agri, and on many other issues, the Government generally ignores this House completely, not only by railroading Bills as was done at the last sitting, but by making important announcements outside of the Parliament. Therefore I was incensed when I heard this announcement and I thought that the Government was merely trying to use a ruse to dodge the debate on the matter today.

Later on I was told in your office, sir, that the Prime Minister would like to speak on this because this matter has serious political implications.

The Minister of Finance(Mr. Hoyte): May I make a serious objection to the way in which the hon. Leader of the Opposition is reporting what was said? I never said that the matter had serious political implications.

Mr. Speaker: In any event, Mr. Hoyte, I think that what took place in my office was a privileged discussion and ought not to be made public.

Mr. Hoyte: I agree with you, sir.

Mr. Speaker: Will you please refrain from making any reference to the question discussed there.

Dr. Jagan: This is relevant, because the Leader of the House first told me that the principal speaker was going to be absent and on that basis I agreed. Then I heard that the same Minister would be talking to the people on the Corentyne. Later, I was told that the Prime Minister is going to speak on the Motion. Therefore, I am saying that the Government is not being honest about this whole matter. That is why I referred to it. I did not want to disclose any discussion which took place. I referred to it in that context, sir. In view of this, I told you, sir, that I could not agree to the withdrawal of this request for the discussion today.

Further, I said to you that I did not think that this matter, which is largely financial at this stage - - it is not a developmental matter; the road is finished. It is not a political matter, either. It has become a political matter because opposition has developed. Not P.P.P. opposition only. The Minister of Home Affairs is saying that the P.P.P. opposing it. Even the supporters of the P.N.C. are opposed to it, but some of them do not have the guts to say so. *[Interruption]* I am not referring to Subnauth. I do not know what political orbit Subnauth and others are gyrating in. *[Mr. Hoyte: "Subnauth is with you."]* Not even their G.A.L.A. supporters - -

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you are at this stage only permitted to make a request.

Dr. Jagan: The Minister of Home Affairs makes a statement from his seat. They do not want to get up and speak in a debate.

I hope you will approve, sir, and that they will agree and let us have a real debate. This, as I said, is a financial matter because the Government is seeking to get additional revenue. It is a revenue measure and, as I said before, the Minister of Finance is a very competent Minister although he has a lot of ideological aberrations when he is delving in a world where he is not competent but I recognize his ability in certain respects and I am sure, in the absence of the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply and the Prime Minister he can adequately deal with this question.

Therefore, Sir, let us have some real democracy for a change in this House. I propose to deal with this matter today, to request leave of the House to move it at an appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker: Do you wish to say –

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, I want to set the record straight.

Mr. Speaker: I will not permit you to speak on the matter raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

As I have said time and time again to permit such a Motion the matter must be definite, it must be urgent and it must be in the public interest. For the matter to be one of urgency it must satisfy certain norms. I will give you an example when the matter can be raised under the Estimates. Today we are discussing Supplementary Estimates, there is provision under Head 65 item 162 – Expenses, Operation of Road toll systems, therefore ample opportunity will be given for such discussion. I regret, therefore, that I cannot permit you.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 6 OF 1971

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, before the Committee deliberates I wonder whether you will permit me to make one announcement.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House will you please wait until we are in Committee. The Assembly will resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the House.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I have reached an agreement with the consent of Opposition in connection with these items that relate to the Ministry of Agriculture. The hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Mr. Ram Karran has agreed that the items falling under that Ministry would be taken first. This has been done to facilitate the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who has to leave about 3.15 o'clock to go into the hinterland.

I wish, too to ask that other items falling within the portfolios of those Ministers who are unavoidably absent be deferred also.

The Chairman: When those items are reached we will have them deferred subject to the approval of the House.

Dr. Jagan: I hope that the Government notes the co-operation which it is getting from the Opposition.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): Your Honour, in accordance with Article 80(2) of the Constitution of Guyana I signify that Cabinet has recommended consideration by the Assembly approval of the proposals set forth in Financial Paper No. 6 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 30th November, 1971 totalling \$9,207,917.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, will you please indicate the items you wish to deal with.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture(*Dr. Reid:* Page 15, item 77 through to item 85. Capital – page 30, item 169 through to 171. Capital Section “B”, Page 2, item 10 Page 3, item 19 and 20.

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

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I should like to speak on items 77, 79, 81, 83 and 84.

Mr. Ram Karran: May I be permitted to speak on item 81?

Mrs. DaSilva: Page 15, item 81.

The Chairman: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak? Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud item 77.

3 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 15.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Item 77, Personal Emoluments, seeks the transfer from Head 62, Ministry of Finance, of a post of Confidential Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture. I should like to know if the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture does not have at the moment a confidential secretary attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, and if he has one, if this is provision seeking to have a second confidential secretary, in which case, he will have two confidential secretaries attached to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Item 79, Transport and Travelling: The voted provision is \$150,000 and the Ministry is now seeking \$30,000 because of increases in air fares and travelling allowances. I wish to confine my contribution to air fares, seeing that it is important for people to be allowed to travel to the interior at reasonable rates. What representations has the hon. Minister of Agriculture made to the Guyana Airways Corporation, or to the Corporation concerned with the operation of

aircraft, for a reduction so that people involved in agricultural production and with the interior could travel in the interior at reasonable rates?

On Item 81, Dairy Farming Expansion, Maintenance Expenses, Mr. Chairman would the hon. Minister indicate where the expansion in dairy farming is being carried out and the number of new cattle bought so that we can get an idea, because it is absolutely necessary for Government to cater for a greater production of milk if we are moving to feed ourselves. If we are seeking to reduce importation, it is important for the Ministry of Agriculture to be geared to give the farmers the necessary incentive for greater production. We are all aware that people are being prevented from selling milk in the City of Georgetown and therefore residents in the Greater Georgetown areas are compelled to go to the Milk Pasteurisation Plant to purchase milk or to go to the country areas. My information is that people are experiencing great difficulties in getting an adequate supply of milk. If we have the potential to produce enough milk for the country and there is this shortage – Government is preventing private individuals from coming to the city, either the City Council or the central government – one would expect Government to be geared to ensure adequate production of milk.

Item 82, Animal Quarantine Station: The original provision was \$8,000 and Government is now seeking \$4,097. This is really half the amount that had been passed when the Budget was presented. My information is that about nine dogs per month are kept in the quarantine and the owners of the dogs pay a dollar per day for the upkeep of those dogs. Would the hon. Minister say whether the amount paid by the owners of the dogs is not adequate, and if the time has come for the Government to increase the amount so that this provision will not come from the taxpayers?

A dog is kept for up to a maximum of six months and the owners would have to pay a dollar a day, but besides the food aspect, I am told there is need for improvement. There is no communication between the quarantine and the lab, and if a dog falls ill, it is necessary for the man to leave the pen and go to the lab to report; then someone goes to look after dog. We know how dogs are dear to so many people and if the Government takes the responsibility, it should be geared efficiently to give service in this direction. What I was expecting in the legend was an

explanation to the effect that the Government is seeking to improve the present facilities. I am told there are no facilities for these dogs to be exercised and so they are kept in pens most of the time, but the owners of the dogs feel this is not satisfactory. Will the Minister indicate to the House what steps are being taken in this direction?

My information is, there is only one person attached to the quarantine and while he is required to be there during working hours, this individual sometimes leaves and no one is there. I wonder if the Minister does not think it necessary to appoint someone to assist the person who is in charge. Those are all the questions I should like to ask on page 15. I should like to go to page 16.

Item 83, National Exhibition of Local Products: The Government is seeking a further provision of \$16,000 for this item. I know the Government holds an annual fair and exhibition or an annual exhibition at the National Park and people pay to go in to the exhibition. I should like to know whether this is a profitable venture. I am not ruling out that the Government should publicise local produce, but I should like to know if the strictest financial control is exercised on the administration and running of the fair at the National Park. I should like the hon. Minister to tell us, if he knows, what amount was made at the last exhibition which was held quite recently. The original provision was \$75,000 and this is an additional \$16,000, \$91,000 which is substantial.

What bothers me, more or less, is that this exhibition is restricted to the City of Georgetown. I recall that the Union of Local Authorities in Essequibo used to hold this national exhibition and fair but my information is that Government contributes very little to these rural fairs. It is necessary for the Government to decentralize its efforts in publicising local foodstuffs and local commodities, and, as I said, we support publicizing our local commodities but we would like to be assured as Members of Parliament that those areas that are available for the collection of finance are properly controlled so that this account can be reduced and the Head should be expanded to include the rural areas and the holding of more exhibitions and fairs in those areas.

Item 84, Assistance for Pakistan Refugees in India. As we read the Press, Mr. Chairman, we see that the situation in East Bengal is becoming worse each day and the number of refugees has increased to such an extent that one wonders whether the Indian Government can indeed carry out this human task without receiving substantial support from sympathetic Governments and well-wishers throughout the world.

I am of the view that this Government has not shown the type of sympathy that is usually associated with Guyanese, the spontaneous reaction of the individual Guyanese who walks the streets, to a situation like this in East Pakistan.

The Government's contribution so far, to my mind, is disgraceful and scandalous and it must seek to retrieve its position by showing in a tangible way its interest and concern for people who are suffering and starving as a result of the unfortunate situation that is now existing.

The original contribution by this Government, according to this Supplementary Estimate was \$10,000. The Government is now seeking approval for \$1,441. What a disgrace and a shame! I fail to see why this small provision is on this Estimate. I was expecting something more substantial. I would expect the Government of Guyana to express its views publicly on the situation and to condemn the wrongdoers in this particular situation.

The Government has been hiding; it has been adopting a very cowardly attitude in this particular situation and the time has come for the members of the Government to come out of the cowardice and to stand up as men to express an opinion, to contribute and to show their support, not merely in kind and cash, but in a tangible way so that all people will know that all the people of Guyana are with them in this situation.

I am afraid that the Government has so far done nothing positive in this issue save and except to give a paltry contribution of \$10,000 and now it is wasting the time of this Parliament with an additional vote of \$1,441. Those are all the points I wish to make on these proposals.

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

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture to the legend against item 81 Dairy Farming Expansion, Maintenance Expresses where there is a reference to “increased cost of stock feeds and labour” in relation to this item. I wish to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, who is very knowledgeable in this particular field, how in the name of God he expects the farmers, particularly the farmers in the suburban area where he used to practice, to continue to sell milk to the Government milk plant at 80 cents a gallon, when the Government itself is paying more for stockfeed and labour. Is it not a shame for this Government, of which the hon. Minister is the moving - - - to tell us that we must produce more and that we must be able to feed ourselves, when the Government, on its own admission in this document, says that there is an increase in the cost of stockfeed and that the cost of labour has gone up? How does the Government expect these people to continue to exist when they are paid a price that was prevailing some ten years ago, 80 cents a gallon? It is a shame!

If I may refer again to the slogans, I would say that we on this side of the House very strongly support the Government’s slogan “to produce more and to feed ourselves”. But we urge upon the members of the Government not only to utter slogans but to do something real and to be honest with themselves. They should observe that while in the 1960s we were spending about \$5 million a year for the importation of milk and milk products, today this Government is in a strong position to assist and advise farmers and to give them good prices. I can assure him – I think the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture knows this – that we can be self-sufficient in dairy products if only the farmers were given a fair chance.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister can explain to us how the farmers are going to be able to produce more when prices paid to them are so unattractive. Today we are spending much more than \$5 million for milk and milk products and in the 1960s, as I recall, more people were producing.

Let us take the case of coconuts. In the 1960s half a million dollars were spent on coconuts. The Government has made it very difficult for consumers by removing the subsidy. It will be recalled that the P.P.P. use to give a bonus to people who produced coconuts.

We are not going to be able to feed ourselves. The members of the Government should not delude themselves. It is not their intention to get the Guyanese people to feed themselves. What they are trying to do is to roll up in slogans. That is why the Prime Minister touched on the most sensitive pulse of the people who do not support, and never will support, a Government like this when he said that he was going to ban the importation of split peas. Split peas might be produced here in the next 20 years. I know that research was being done here by Mr. Poonai but he was hounded out of the country. The type of pulse that Mr. Poonai was planting, the type that can be grown in this country, is what is known as arahar; but we have been using Canadian split peas. We have grown accustomed to the taste. Fifty years of research will be needed before we can produce mattar dhol. Do not tell us that we can make dhol from black eye peas when, in fact, black eye peas are not yet available.

Somebody told me that the Maha Sabha advised the Prime Minister that black eye peas can make dhol. I do not know if that is true but it is said that the Maha Sabha is the official adviser to the Government on these matters. Let me assure hon. Members that it is not practicable; no matter how much massala is mixed up in it, the taste is going to be different.

Let us ask the Government to be serious and to attempt to produce the things that can be produced. Do not try to produce ice apples and dhol. The Government will be breaking its neck in such an attempt we should note that the provision is inadequate because of the cost of stockfeed. The cost of stockfeed has gone up and hence this provision is necessary.

The other matter dealing with the selling price of milk, it has to be noted that because of the work being done the farmers who are engaged in dairy production are keeping better animals. It is not the number of Farmers that will make the production of milk greater, but it is the type of animals that you keep. Because there was a time when an animal gave two and three pints of milk, you can have hundreds of those. These days farmers are encouraged through programmes to keep a better breed of animals that will give 20 pints of milk, some of them even 50 pints of milk per day. The cost of it all ought not to rise substantially because you are not keeping the ordinary type of animals that were not really dairy cows.

The matter on dholi was most interesting. My hon. Friend has said that people have acquired the taste. Probably he will recognize that taste is something that can be acquired and people that move from the original dholi, the Canadian Dholi in some cases the original dholi is still used that can be turned into peas. This work is being carried on now in Guyana to grow enough of this peas that we know locally as pigeon peas and to do the processing so that split peas can be produced locally.

Recently it has been learnt that the water hyacinth can be very useful as a feed stuff for animals. As a matter of fact, the animals have already found this out, because they have been feasting on the water hyacinth. But what has come out in recent advice is that it has a high percentage of protein, and the cost of our feed usually is high because of the imported ingredient, to provide the protein part of the feed.

The animal quarantine: Of course you can never tell for sure what it will cost when you run a Quarantine Section because depends on the number of animals that come in. As a matter of facts, this is also a new area; we never had any proper quarantine over the years. Consequently, you can never say for sure what the cost will be. The animals that are kept there must be properly fed and must be properly taken care of, to keep them for a long period – three months the minimum. My friend has said that it is sometimes necessary to keep them as long as six months. But the inspection goes on daily.

Notwithstanding this telephone connection, the man who is in charge is knowledgeable about animals especially small animals. Because a knowledgeable person is there it is possible to detect any signs of illnesses in the earlier stages so that a report can be made properly. No losses have been suffered since animals are kept there. In the evening the watchmen too have been put on charge to take good care of these animals. I am satisfied that these animals in the quarantine are properly taken care of.

We go on now to the National Exhibition. I thought my hon. Friends on the other side would have said how is it possible to mount an Exhibition of the type we had with such a small sum of money, just \$81,000. I wonder if anybody could imagine the amount of work that has been done with just a small sum of \$81,000. This is not an ordinary Exhibition. As a matter

26.11.71

National Assembly

3.10 – 3.20 p.m.

of fact in the rural areas too we are having exhibitions. There was one at Anna Regina and there were exhibitions on the East Coast, and on the Corentyne. It is not only in Georgetown. It is fair to say that it is a good thing to have the national exhibition in some central point which has to be in and around Georgetown, as near as possible, so that people can come from all parts and bring their products at this one big national exhibition at one time in the year. The future plan is to continue to have local exhibitions in the districts but the national exhibition will be held in Georgetown.

We have not got the exact figures as yet, but this Exhibition has taken more at the gates than any other exhibition ever held in this country. I think good arrangements were made for the collection of fees, but you know when you deal with the public, some people I am certain have gone into the Exhibition without paying.

The Exhibition was not only to make money as such, it was a way of bringing our public, especially consumers, near to the things that can be grown on the farm. That is another point why it has to be done in Georgetown where they do not grown these things where people feel that you can only get them by importing them. It was a good experience for them to see what can be grown, and as their demand increase for local products, will certainly benefit. I can say more on that, but that is enough for now.

3. 20 p.m.

The assistance to Pakistan, with all the shouting my friend is doing, it would be a good thing if we ask ourselves without telling anybody: "What is my personal contribution to this fund to ease the suffering of those people? Government has done what it can for the time being, and the recipients have been very grateful. Moreover, because of this contribution, other organizations in this country have subscribed. For instance, the sugar industry has contributed a

substantial amount of sugar, the rice industry has contributed a substantial amount of rice, and several other organizations in Guyana have contributed.

The sum in the supplementary request is not a new sum, but this is necessary to pay the cost of transportation of some of the things that have been sent to East Pakistan. We thought at the time that other arrangements would have been made but since those arrangements were not made, the Guyana Government had to bear the cost of transportation.

The Chairman: We have Section “B” Capital Estimates, page 2, item 10, and page 30, items 169 and 171.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Item 171, page 30.

Mr. Ram Karran: I do not know if my friend will ask the same question I wish to ask, but I should like to put down my name to speak on item 171.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Item 171, Maintenance of Land and Water Transport. Will the hon. Minister tell us what portion of this money is to be used at Matthews’ Ridge? The Government has been talking about hinterland development but the Government has not from time to time used this Parliament to bring us up to date with what is happening in all these areas. As a matter of fact, I am told that in Matthews’ Ridge, all the co-operatives have more or less gone out of existence and the people involved have been pointing to several areas of dissatisfaction. I am told no actual agricultural work has been done at Matthews’ Ridge. There is a standstill and a sum of over a million dollars is being spent each year. I am told that the Government at first offered to sell these people the houses in which they lived at Matthews’ Ridge. They did not heed that call and subsequently Government agreed to give them the houses free, and they refused the houses.

The Chairman: We are dealing with “Maintenance of Land and Water Transport” and the legend reads, “To meet additional expenditure as a result of expanded activities on the hinterland”.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was trying to find out what portion of money allocated to this hinterland development scheme is being used in Matthews' Ridge. I want to find out from the hon. Minister what is really happening at Matthews' Ridge because millions of the taxpayers' money have been wasted there.

The Chairman: Hon. Member *Mr. Persaud*, is it relevant to Matthews' Ridge?

Mr. Ram Karran: From the scale of spending by Government, the hon. Minister would say this is a relatively small amount. When one sees the word, "hinterland", one is reminded of Sir Walter Egerton and the whole hinterland, and to think that the Government is spending \$17,100, a small amount for a Ministry. When the legend says, for additional expenditure as a result of expanded activity in the hinterland, it is so vague, and the legends are so vague on things on which the Government can be more specific. For instance, \$9,000 cannot be used for the quarantine, and Matthews' Ridge, and the Mahaicony scheme, and the schemes where they have the terrorist all over the country.

I should like the hon. Minister to tell us where this is. This sum cannot repair a boat, if we were to take the word of the hon. Minister of Communications when dealing with the Ambrosia. What is the amount for? Is it to repair one, two, three boats? It is a small amount, but even now and in the future, the Ministry of Finance will be more specific in its explanations so as to avoid members getting up and asking questions on what appears to be trivial.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence to ask the hon. Minister one question on item 171.

The Chairman: Please proceed hon. Member *Mrs. DaSilva*.

Mrs. DaSilva: There was a co-operative in the Marudi Mountains. The land is fertile and they produced cabbages and tomatoes. Is it correct that this co-operative has failed? I should like to know why an arrangement was made to have a proper roadway so that they can get their supplies out. Before they could get the vegetables out, because transport facilities were so

26.11.71

National Assembly

3.30 – 3.40 p.m.

bad, the produce rotted. Could the Minister say if this is so, and, if so, if anything has been done?

Dr. Reid: It is good to see the interest shown in the development of the hinterland. I thought perhaps members will have opportunity to speak on specific areas like Matthews' Ridge another point on this supplementary paper, so we will not repeat ourselves too often. We are dealing with a large country. If we are ever to do anything, then transportation will be a substantial cost. In Barbados, one can travel all around the place within an hour on land all the time. In Guyana, if one wants to get anywhere, one has to use both land and water transport. If we are to give the necessary supervision, then the officers in the districts must be mobile. As we improve the roadways in the hinterland, we need to use more jeeps and things of that kind. As we clear some of the rivers and have settlements around, they should be properly serviced and we will be able to have boats good enough to take them through. Indeed, my friend is correct when he says this is a small sum to spend on water and land transportation to service 100 villages and townships that must be serviced by the Ministry of Agriculture.

If we do what we set out to do, to feed ourselves, to encourage people in these areas to grown some of the newer crops so that we can really have import substitution, it would mean the officers will have to give them more attention and this would mean more visits. It is no point having officers and then having no means of transportation. We would pay them to sit in their offices and agriculture cannot be done by anybody who sits in his office.

3.40 p.m.

I think that this provision in the supplementary Estimates is justified. I shall speak on the other matters raised when we come to them.

The Chairman: Section "B", Capital Estimates: page 3.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I should like to speak on items 19 and 20.

Mr. Ram Karran: May I speak on items 19 and 20?

The Chairman: *Hon. Member Mr. Persaud.*

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 19, Kibilibiri Land Development Project, is a sore question. Until today, the Government has not attempted in any way to satisfy members of this House or the people of this country as to what is the true position at Kibilibiri.

This scheme was popularly known as Global-Agri and the name still rings a bell in the ears of so many. Originally the Government provided a nominal sum of \$250,000 for this particular scheme. The matter was very topical earlier this year and during last year and so the Government, cleverly in my view, provided a small sum of \$250,000 so that it would not be severely criticized when the Estimates for 1971 were presented.

Now, in the month of November, the Government is coming before this House to ask for the large sum of \$1,200,000 to meet payment of 1970 accounts. One is forced to ask oneself the question: Will this be the full amount of money that the people of this country will have to pay for this scandalous project, Global-Agri, or will the Government come back again and seek additional provision?

The Government must provide members of this House and the nation with adequate information concerning this scheme. I am of the view that the input in the Global-Agri project, or Kibilibiri scheme, or whatever it is called, is great and the output is very small. Therefore this scheme is a liability on the people of this country.

When one goes to the area and examines what is there one sees a large wharf and many other things that are uncalled for in such a scheme. For many years, the farmers of this country

have worked under severe conditions. I am not saying that conditions should not be improved to give farmers an impetus to produce more, but when one single scheme takes such a substantial amount from the vote for agriculture it, in my view, defeats the development of a large number of schemes in agricultural areas, and what the Government is seeking to achieve, that is, feeding ourselves, cannot be achieved.

We have been voting money from time to time for Global-Agri, or Kibilibiri, but we have not been hearing what we have received from this scheme. On the last occasion when this matter come up – not the last occasion because I was not here to pilot my own Motion, but when I spoke on this matter in the debate on the Estimates, the Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid) brought some sorghum and showed us. We have not heard anything more. [Dr. Reid: “You saw it for the first time.”] Even before the hon. Minister took over that portfolio I had visited the area. I am one of those who saw and know.

The land may have certain potentials, but when the scheme is examined in a comprehensive way we see that it has not been properly located. People in this country would like to have land and they would like to produce. This scheme has now more or less been converted after the Government – and if I may take the liberty to say so, the Minister of Agriculture in particular when he was Minister of Finance – allowed a Yankee to rob us.

This is the opportunity for the Minister to say that he was against the Yankee – Stanley Green I think was his name. I am told that this person rented a house, that he lived in real luxury in the Pegasus for a long time at the expense of the people of this country. I am told that when a nice house with facilities was provided for him, the facilities were not regarded as satisfactory, so that this man used money from the coffers of this country to expand the facilities to allow him to live in greater luxury. No check was put on this man; he was allowed to expend millions of dollars belonging to taxpayers of this country.

I should like to know from the Government how much money has been expended on this scheme so far. What are the assets in the scheme? What has been the return? What is the

present position? We know that after the scandal came to light the Government brought in local personnel to take over the scheme.

I would wish to concede that the majority have been endeavouring to see that something can come out of Global-Agri, but I should like to ask the hon. Minister why is the Government afraid of an inquiry into this particular matter? This is what bothers me. If the Government has nothing to hide, if everything is above board at Kibilibiri and if the scheme will pay and will be a boost to the agricultural sector of this country, why is the Government afraid of a commission of inquiry? Why is it afraid of any inquiry at all into this matter?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud, may I remind you that a substantive Motion on that point was brought before this House and was rejected.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: The only reason why I brought it back is that so many other points can be made on this matter. I am making these points because the Government is asking for more money. It has spent millions of dollars already and now wants \$1,200,000 more.

As the people's advocate I am forced to call upon the Government to give the people of this country, through their representatives in this Parliament, an opportunity to look into all the files and to examine all the affairs of Global-Agri. If the Government can justify what has happened, if it can say that its hands are clean in Kibilibiri, it will then have an opportunity to come to the House and say, "You have had an opportunity to look into the matter in its entirety and therefore you cannot indict or charge us any more."

So long as the Government continues to come to this House and continues to ask us to vote more money for Global-Agri, I reserve the right, as a member of this House, to query, to enquire and to seek to find out exactly what is the true position in Global-Agri.

How many persons are involved in the financial scandal? Is there evidence for the Ombudsman to carry out an inquiry into the Global-Agri? As Members of Parliament we will only be in a position to go to the Ombudsman if the evidence is available to us. But if the files are not available to us, if documents are not available to us, how would we be able, as Members of Parliament who are allowed under the Constitution of the country and the Ombudsman Act, to bring matters before him for investigation and enquiry. If the Guyanese people are to be called upon to make sacrifices, Government employees be they public servants, police or teachers, are to be told that their salaries cannot go to the place where it should be and they are required to make certain sacrifices at this stage of the country, those people must be satisfied that the Government is setting the example.

If the Government wants our support to vote more money for the Kibilibiri Scheme the Government must give us an opportunity, the Government must put documentary evidence before the House of the various transactions from the inception of the Scheme up to the present time, and if we are satisfied – we are not here to continue not to support the Government on the schemes if it can justify and satisfy us that the taxpayers' money have been properly spent. This is a serious failure on the part of the Government.

Item 20. This item probably is the right item under which I should talk about Matthew's Ridge. I do not want to repeat in detail all I said earlier. This is another Scheme that the Government will be indicted for, unless it comes early and state the position to this House and to this nation. The Government is in deep hot water at Matthew's Ridge. The Government is making a serious error in agricultural development in so far as selection of persons for agricultural schemes is concerned.

There are thousands of persons in this country who have grown up in agriculture and who have got the necessary skill and know-how to help this country produce more. But the people who have got the skill and the know-how, the people who have got the experience, and the people who are willing to contribute to agricultural development are not being given land by the Government. Instead, the Government is involved in a number of bogus co-operatives. The

Government is fooling the nation that these people who constitute these co-operatives are indeed the legitimate people who are concerned and who have got a direct interest in the development of agriculture. But when investigations are made on finds the opposite.

I have gone to Matthew's Ridge again and I speak from first-hand information. There are many weaknesses not only so far as selections are concerned but other weaknesses not only so far as selections are concerned but other weaknesses – suitability of soil for certain produce.

The situation now is, the people feel that the scheme just cannot work. As a matter of fact, I understand that efforts are being made by the Ministry of Mines and Forests to see if once again the necessary factories can be set up there to go back to manganese. The hon. Minister can tell this House whether this Government is satisfied that there again it has thrown away millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money and it is reverting to see if it can resuscitate what was the original operations there. What I say is the Government pays very dear to learn and the unfortunate thing is when it pays dear it is the taxpayers', who in fact who are paying.

Could the Minister tell us what the position is with all these co-operatives. Are these co-operatives active? Is it true that the people who are involved are complaining bitterly? Could the Minister tell us if it is not true that these people wish to come back to Georgetown? As a matter of fact when the company was closed down, there was a total number of five hundred persons involved. I understand that two hundred and fifty or there about came down to the city and they were able to find alternative employment at DEMBA and in other areas because they are skilled people. They were trained for different type of work, they were not basically farmers. And at least two hundred and fifty decided not to stay there but to go and perform the work for which they are best suited and best qualified. I am told that the number has risen from two hundred and fifty.

Originally it was a move to find suitable occupation for the two hundred and fifty right in the area. I am told that that number has been increased to nearly seven hundred and fifty. Many of them do not feel satisfied about the scheme and many of them feel that they are not in

the best area or even if they were in the best area, the necessary inventive and encouragement that they were promised when they were sent to the area those incentives and encouragement are not forthcoming from the Government.

The Government has got in its lap again another matter that is causing the Guyanese nation and particularly those of us who sit on this side great and grave concern. This item speaks of resettlement. Who are the people that will be resettled? Where will they be resettled.

4 p.m.

What is the position, so far as the Government's own development programme is concerned, for new agricultural schemes to be established adjacent to existing ones? What has become of the Government's own proposals, so far as the suitability of soil is concerned, for Crabwood Creek? What has become of the Government's suggestion in its own development programme for the expansion of agriculture adjacent to the Mara Land Settlement Scheme? I can go on and name a number of areas.

The Chairman: Do you propose to go on much longer, hon. Member?

Mr. R. D. Persaud: About 10 minutes, sir.

The Chairman: Well, then, this is a good time to have the suspension.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting is suspended for half an hour.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Ramsaroop: As I indicated to you earlier, sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Reid, has left to fulfil another engagement. I wonder if I can, with respect, request that the debate on the Capital Estimates relating to the Ministry of Agriculture be deferred until Monday when he will have returned. The particular items are numbers 19 and 20.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, we will defer the matter until Monday. We will now discuss the Schedule page after page. Page 1. Will those hon. Members who wish to speak please indicate the items on which they wish to speak?

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Item 1, Transport and Travelling. Mr. Chairman, a very short question. The Bar Association in Berbice has been reported as saying that there is need for an increase in the number of judges in Berbice. I notice this provision calls for travelling. It is clear there is need for more judges to do cases in Berbice. Would the Minister tell us if any arrangement is being made to provide the additional judges in the Berbice district?

The Chairman: How does this come in this item, Transportation and Travelling?

Mr. R. D. Persaud: From the standpoint, Mr. Chairman, of travelling by judges. I should like to know if the item is to enable more judges to travel from Georgetown to Berbice. I did not on the first occasion frame my question properly.

The Chairman: May I draw your attention. If you look at the code number in the Estimates, you will see that this is transport and travelling for the for the officers, not the judges.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: It is regrettable that we did not see a provision for the judges, in view of the demand of the Berbice Bar Association for more judges.

The Chairman: Page 2.

Mr. Teekah: Item 7.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 6.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: I would like to speak on item 6, if the point is not made by my colleague.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 6, Refreshments for the National Assembly. Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that there is some degree of inadequacy of information in the notes accompanying these Estimates and I observe that the legend states, "Voted provision inadequate on account of increased number of late sittings of Parliament". As far as I remember, we have not had many Sittings of the House. Indeed, we do not meet at all on Wednesdays except on very rare occasions, and even then, we meet to dispose of Government business rather than to give priority to members' business. That is why I want to know. Refreshments generally are provided at 4 o'clock each day when the National Assembly sits. We rarely meet until midnight, when refreshments are provided at 10 o'clock. I am sure somebody would be able to give us some idea. This does not really account for the business of the House, in other words, the notes cannot be correct, that this increased amount is voted because it is inadequate due to an increased number of late Sittings of Parliament. We spent less than what we ought to have spent last year.

Mr. Teekah: Item 7. When the recording of the proceedings of the National Assembly commenced, we were told that it was necessary because there was a short staff of official reporters in Parliament Office. I know for a fact that two official reporters resigned, but since then, we wonder what Government has done to fill these two vacancies.

I wish to observe, too, that since the proceedings of the National Assembly are recorded, it would be a good thing if, at least, excerpts of the proceedings could be broadcast on the radio stations. The Government has a radio station, the G.B.S., and therefore it would be a good idea if the people of this country could hear their representatives in Parliament, the highest forum of the land, discussing matters of their interest. We want to suggest to the Government that it should see the wisdom in broadcasting these debates, since already, we have the recordings and since the Government owns a radio station. The Government is able to get over its points of view to the nation via its radio station, and, therefore, if the proceedings are broadcast on the

26.11.71

National Assembly

4.30 - 4.40 p.m.

radio stations, we, on this side of the House, would be able to get across our points of view to the nation.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Mr. Chairman, the legend relating to this subhead is accurate. I do not think anyone can gainsay the fact that we have had quite a few late sittings latterly. However, in addition to that fact, efforts are being made to improve the service generally with respect to the provision of refreshment. Indeed, many of us here recently witnessed a very tangible act of such improvement in the refreshment which had been served us, so that having regard to the first fact, the number of Sittings and to efforts to improve the service, this expenditure is now sought.

On the point raised by the hon. Member Mr. Teekah, he will appreciate that that does not really fall within the competence of the Office of Parliament. I will certainly raise that with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Information, and let the hon. Member know, through the Minister of Information, who is the proper Minister to make a pronouncement on this matter, whether his request can be complied with or to what extent his request can be complied with..

Mr. Chairman: I think the hon. Member made the point that when this provision was being sought, it was mentioned there was need for more reporters.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Mr. Chairman, efforts have been made for a long time to fill the posts of the two reporters. Indeed, I understand the matter is now engaging the attention of the Public Service Commission. You will have recalled, sir, a short while ago, two trainees were in this House, and I understand that efforts are being made to get a rating on their work to see whether they can perform competently in this area. In addition to this, I understand other efforts are being made to recruit staff to perform this type of work.

4.30 p.m.

The Chairman: *Hon. Member, Mr. Teekah.*

Mr. Teekah: Item 9 and 11.

Mr. Jagan: Item 12.

The Chairman: Proceed, hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: There seems to be a typographical error as far as item 9 is concerned in that the sum of \$31,558 has been brought forward and actually, under subhead 1, Personal Emoluments, there is no supplementary provision being sought and there is nothing under the previous supplementary provision although, according to the legend, an amount is supposed to be sought for one post. When one looks at it, the amount stated here does not really pertain to the item.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, if I may invite your attention to page 2, item 9, you will observe that what appears on page 3, under item 9, is a continuation of what appears on page 2, item 9. It deals with Personal Emoluments and the sum of \$1,490 is being provided.

Mr. Teekah: With respect to item 11, Transport and Travelling, we are not criticising the travelling done by the Public and Police Service Commissions, especially the Public Service Commission, but I think this nation deserves more efficiency from the Public Service Commission. There is a case where a candidate applied two years ago - -

The Chairman: We are dealing with Transport and Travelling.

Mr. Teekah: I am trying to relate it. This helps their efficiency. We are in agreement with this expenditure but we would like to see the efficiency. Although we are trying to provide the amount that is requested by these Commissions, the Public Service Commission is particular drags its feet on very important matters. In this case, where a person applied in March, 1969 - -

The Chairman: You will not be permitted to continue in that strain. We are dealing with Transport and Travelling. Will you confine your remarks to that.

Mr. Teekah: I want to conclude by saying that, although the National Assembly is trying its utmost to give consideration to the requests of the Public Service Commission, we do not get utmost efficiency from that Commission.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. D. C. Jagan.

Mr. Jagan: Some time ago, Mr. Chairman, the practice was that State Counsel – at that time they were known as “Crown Counsel” – could only be employed in the Government Service if they had three years’ experience. I was one of those who used to attack that requirement because a person could have a great deal of experience without practicing for three years at the Bar and I was very happy when the Government abolished that requirement.

Unfortunately, the Government has apparently gone to the other extreme by retaining persons with no experience whatsoever to be State Counsel. Persons are now employed direct from England; they arrive in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and appear in Court with a Senior Counsel who is prosecuting. The Government is, so to speak, paying these persons just to sit down in the Court to see how prosecutions should be conducted.

I think the Government has gone too far in this respect. I would ask my hon. And learned Friend, the Attorney-General, to ensure that persons who are employed by Government for the purpose of conducting prosecutions have some experience at the Bar.

Most of us who have practiced at the Bar would realize that if prosecuting counsel is without experience many persons who are guilty, or who may be criminals, may be acquitted because of the case not being properly presented. I would therefore ask that the Government should see to it that the persons appointed to prosecute have some experience.

I can see that where persons are recruited to do drafting in the Attorney-General’s Chambers, such persons, in certain cases, may be employed without any experience, but with respect to persons employed in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions I hope that the Government will change its policy and employ persons with some experience.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the contribution of my hon. And learned Friend. I am surprised that he ventured into the area of criminal jurisdiction, which is not an area in which he normally functions. This is a difficult matter. I am grateful to him for saying that we have tried to move in a direction of realism. I think he should know – and I hope he will recognize – that not all the aspects of practice on the

side of the defence, or in the private area, necessarily create assets to produce qualifications for the conduct of the State's cases.

I really do not think it is valid to say that a newcomer to the Bar cannot be equipped in a relatively short time, with the assistance of senior prosecuting counsel, to handle cases for the State. It has not been the experience of the Director of Public Prosecutions – certainly he has not brought that to my notice – that this has led to any inadequacy in the conduct of the cases on behalf of the State.

I shall note the observations of my hon. And learned Friend. I shall bring them to the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions, but I feel obliged to place on record my own view that the arrangements currently in force are entirely adequate to discharge the State's obligations to its citizens.

The Chairman: Page 4.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: We are not dealing with the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Chairman: Yes, we are not dealing with the Office of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Teekah: Item 21.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 22.

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

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, many persons in this country express much concern about the travelling done under the Ministry of External Affairs. We have already voted \$191,000 and now we are seeking another provision of \$49,000½. Every day the world is becoming a smaller place by more efficient means of communication. There are means of communication other than by use of transport.

This is certainly an extremely large amount. We on this side of the House would strongly recommend to the Government that it should try to use the facilities of the telephone

26.11.71

National Assembly

4.40 – 4.50 p.m.

system and the telegram system to transact its business, especially in the Ministry of External Affairs, because the sum is increasing.

We should very much like to recommend that, instead of using the means of transport, the Government should use the telephone system, which is now becoming very efficient and by which business can be transacted in a very short time. It should also use the telegram system because all over the world these two means of communication are very efficient now. There is a very good network. If the Attorney-General and Minister of State could make use of these systems he would cut down on his travelling and could spend more time in Guyana. The cost would also be reduced.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Mr. Chairman, Item 22, Miscellaneous, where the sum of \$30,000 is being sought. The legend states:

“Voted provision inadequate on account of increased expenditure for Mission.”

I should like to ask the hon. Attorney-General to tell us why there is need for this additional amount of money. The legend states the need for the money since so much has been voted in the past for expenditure for the Missions, especially when there have been so many other heads dealing with different aspects of expenditure, why there is need for this \$30,000. I gather these Missions are getting different forms of allowances – telephone, house, furniture, transport, etc. These allowances are so fantastic and numerous that one would think there was no need at all for this additional amount of expenditure.

Sir, it should be noted that the taxpayers of our country are very concerned about the extravagant allowances and expenditure being used up in this particular Ministry especially when it comes to the question of entertainment allowance. I hope the hon. Attorney-General is not feeling embarrassed if I would mention the amount. The fact is that these allowances are so fantastic one wonders why the Government is asking for this additional \$30,000.

One would have expected a certain amount of modesty on the part of our officers abroad so that they can be able to, at least, help the Guyanese taxpayers so helping the Guyana Government also to save money to carry out for other forms of development. Imagine from 1967 \$49,191 was used for entertainment allowances and now in 1971 it has risen to \$183,000. I am just showing the fantastic increases year after year in every provision. I shall be grateful if the hon. Attorney-General could give a proper explanation.

The Attorney-General: Mr. Chairman, my hon. Friend Mr. Teekah has earned a reputation in this House for being pertinent in his comment. I would urge upon him to do nothing to damage that reputation. The observations he has made with regard to transport and travelling really fell far below the level we had come to expect from him. He suggested that we ought in some way to avoid expenditure on travelling by making use of such devices as telephone and telegram. We are, in fact, making considerable use of telephones and communication facilities such as telex. I am glad to know that he sees the value in this and I hope I can rely on his support when we come to item 23 for increased expenditure on the head of telephones.

But there are some matters that we cannot adequately deal with on telephone or by telegram. For example, some items that came up unexpectedly during the year which called for rather special expenditure to which this is attributable relate, for example, to the Meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in Peru to which we had to send special representatives because of the importance it has, not only for our own relationship with the Bank but, for our whole policy of ownership and control of resources. I am sure he will agree this was not a matter that we could have dealt with by telephone. We incurred very considerable expense in sending personal representatives to attend the inauguration of President Allende in Santiago Chile. I am sure he would not consider that it would have sufficed for us to telephone our greetings to the new and distinguished President of that neighbouring Republic. We can go down the line: The Meeting in Costa Rica, the General Assembly of the O.A.S. of which we are not a member but of which developments bear upon Guyana, particularly developments in relation to a new status of permanent observer which were being discussed; the developments in

the European Economic Community which has called for several visits from our representatives in London to Brussels.

These are all matters which arise in the course of a year which require our presence and which make it essential, I would submit, in the interest of Guyana that we be there. This is part of the price of freedom and a part of the price of independence. We will lose that independence; we will lose it by default, unless we make it our business to be at places in the form of our own people when decisions which effect our future are being taken. I hope hon. Members will agree, on reflection, that expenditure of this kind which cannot always be foreseeable is necessary. I can certainly offer them no promise it will not continue, it must be a continuing part of the future of this country and as our country expands, we enter new fields of activity, new areas of production so new interests will arise that need to be protected and can only be protected by Guyanese and this is going to involve our presence on all these occasions.

The Chairman: Item 22.

The Attorney-General: I beg the pardon of the hon. Member. I was a little lost in the course of his observations because he seems to be dealing with allowances. My intervention from my seat was to try to tell him that we were dealing with miscellaneous expenditure; it had nothing whether to do with allowances. This is the head that covers as it says the miscellany of matters in relation to Missions, their upkeep of the many things that arise from day to day which are not dealt with under specific heads.

During 1971 we have two unexpected developments under the Miscellaneous head. One was the separate establishment of the Consulate in New York. We were fortunate in one sense in being able to house them in the same building and on the same floor as our permanent Mission. But as many other hon. Members will know it is a requirement of the Protocol of the United Nations that the Consulate has to be entirely separate from the Permanent Mission. We had to ensure this, and it has cost money. It has cost us money too in establishing the Consulate and ensuring that it began to function.

We have had unexpected expenditure also in the removal of our Mission in Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia. The Brazilian Government has designated Brasilia as the capital city of the Republic of Brazil and it has been encouraging Missions to move from the established and salubrious capital of Rio to the new capital in rather more arid surroundings in Brasilia and many Missions have been resisting this. Matters came to a head recently when the Brazilian Foreign Ministry issued an edict that Missions that did not remove from Rio to Brasilia by a certain date, which was initially fixed for a date towards the end of 1971, would cease to enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities, since these only attach to Missions in the capital city. At that stage, a number of Missions considered it necessary to undertake to move, and I am glad to say that Guyana was among the first group, and we did have considerable expenses in moving the six or seven hundred miles from Rio to Brasilia. Much of this expenditure is traceable to that particular operation.

The Chairman: Page 5.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 if I can deal with them together.

Mrs. DaSilva: Items 26 and 27, please.

Mr. Teekah: Item 26

Mr. Ram Karran: Mr. Chairman, I asked that I be permitted to deal with them together in order to enable me to refer to the details of current expenditure in the Annual Estimates of 1971, and to compare the total amounts spent or approved from 1968 to the present time. In 1968 under this Head, Ministry of External Affairs, we spent the sum of \$1,695,915. The actual expenditure for 1969 was \$2,085,776. The Approved Estimates for 1970 was \$2,531,541 and the estimates for 1971 approved in this House amounted to \$3,499,998. We are now asked to approve an additional sum totaling \$116,740, bringing us to a grand total for this year of \$4,078,636, or roughly there.

I want to ask the hon. Minister of State and Attorney-General to tell us: where are we going? He told us in a very cheeky way: they are not going to stop this. This is going on. Well, so long as he has the guns, this will go on. That is the Government's attitude. That is not

the way, especially since this barren advisedly, has been stepping out of its crease to use diplomatic facilities to assist the party to which the hon. Member subscribes, to use the base in England in Cockspur Street to carry out propaganda for the P.N.C., and also to assist them in the rigging that is forthcoming.

We do not mind expansions in this and in other fields, but we want more food to eat. People in this country are starving. *[Interruption by the hon. Minister of State and Attorney-General]* The hon. Minister of State and Attorney-General lives in the posh area of Bel Air Park and he cannot see. He does not have the time, I believe, flying high over the clouds to go abroad to make his visits to this foreign Ministry. Brazil is no place for our country, democratic as it claims to be. Brazil, a place where there is torture practiced on its opponents.

I was talking with the hon. Minister of State and Attorney-General about the Government's stand on foreign matters. He cannot deny that. It was debated in this House. It did not appear in the newspapers because the Government controls them. The Government of Cuba, in the United Nations, raised the question of all the powers subscribing to a fund which could assist when devastation overtakes any small country. We have the case of Pakistan, when East Pakistan was destroyed before the terrorist of Yahya Khan moved in, but our Government sat down with the United States and voted with the big powers not to set up such a fund so that people who are oppressed by natural calamity could be assisted. We are fraternizing with Brazil and we are spending more money, heedless of the problems facing Guyana.

Documentary evidence has been put forward. He should deny that the diplomatic office in London is used as a base for carrying out propaganda for the People's National Congress. Knowing the hon. Minister for so many years, knowing him to be an upright man, I hope he will use his authority as the Minister of State to stop this rot that is going on and stop the missions outside of Guyana being used as a base for political agitation and political activities, and rigging, on the part of the Government.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 26, Missions and Residences – Upkeeping of grounds, lawns etc., and item 27, Missions and residences – Security Services. I notice that the amount of the supplementary provision now being sought in each case is more than double the amount voted

previously, and the legend states, "Voted provision inadequate." I wonder if the hon. Minister would explain why it is necessary. As far as I can recall, it happens every year at this time when we come with a supplementary financial paper. These Missions always find themselves in a spot for money to upkeep the residences, the lawns, the grounds, etc. Would the hon. Minister say whether the cause of this is a question of bad planning? He gave us a lengthy explanation about having to remove from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia. Does it apply to this, or to all the Missions? We are asked to make so much sacrifice in Guyana and here we have our Missions overseas squandering the money. We do not want them to let Guyana down. We want them to live up to the standard expected of them, but we certainly do not expect them to be extravagant.

5.10 p.m.

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

Mr. Teekah: Guyana, says the Government, is non-aligned and socialist, but everyone of its permanent Missions is outside the non-aligned and socialist world. There is a Mission in Surinam, which is a colony and which certainly is not non-aligned and socialist. There is a Mission in Jamaica, not non-aligned and socialist; a Mission in Brazil, not non-aligned and socialist; a Mission in Venezuela, not non-aligned and socialist; a Mission in Britain, not non-aligned and socialist; a Mission in Washington, not non-aligned and socialist. Of course, there is one in New York, but that is understandable because that is the United Nations.

Not one Mission is there in any country of the non-aligned group or of the socialist world. Guyana does not have one Mission in Africa or Asia or in any socialist country. Not only that. There is no permanent Mission from those countries here.

It could be argued that it takes money for us to have a permanent Mission in the Soviet Union but the Soviet Union could have a permanent Mission here as West Germany has. West Germany has a permanent Mission here and we do not have one in West Germany. The same thing could be done there the socialist countries are concerned.

I therefore want to make this pertinent observation: although we say that we are non-aligned and socialist, we do not have a permanent Mission in any non-aligned or socialist country. I strongly urge the Government to think about this and correct it.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: I wonder if I could deal with the specific questions first, that is, the questions raised by the hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva. The questions relate to very small amounts of expenditure. When she talked about sacrifices that are being demanded of persons locally, it might be misleading unless it was, in fact, made clear that the increase we were talking about was \$3,200 in one case and about \$6,500 in another.

The increase in the provision under item 26, Missions and Residences – Upkeeping of grounds, lawns, etc., was the result of an error in the calculation of the average monthly expenditure on which the figure of \$2,000 was originally based. It was erroneous in the sense that no provision had been made for the maintenance of the grounds of the Ambassador's residence in Washington which the Government purchased in the latter part of 1970, the Estimates having been computed at an earlier stage.

It was also necessary, in terms of the leases signed by the Government, for the grounds of the residence of our Head of Mission in Brasilia, the new Mission that I talked about earlier, to be dealt with under this subhead. Therefore, supplementary expenditure was inevitable.

The second item of expenditure related to Security Services. The provision of \$6,500 had been based on our experience during 1970. In fact, in relation to the time when Estimates are put up, the figure was more in relation to our experience of 1969.

I think hon. Members will be aware, however, that a number of our Missions – I would not wish in this debate to identify them – have to function in capitals in which increasingly, for one reason or another, it has become necessary for them to be the recipients of a minimal amount of security.

26.11.71

National Assembly

5.10 – 5.20 p.m.

I think it is right when we send our Ambassadors and their officers abroad that we should afford them normal protection and this we have had to do in a number of capitals in which, for reasons that have nothing to do with relations between that country and Guyana or to do with the policies of this Government or with the work of our Missions, but for internal reasons associated with those countries, a certain amount of security is necessary and we have had to provide it. In 1971 we have found it necessary to make supplementary provision for this purpose. I am sure that hon. Members will agree that where it is necessary it must be done.

The hon. Member Mr. Teekah, in his observations, put his finger on a current fallacy when he said that we have no Missions in the Third World; we have no Missions in the non-aligned countries; we have no Missions in the socialist world. What he was saying is that we have no Missions in the countries of our close friends and that something must be wrong because they could not really be our close friends or we would have been there.

This is a fallacy because it is not mere friendship that justifies the establishment of a Mission. If that was the criterion that we applied, except that we wish them well in their solution, but with whom we must live and work on a basis of amity and increasing co-operation.

There needs to be no apologies for Missions established in places of this kind. I think the people of this country must have shared in the spirit of welcome that was manifest during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Brazil and the very considerable practical arrangements for increasing co-operation between Guyana and Brazil which have flown from that visit.

That brings me to the overall observation of the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

5.20 p.m.

I suppose of all the items of expenditure in any Budget the expenditure on external affairs in perhaps the most obvious target, the easiest to be critical of largely because its returns are not in the area of practical, tangible things. But I believe that the people of the country themselves in the end share in the sense of contribution which our external relations bring. I should like to

suggest to hon. Members that our record in the field of external relations in our first quinquennium as it is in the area of international relations is a good one, is a commendable one, that we have made important gains for Guyana, that I hope we have made some small contribution on the international scene.

We have made mistakes; there can be no doubt that we can make mistakes in the future. I imagine that will always be the case. That we have laid the beginning of a stable and effective diplomatic service, I personally have no doubt whatever and it is on that basis that the future of the country's relations with other countries will always depend. [Mr. Ram Karran: "What about the rigging?"]

The hon. Member has alleged that our Missions abroad are used for partisan political purposes. That is not true. It would be wrong if it were true. Hon. Members must recognize that allegations of this kind should not be brought here and bandied so lightly. Our Missions abroad are there to serve all members of the Guyanese community. Some members make more use of our Missions than others. I invite all our Guyanese citizens abroad to make full use of our Missions, to make full use of the facilities they offer to all alike. Our Missions do not operate in the environment of partisan politics and hon. Members who have travelled will know, those who had visited our Missions in whatever capital it may be I am sure will be able to testify to that. That is the basis on which they shall continue functioning. I hope that when we come to debate these Estimates for next year hon. Members will do so on the basis that they have made real efforts to ensure that their own supporters abroad who wish to draw on the facilities of our mission have, in fact, sought to do so.

The Chairman: Page 6.

Mr. Hamid: Item 35.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 35.

The Chairman: I think that is for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sorry, sir.

The Chairman: Page 7.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Items 36, 38 and 40.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 38 to 40.

Mr. Sutton: Item 35.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, item 36 (b) (ii) in the legend there is a - -

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Sutton what item would you like to speak on?

Mr. Sutton: I understand that the items covered by the Prime Minister will not be taken today.

The Chairman: That is so.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I should like to know if the time is not right for us to remove this colonial inclusion. I say so because it is the practice that when a lawyer who is in active practice is employed by Government whether in the Attorney-General's Chamber, the Director of Prosecutions or in the Magistracy he is paid what is termed there a Chamber Allowance. One assumes that during the period when he is acting the clerk will be retained and he will be paid; the office will be retained and the rent will be paid. But my experience is that shortly after the appointment of the person the clerk is dismissed and the office is surrendered.

The Chairman: Hon. Member what is the item?

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 2, Chamber Allowance to temporary legal staff. I am not opposed to the Government paying a man in the Director of Public Prosecutions Office or in the Magistracy or in the Attorney-General's Chamber a decent salary but I am opposed very strongly for the Parliament to pass payment in this way.

In fact, if a magistrate gets – my figure might not be right - \$460 per month and he gets an additional \$100 as Chamber Allowance that magistrate wants to continue as an acting Magistrate so that he can draw the extra \$100 as Chamber Allowance. [*Mr. Hoyte: "Is that all his ambition?"*] I will answer that.

On many occasions very experienced Magistrates and persons who have done very well during their acting period are by-passed by a junior because he took appointment earlier than the fellow who wanted the \$100. The hon. Minister of Finance made the point that if that is all the man's ambition. Well what we have to take into account is what is the man's financial position and not his ambition. This must be an important area for consideration. I would therefore suggest to the Government on this occasion without attempting to move the deletion that the Government must give consideration to offering people who are required to act for a temporary period in the legal service proper salary and remove this item of Chamber Allowance. Because as I said, in fact, this money goes to the person acting and it does not go to a clerk or for office rental; probably there may be exceptions but very few cases. All the hon. Members who are in the legal profession know what I am saying is true.

The hon. Minister of State and Attorney-General: Mr. Chairman, I understand my hon. and learned Friend's solicitude for the legal clerks in relation to whom he thinks this allowance is payable. I think it is right to say, on behalf of those lawyers who have, in fact, drawn chamber allowances, that they were not given by way of remuneration for clerks, and it is not to any discredit on them that the allowances may not have been passed on in this way. We recognize that a lawyer who comes out of private practice must maintain, so long as he has not accepted a permanent appointment or committed himself to a permanent career with the State, and will wish to maintain a modicum of his private establishment in relation to his practice. He could not maintain an office and a Clerk on \$100 a month and it was not intended for that exclusive purpose, but he would have to maintain arrangements in relation to his papers and his documents, there would have to be continuing arrangements over a variety of matters. It was a miscellaneous allowance attributable to the fact that he had not taken the plunge finally.

Hon. Members on that side who have not been in the legal profession would not be as acutely aware of this need as hon. Members on the Front Bench who are in the legal profession and who have had to make this transition from practice to Government service. I do not know that the matter will be solved entirely by a revision of salaries because there will always be a situation of this kind for the person who comes in on an acting basis and I do not think our experience has shown that it is bad to bring these people in in this way. Some of them do go back, some of them do continue to act over a long period, but we have corresponding, the happy situation in which men, who come in from the Bar receiving the chamber allowance, have given it up and accepted a permanent appointment. I thank the hon. Member for his observation and I hope I have convinced him.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Item 38, Purchase and Production of films, photographs and other Visual Aids, and item 40, Publishing and Publicising. I should like the hon. Minister of Information and Culture to tell this House how many non-Guyanese have been employed in the Ministry of Information and Culture because my information is that there are Americans employed in this Ministry under this particular Head, "Purchase and Production of films, photographs and other Visual Aids." I make this point because, as we are all aware, the German Government is providing the Guyana Government with the necessary equipment for the production of films. I am told that Americans who are employed in this Ministry confuse the German technician to such an extent, that despite the fact that he is provided the expenditure, after filming, he has to send the film abroad for the final processing. What is worse is the fact that these expatriates are paid higher salaries than Guyanese employed in this Ministry. What yardstick is being used in determining the salaries to be paid these persons or can the Minister, who was originally assigned to the Prime Minister's Office, say what he has offered them? This is extending to other Ministries and it is causing concern to members of the Public Service.

My information is that the expatriates are working in the Ministry as photographers. Why? There are so many photographers in Guyana and the unemployment situation is so scandalous in this country. We are paying expatriates when Government has got the obligation to find work for Guyanese people. One can well appreciate if we are without persons with the necessary skill, it becomes necessary for us to import persons for a period so that our Guyanese

26.11.71

National Assembly

5.30 - 5.40 p.m.

employees can be taught and can indeed share in their experience, but I say there is no need for this in the Ministry of Information and Culture, and I think the hon. Minister owes this House and the country an explanation in this matter. As I said earlier, I wish to know how many expatriates are employed in the Ministry of Information.

I do not want to offer criticism against the film unit but I merely want to suggest that the unit be diverted into areas of culture so that our films will be less political and they can portray the various cultural aspirations, activities, and life of the Guyanese community, so that sometimes we can see the calypsonian singing at cultural events. The unit has not done very well in the cultural field and it is necessary for this to be done.

Item 40 is a scandalous item, because what we are finding extreme difficulty in doing is to recognize the distinction between Government propaganda and P.N.C. propaganda as emanating from the Ministry of Information. I cannot object to the Ministry of Information propagandizing the Government but I object to the Ministry of Information, a Government department, and to public servants being used to do party work as distinct from Government work. Let the hon. Minister deny that in their various releases from the Ministry of Information and Culture, they do not issue items from the People's National Congress or have officers from the Ministry preparing propaganda for the P.N.C. as distinct from the Government. This must stop. There must be a separation between party activities and governmental activities [Interruption.] The hon. Minister of Information says, the way I speak, the people will believe me. Probably his security is not active enough

5.40 p.m.

Further, it is necessary for Government to cut down on this vote. In my view, the amount of money spent by the Ministry of Information for Government propaganda is excessive and there is need for the Government to look into this matter with a view to reducing the amount.

As a matter of fact, I venture to say, without any personal accusation against the individual who holds the office of Minister of Information, that this Ministry can indeed be merged with another Ministry. Take, for instance, the Ministry of Education. That Ministry

can take care of Culture and Information and the person who holds the position of Minister at the moment can serve his party at Congress Place with his clerks. If he has the interest of his party at heart, that is his right. If he is enthusiastic about the aims and objectives of his party and would wish to make a tangible contribution to the party, Congress Place is there. Let him go there.

As I said, this is not an attack on the Minister. I am talking about the Ministry, and I would like to urge the hon. Minister, if he had issued directives earlier that his clerks must do P.N.C. work, to issue another directive immediately that this must stop.

I call on the hon. Minister to deny these points I have made so far as these two items are concerned.

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

Mr. Ram Karran: I wonder if I can have your permission, sir, to deal with items 38, 39 and 40 together.

First of all, I wish to observe that my young friend sits in the same area in which his namesake, the architect of many follies some of which we are still living with, sat some years ago in this Chamber.

In dealing with item 38, Purchase and Production of Films, Photographs and other Visual Aids, item 39, Public Free Library and item 40, Publishing and Publicising, I have some very simple questions to ask. I referred earlier to the inadequacy of the explanations, the very brief note "voted provision inadequate". I wish to ask the hon. Minister what extra had to be bought or done?

I ask that question because the amount which is sought under item 38 by supplementary provision is even greater than the amount originally sought. Is the Government increasing its requirements under this Head to prepare itself for Elections, which it has a right to do but which, at least, should be done in a manner satisfactory to all parties in the House and, indeed, to all Guyana. As my friend has observed, things have been done on a very partisan basis.

I also wish to ask the hon. Minister if the Public Free Library has ceased its purchase of the *Guyana Graphic*. If it has done so, we may wish to advise the hon. Minister to increase the supplementary provision of \$8,500 to cater for the purchase of the *Guyana Graphic* in the Public Free Library. *[Interruption.]*

The Chairman: Order! Order!

Mr. Ram Karran: I observe that the sum of \$22,000 is required under item 40, Publishing and Publicising. This is not the Head under which we can use taxpayers' money as a subsidy for the *Daily Chronicle*. I should like the hon. Minister to explain to us what this item, Publishing and Publicising is.

I should also like to ask him not to desecrate this building. When we come here we see all sorts of slogans on the building. It is time for us to call a halt to the desecration of this building by the Government when posters, which are sometimes completely irrelevant to the business we do in this House, are put up in the building.

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

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, the Public Free Library is a very important institution. I will not be hard on the Minister do is to urge him to examine the situation. When one makes a check at the Public Free Library one sees that the majority of books have been imported from the United Kingdom or the United States, especially the books on co-operatives. Most of these books have come from the United Kingdom.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Teekah, this is a vote to pay increased wages.

Mr. Teekah: The wages are for workers at the Public Free Library who carry out the service of lending books to the people of the country. Because books are borrowed we need them. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Chairman: Order!

26.11.71

National Assembly

5.40 – 5.50 p.m.

Mr. Teekah: The United Kingdom does not have a good history in co-operatives. The co-operative movement has failed badly in that country. Efforts should be made to get books on co-operatives from Third World countries, Bulgaria, China, Soviet Union, where the co-operative movement has been very successful. Since Guyana wants to develop the socialist type of co-operative it is important to look at those countries where the socialist co-operative movement has been successful.

With respect to item 40, Publishing and Publicising, I should like to be very critical of the present Minister. When his predecessor, Mr. Martin Carter, was minister of Information we never had anything like the publication, FAX. The terrible thing about FAX is that no sooner had the Minister assumed duty and put out the first publication of FAX than he deemed every critic of the Government to be an enemy of the State and that is how the term “enemy of the State” really came into being.

It was very early after his assumption of office that FAX was printed and in that copy it was stated that all who criticize the Government, all who oppose the Government, are enemies of the State. This is extremely bad because there must be a distinction between the State and the Government. Love and loyalty to the Government is different from love and loyalty to the State.

The Minister of Information must see that such irresponsible statements are not made by his Ministry. He must desist from this because in these days, when people seek their constitutional right to dissent and to criticize, he must not make the irresponsible statement that all critics of the Government are enemies of the State. If he does so, we will not vote this sum here again.

5.50 p.m.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister.

The Minister of Information and Culture(Mr. McDavid): Mr. Chairman, I should like to apologise in advance if I offend any of my friends across the Floor. It is my first appearance in terms of speaking, so I hope I will be excused.

Dealing with the remarks of the hon. Member Mr. Persaud, I am a bit surprised at what is obviously a total set of inaccuracies and his source of information needs checking. If he were Minister of Information I do not think he would have lasted very long.

Now the vote "Purchase and Production of Films" is not used to pay non-Guyanese. This is a vote which is used, as it states to produce films and photographs. The hon. Member Mr. Persaud went into a tirade of abuse against Americans. I should like us to reflect on the fact that there is a certain American well known to both sides of the House who is making a very good contribution to this nation. That person is the wife of one of our leading politicians. Therefore, I think that the hon. Member must be very careful, because his remarks implied that all Americans are bad.

There are three Americans who are working with the Ministry of Information and they are not paid from the Ministry's fund. They are part of a Technical Assistance Programme in communication. I think that we must accept that there are certain skills which we have not yet accumulated and it is in our interest to have people train us. These three Americans are here for a short period to train Guyanese in communication techniques and have come, as I said, under a Technical Assistance Scheme.

There was a question asked with respect to a German technician and American equipment. The equipment from the German Government is not here as yet, the equipment is on its way to Guyana. Therefore, the question is not really valid.

Also, there was a question with respect to the salaries paid to the Americans. Hon. Members said that they receive higher salaries than Guyanese. The Americans are not paid higher salaries than Guyanese with the equivalent qualification. In fact, when the Americans came, they insisted that they be paid the same as Guyanese as they wanted to consider themselves Guyanese. I do not know where hon. Members opposite got that information from.

There was an accusation that some of my officers work for the Party. I myself find it difficult to understand how one can distinguish between the Government and the political Party which form the - - - But that is a theoretical argument which can be pursued outside of this House. Since the Party supplies the personnel of Government and the Government carries out party policies how can we distinguish between Government and Party philosophy? What the hon. Member Mr. Persaud is annoyed about is the fact that some members of my Ministry are so committed to the philosophy of the People's national Congress that they are prepared to devote extra time to working towards the betterment of the Party. I am sure that there is nothing wrong with that as there are some officers in Government who work for the betterment of the People's Progressive Party. It would restrict the freedom of the individual to stop him from using his extra time to work for a party in which he believes.

The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran said that some man with a name similar to mine is an architect of many follies. I can also think of a Government which was also an architect of many follies and fallacies which this People's national Congress Government has to try and remove. So that is history.

Publishing and Publicising: This vote has been increased. I remember on many occasions the Opposition has said that the Government is not doing enough to inform the nation of what is taking place. It is as a result of a direct call from the Opposition that the Government has decided to increase the vote and increase our publications. Members of the Opposition receive the publications and if they want they can contribute to some of them. We will consider contributions on journalistic merits and I am sure that they would not object to the increase of Government publicity because we are more or less just trying to do as they said we should do – putting across to the people what Government's policies are and giving the public a chance to comment on what we are doing.

The hon. Member Mr. Teekah mentioned something about the Public Free Library and books. I accept the point. We have already started to receive books from Socialist countries. If the hon. Member knows of any other source I am quite willing to accept the advice and

information. As a matter of fact, as soon as I became Minister I instructed that there should be a revision of the content of the Public Free Library and this is already in progress.

With respect to what the hon. Member Mr. Teekah said concerning the term “enemies of the State”, I am appreciative of his making a distinction between Government and the State. Because the “State” is a collective term which embraces both Government and Opposition and the copy of Fax states that there are people who are enemies of the State, which means that they are enemies of both the Opposition and the Government together. Since the issue at the time was the DaSent affair and the Opposition was supporting Mrs. DaSent it could not have been directly against them because it has to be directed both at Government and Opposition collectively and since the Opposition was supporting Mrs. DaSent it was meant as a future term for people who oppose the good work that both the Government and the Opposition are trying to do for the development of the nation.

The Chairman: Page 8.

Mr. Teekah: Item 41.

The Chairman: Hon Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$74,000 is being sought for the Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts to be held in 1972. Certainly we are not against this Festival, but we are trying to move in the region closer together, we are trying to **evolve a nation from** the ex-British colonies. Undoubtedly and unquestionably this is an extremely large sum. The Government should take cognizance of the fact that this is a very poor country and what should have been done here was to seek the assistance of other Caribbean countries to foot the bill for this Festival. The Government should not try to do it on its own because it is extremely expensive.

It is no sense we try to show off that we could sponsor this important occasion. Our taxpayers are heavily soaked with taxes already, people are crying out everywhere, unemployment is so high in the country. We do not know how much more will be needed next year for this occasion. This is a lot of money and we need the money to help people get jobs,

26.11.71

National Assembly

5.50 – 6 p.m.

and help people in many ways. All it needed was some imagination on the part of the Government, the Minister or the Ministry of Information to help spread this large sum. Had this Government sought the assistance of the other Caribbean countries to make a small donation this would have offset this large amount. Mind you, sir, we are in agreement with this Festival, but it is costing this young nation too much.

6 p.m.

We must take into consideration the fact that we are not economically viable, we have so many more matters to attend to. Food, clothes, and shelter, are the most important problems facing this nation. It is still not too late for the Government to ask other countries to subscribe to the cost of this Carifesta.

Mr. McDavid: It is with pleasure that I note that the hon. Member Mr. Teekah is supporting the concept of the Festival because I agree we are a very poor country and it is because of our poverty that we are holding this Festival. The Festival is an occasion which will bring together, not only people from the so-called Commonwealth Caribbean, but also our socialist brothers and sisters from the Latin American continent. It will help to establish cultural links, which are people's links. I am sure it would be accepted that when politicians go to other countries, links are established at a high level, but it is through the mechanism of cultural exchanges that we get links of the people formed. I think that the investment in this aspect is that the people of Latin America and the Commonwealth Caribbean and French-speaking Caribbean will be together at the same time. It might well be that solidarity patterns will emerge which will serve us in our struggles in the future.

The cost of the Festival is as minimal as possible and it is because of our scarce resources that it is costing the sum that it is costing. We have tried to reduce the cost to a minimum. However, I would like to point out that there will be economic benefits to Guyana during the Festival. Not only will there be over 600 participants from twenty-five countries including Cuba, despite a remark we noted in a certain daily paper, who will bring in foreign exchange. We have also been informed that there will be many visitors who will come to see the Festival

who will do likewise. Therefore, I am sure that in terms of foreign exchange we will probably get in much more than we are spending on the Festival. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DaSilva: Under item 47, Personal Emoluments, where the legend states, "six posts of Constable on the P11 salary scale", I wish to say I am very upset and concerned that in a country like Guyana, where we profess to have six races all working together in unity, that there could be such rumours as are going around. I would be most grateful if the hon. Minister of Home Affairs would refute this quite clearly because I think it is a disgrace for our country, where we say there is no racial discrimination, that rumours such as I am going to mention should be allowed to be circulated.

I understand that there are more Indian policemen leaving the Police Force, proportionally larger in numbers than there are Africans, and the one that I am most disturbed about is that our Ministers of African descent, whose homes are guarded, refuse to have policemen of East Indian descent on duty at their homes. I have heard this and I made it my business since I heard it to check on it. There is a certain Minister whose home I pass frequently and I made a point of looking in to see what sort of policeman was on duty and I am afraid I have always seen an African policeman. Maybe it is just unfortunate. I think it is a terrible thing that there should be such discrimination where the Ministers could refuse to have Guyanese of East Indian descent and because they are not African. I hope the Minister will deny this very forcefully because it is needed.

The Minister of Home Affairs(Mr. Clarke): This item 47 deals with security for post of offices but perhaps it is not a bad thing that the hon. Member has conveniently overlooked the legend and has mentioned the question of - - *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Ram Karran: To a point of order. The hon. Minister said that the hon. Lady Member willfully noticed the legend. He said, "conveniently."

Mrs. DaSilva: If it does not say post officers, I am very grateful to be told, but I cannot know that the six constables apply to post officers unless it says so. Certainly it cannot be willful on my part to say so.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, I have volunteered information and I am glad the hon. Member is now satisfied. I am glad the hon. Member took this opportunity to raise what she herself has described as a rumour, because it could be nothing more than a rumour. The fact is that it is just not true to say that ministers of the Government have refused to accept as guards at their residences members of the Police Force who are of Indian descent. It is not true to say that, and I would prefer to believe that it is indeed and in fact a rumour as the hon. Member has herself pointed out.

6.10 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 9. *The hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud.*

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Items 51 and 54.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Items 49 and 54.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 50, 51 and 54.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 54.

Mr. Wilson: Item 57.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally.

Mr. R. Ally: Item 49, Lighting: Mr. Chairman, the police station at Charity on the Essequibo Coast has a lighting plant. About 12 rods away from this police station there is an Amerindian Hostel and the Amerindians go to the hostel at all hours of the night. The caretaker at the hostel states that the Amerindians who arrive in the night have to feel their way through the darkness. They are asking for a light.

I met a policeman in the district and asked whether the police station could supply the one light. He said that provided approval was given from the top it could be done. I believe that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs is head of this Ministry and I wish that he would supply this Amerindian Hostel with one light which would give the Amerindians some satisfaction.

Mr. Ram Karran: I have a very short question to ask the Minister of Home Affairs.

The Chairman: Are you going to deal with item 50?

Mr. Ram Karran: I can ask the questions under each item separately. I shall be very brief.

Under item 50, Prisoners' Rations, I should like to ask the hon. Minister if this amount which is being voted here today is as a result of the advice offered to the Government by the Opposition, namely, that the diet of prisoners be improved in quality. Is it that we are going to improve qualitatively the diet of the prisoners? The Government may have accepted our advice. It sometimes does.

With respect to item 51, Prevention and Detection of Crime, I wish to observe that we live in very troublous times. We read in the Press not long ago that a man named Mr. Vransy was murdered. Mr. Hogermeer was murdered and no one has been apprehended.

I should like to enquire from the hon. Minister whether there is any statement which can be made to clarify the reasons for the inability of the police to apprehend the murderers of these two persons.

I wish also to refer to the case of our eminent University professor, Dr. Clive Thomas. We have been told in the Press and otherwise that an attempt was made by members of the Police Force to kidnap him and that the numbers and names of the policemen involved have been supplied to the relevant authorities. May I enquire - *[Interruption.]*

The Chairman: Hon. Members, this is a most serious matter the hon. Member is speaking on. Will you please let us hear what he is saying?

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to know why action has not been taken to apprehend those who either attempted to kidnap Dr. Clive Thomas or to molest him. The Government may think that this was only a question of molestation. Has any action been taken? If not, why not?

Following the incident involving Dr. Joshua Ramsammy not far from this Chamber we are inclined to the view that it was not mere molestation.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether any further information is available to the members of this House and to the nation with regard to the incident with Dr. Ramsammy in a busy area. We are made to understand that members of the public have submitted the number of the car or vehicle involved for the police to act on that information. The case was taken over from a junior officer in the Force by the Deputy Commissioner of Police who at the time was acting Commissioner or had just reverted to his substantive post of Deputy Commissioner of Police.

We wish to ask the hon. Minister if he thinks that we can have confidence in these highly paid and very senior policemen where our lives and the lives of our children and womenfolk are concerned. If these things are happening today then I think a question addressed to the hon. Minister on our safety in the future is very relevant.

May I refer to the case of the Heberts, some people who live not very far away from me. One night the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I were going home very early in the evening and we saw a crowd there. We went in and saw old women who were attacked by crooks who got into their home. The criminals were arrested and charged and put on bail. These “gentlemen” are no longer in Guyana. They have had, I understand, two sets of passports and were probably aided and abetted by somebody in the Government so that they were able to flee Guyana.

Will the hon. Minister tell us if he considers it safe for us to live in this country if such things can go on? May I not, following not necessarily along the same lines but in the trend urged by my friend the hon. Lady Member, Mrs. Elinor DaSilva, ask about the obvious discrimination in the country particularly with respect to the Police Force? I am told that no East Indian can hold the post of Minister of Home Affairs in this Government, the P.N.C. Government. The imbalance in the Police Force which was to have been rectified by the

26.11.71

National Assembly

6.10 – 6.20 p.m.

International Commission of Jurists has been repeatedly refuted by the Government. At one time the members of the Government say, "Yes, we are going to accept the I.C.J. report." Subsequently we are told, "No. It must go on as it is."

What is the object of voting \$811 under item 54, Expenses of Police Entrance Examination? What is to be examined? I remember when I was a boy there was a policeman known as George Patate. If he arrested you at Church and Oronoque Streets, he would drag you around the corner because he could not spell Oronoque. The situation I know somewhat the same so far as the intake of policemen is concerned.

6.20 p.m.

Why hold examinations? During the time of the P.P.P. – I must admit because Police matters were in the hands of the white expatriate – we know that examinations held in areas where the P.N.C. was strong, or supporters of imperialism were strong, in Georgetown, in Wismar and in New Amsterdam, the examinations were very simple. But when it came to Corentyne and Essequibo where Indians lived, and this is the naked truth, the dictation had hard Scottish words, very hard, outlandish. This is a fact. Words like "l o c h" and many difficult ones. Even though that was so. I take the case of a man name Basdeo living in Albion who had 5 G.C.E. subjects. He was told by the then Commissioner of Police that he must apply to Bookers as a security guard. When I questioned him he said the man had the educational qualifications but he lacked something else. [Hon. Member: "Physically."] No, he had everything.

This Government is not sheltering behind such subterfuge but it is coming nakedly and they tell you that Indians cannot get in and the Indians that are in there are being hounded out. The hon. Minister did not attempt to deny that suggestion made by the hon. Member across here.

Any Indian in the Force will tell you that he has got a very difficult time. This country cannot be run in this way. This Government is persecuting the majority in Guyana and it is not going to fair well. I referred earlier in the debate to the fact that the Government has selected the most sensitive spot – the “coolie dholl” – for banning. It would not ban milk and coconut oil. And the policy that the Government is pursuing is not a policy that will reunite the Guyanese people. I say that the examination is useless, we do not need an examination because if one has a criminal conviction all one has to do on the instruction of the Kabaka is to go and change one’s name by deed-poll and one is admitted into the Police Force or Guyana Defence Force.

I wish to urge the deletion of this amount; it is not necessary.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva dealt with item 51 extensively but I merely wish to add that Guyanese today are expressing great concern about the whole state of security. Many people go to bed at nights in great fear. I would wish to urge the hon. Minister to look at this matter objectively with a view of attempting to change this present feeling in our country. I wish to add that the feeling is not without justification.

Only a few weeks ago a very learned gentleman at McDoom Mr. Samuel Wilson was killed in his home according to the report. There are many people who are being choked and robbed every day on the streets and the government is not without this knowledge and out of fear again these people go home losing all their belongings without even attempting to report these matters to the Police. I have come in contact with so many people who have shared these experiences on the streets. I have always encouraged them to go to the Police and report at least for the record.

I merely want to say that the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran is justified in his contribution. The time has come for the Government to look at this matter objectively. It would appear that there is no prevention at all with respect to detection. The hon. Member has cited positive instances to show that even if there was detection it would appear that there has been some interference on the activities of the Police. I would not wish to blame the Police, but

I would wish to suggest to the Government that if the Police are let alone probably they will do a better job. Sometimes you hear these remarks even from the very lips of the policemen.

Item 54, Expenses of Police Entrance Examination: This is a very serious provision. I want to urge the Government to examine this question. I have positive evidence and I am willing to hand over the evidence to the Minister of Home Affairs of persons who actually went and took the test and they were told that they have passed. As a matter of fact one fellow from Essequibo was written to and told positively that he must report on a particular day after he had received previous correspondence that he was successful in his examination. Having been told that information subsequently he received a letter, which I have got and I am prepared to hand to the Minister of Home Affairs, saying that he must no longer turn up. *[Interruption by Mr. Clarke.]* The Minister wants to know how I got the letter. The man is so frustrated, that if he gets a visa he will certainly run out of this country. *[Interruption by Mr. Clarke.]* I am seeing the arrogance of the Minister of Home Affairs in that he supports me. They are not giving the man work and if he wants to get out the Minister of Finance suggests that he swims out of Guyana. This is the situation.

6.30 p.m.

Our charge against the Government, so far as the Police Force is concerned, call a spade a spade, is that it is not giving Guyanese of Indian descent a fair opportunity for entry into the Force. So far as promotion is concerned, there is clear discrimination.

Suspension of Standing Order No. 9 (2)

Mr. Ramsaroop: I wish to move the suspension of Standing Order 9 (2) to enable us to go beyond the appointed hour of 6.30 p.m., so that we can break at 7 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Or on the completion of page 10.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Yes, sir.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 9 (2) suspended.

Resumption of Proceedings on Financial Paper No. 6 Of 1971.

The Chairman: Please continue hon. Member.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: The hon. Minister has a very significant Ministry and it is necessary for every effort and step to be taken by the Government, through the Minister, to build confidence which is not in the minds of a large number of Guyanese. More than half of the population has great reservations about police, security, entry, and so on. I have many names of persons who have said they have done very well, who have been written to, and they are not allowed entry in the Police Force. I have one particular matter which to my mind has clear evidence of discrimination. The Government must look into this matter, and if the Government is seeking to win the support of the people of this country to build this country, to change the present atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, it must correct these serious areas of discrimination against Guyanese.

Mrs. DaSilva: I heard the hon. Minister of Finance saying a while ago, when one hon. Member was speaking with much concern about the rise in crime, "Oh, it is happening all over the world." That is no excuse for us not to be concerned about it. We might as well say, "Oh, you have accidents all over the world, so we must not worry about the rising death rate on the roads". We must be concerned.

I should like to couple with that item, item No. 55, Transport and Travelling, because I would be the last person to say that squad cars are unnecessary. They are very important nowadays to help in the work of crime prevention but unless and until we can get the ordinary policeman on the beat on the streets, we will continue to have this alarming rate in the rise of crime. Something has got to be done about it. I can understand the concern of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs that he does not want it publicized to raise undue alarm, but the crime rate goes up. It does not appear in the newspapers, but it would be of interest to know the figures.

I wonder if the hon. Minister could tell us how many cases, over say, the last three months, we have had in crime, in house breaking, in choke and rob, in assault. I appreciate that to answer it now might be difficult, but maybe at some future date he could give the answer, a comparison of the last three months of this year as against the last three months of last year. He would be shocked to see the high rate of crime over the last 12 months. I want to make that point to help him. I am not a member of the Police Force, I am not an hon. Minister of Home Affairs, but it just seems to me that in the days when we had more policemen on the beat, there was better control then now when we have squad cars, which, although I say they are necessary, they are not necessary to the extent the ordinary policeman on the beat is kept out.

Mr. Wilson: I support the proposition by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran for the deletion of this item and I think the Ministry of Home Affairs cannot be too strongly condemned for inefficiency in this matter of prevention and detection of crime. There are several cases to support this. I would refer to just three, first, the sort of evidence given by one Armogan in the Clifford murder case. Armogan explained how he was being paid by the police as a police informer, but it came out that the man was being paid for doing nothing. The taxpayers' money was being misspent. Rather than doing real prevention work, they were just giving money for political reasons. Take the Ramsammy case. The man was shot in bright daylight, but up to now they cannot find the culprits. They do not want to. It shows either gross inefficiency or collusion and interference. Take the case of Dr. Premdas, who was attacked by a bandit. He made a report but rather than going to look for the man who attacked him, they charged this man. The police inspector took no evidence. He was dismissed from the charge which the police made against him.

If, tomorrow, I go out and somebody attacks me, I would be afraid to report that somebody attacked me because I would be charged. I think the taxpayers' money is being grossly misspent in this matter and I strongly support the deletion of the item.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 52, Revenue Protection. The Government is seeking the sum of \$2,970 to meet increased expenditure in connection with the campaign for the suppression of the manufacture of bush rum.

There has been an increase in the number of persons engaging in the manufacture of bush rum and there has been a considerable increase in the number of persons who are drinking bush rum.

The situation is alarming because bush rum drinking is not only among the adults in our community. It also affects the children, many of whom take part in bush rum drinking. Medical reports have stated that the drinking of bush rum is injurious to health. I think that the Government ought to carry out a campaign of education. It should not only vote money for persons to be apprehended. Nearly every week people are taken before the Courts charged with this offence. Many of them have to pay large fines and some, no doubt, have been sent to prison, but this really does not stop the practice. The fact is that people are continuously engaged in this process.

Government ought to carry out an educational campaign for people to understand the dangers of drinking bush rum. People manufacture it because it is vital for their economic well-being. Many persons cannot find employment, for instance, in the Black Bush Polder, on the East Bank, on the East Coast. In all these areas where there is unemployment persons try to do something else to raise some money for themselves and families.

There are, too, a lot of people who are engaged in the selling of bush rum. Certain business places are buying it. To apprehend these persons does not solve the problem. What the Government ought to do I repeat, is to carry out a very vigorous educational campaign to educate the people about the dangers of bush rum drinking and to help younger Guyanese to stop drinking it.

Unless the Government does this, the situation is going to remain the same and Government is going to spend lots of money to curb this illicit trade and will create more social problems. If a person is apprehended and sent to prison, his wife and children are left on the streets. It becomes more of a social problem for the Government. Therefore, I urge the Minister, or his Ministry, to embark on an educational programme to educate the people on the dangers of drinking bush rum.

The Chairman: I think, hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally, you had indicated that you wished to speak on item 54.

Mr. R. Ally: Item 54, Expenses of Police Entrance Examination. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs is fully aware of the fact that if anyone wants to join the Police Force today he has to produce a P.N.C. card. Secondly, the person will have to get the necessary recommendation from a P.N.C. activist within the area. I am certain of this because within our area a certain man was elected by a council. He was of Indian descent and had been a supporter of the P.N.C. for years, but because the council elected such a person, the Ministry has sent an officer from the Ministry itself to advise the council to elect another man who was thrown out by the council.

I am pin-pointing this to show that this practice comes from the Ministry itself. The Ministers, therefore, are aware of these things. They are meddling in these things, but in this House they are trying to say that they know nothing of this and they would like to learn. They are fully aware of what is going on.

This Government is making sure that it sets up a P.N.C. Police Force and not a Guyana Police Force. That is why crimes are committed all over the place and as long as the P.N.C. does not wish to involve those persons the Police will never find the culprits.

I wish that the hon. Minister would see to it that this nonsense is stopped. Any Guyanese who has the necessary qualifications and wants to become a policeman should be free to do so.

The Chairman: the hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Clarke): The hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally referred to his visit to Charity and to the fact that the Police Station at Charity has a lighting plant which might be able to supply an Amerindian Hostel which is close by. I am not aware that any official approach has been made to the Police for this service. I am not aware that the capacity of the lighting plant at Charity is such as to accommodate lighting for the hostel, but I shall certainly, now that the hon. Member has raised the matter, ask my officers to look into the

question as to the availability and desirability of establishing that service for the Amerindian Hostel.

With respect to item 50, Prisoners' Rations, hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran

6.50 p.m.

it is not true to say that there is discrimination in the way the Police Examinations are organized. The papers which are set are not even set by the Police. The papers are set by the Ministry of Education, and the Examination is run and supervised by the Ministry of Education. *[Interruption]* The hon. Leader of the Opposition is being his usual inaccurate self tonight. He is always irrelevant and he would like me to get into those areas of irrelevancy which he himself enjoys so much.

But to get back to the question of Examinations. This year there were two entrance examinations for policemen. A total of 1,577 persons applied to get into the Police Force. Of that amount, just over 1,000 turned up to take the Examination. That is the first thing. My information is that less than 30 per cent of all the persons who took the Examination came up to the required standard for entry. *[Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Hamid.]*

The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran suggested that different sets of test papers are used. I cannot make the hon. Member believe that I say all that I can do is to explain what the facts are. I hope that those who in this country still believe in the facts would not be taken in by the attitude which the hon. Member has displayed, and by the statements which he has made tonight.

Some remarks were made with respect to Revenue Protection under item 52 by the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud. May I say immediately that I could not agree more with the hon. Member when he suggested that there ought to be a countrywide programme of education away from the encouragement of people to drink bush rum. But this education need not be formal, and I am suggesting that each and everyone of us who recognizes the dangers of bush rum drinking has a duty to the community we serve to insist to our various communities that the manufacture and use of bush rum is injurious to health. All of us have that duty and I expect that the hon. Member and his colleagues on that side of the House would join with the

Government in ensuring that this very despicable practice is stamped out. [An hon. Member. “What about the G.I.S.?”] The G.I.S. will be used. I said I hope hon. Members will join the Government. I cannot agree with the hon. Member when he goes on to suggest that people are engaged in the manufacture and sale of bush rum because they are unemployed. This is not true because I know a number of well established farmers who do very well on their farms and are engaged in this practice. The hon. Member cannot deny that he himself is aware of this situation. It has become a very lucrative business and a lot of people are involved the the manufacture and sale of this illicit spirits.

This brings me to the question of prevention and detection of crime. I am glad that the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud was very careful to point out that he is not accusing the Police. I think that a great deal of hysteria has been generated on this question of crime. I am sure, sir, no one in Guyana who has been following our situation will deny that there has been a palpable increase in the number and perhaps in the types of violent crimes over a relevantly long period. But to suggest that this is so because of Police inactivity or because the Police refuse to do their work is not being helpful. It was suggested also, as the hon. Member Mr. Persaud said from his seat, that it is because of political interference. This is again being naïve and trying to justify a statement.

We have not really seriously, in this House, looked at the situation with respect to crime in Guyana, and attempt to evaluate the situation. It is said that an increase in crime comes sometimes with development. I believe myself that as this country develops we have got to prepare ourselves for a greater and greater task of controlling our crime situation. [Interruption.]

The Chairman: I do not know that the two members are carrying on a dialogue and interrupting the Minister, Proceed hon. Minister.

Mr. Clarke: Seriously, when one comes to examine this question one finds that more and more new areas are being opened in this country, new housing areas are being developed. I would take as a criticism from the Opposition the point that there have not been a police presence established in some of the areas in which crime has been most rampant. I do not

26.11.71

National Assembly

6.50 – 7 p.m.

accept that because there is an increase in crime that this is because Police do not care about what is going on.

There have been a great deal of constraint placed on the activities of the Police. There is a shortage of police vehicles. When ever we come to this House for money we are being criticized by the members of the Opposition and at the same time they want us to give the best service. We are conscious of our responsibility in the Police Force of giving a good service to the citizens of this country.

7 p.m.

We are determined that once we get the co-operation of citizens, we are going to be able to do a great deal more in the way of grappling with the crime situation than we have been able to do without the high level of co-operation which we expect from the Guyanese public.

I could like to make a plea for a greater degree of cooperation between the police and the public in the matter of solving some of the problems. There has been a suggestion by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran that the public is willing to help. So often the police have been left standing because they could not get vital information which the public can give, and I am appealing to the public to give the police a greater measure of co-operation to assist in finding solutions to some of the problems which we have been having, and I look forward to that co-operation not only from the public at large but particularly from the members of the Opposition, who seek to make this House a place for politicking on questions of national importance. I expect the police, not to be targets for attacks from the Opposition, but to get the co-operation of the public in the work which they have to do.

Mr. Wilson: In making his reply, the hon. Minister gave an answer which stopped short of answering the essential point of criticism made. I should like to ask a follow-up question, to bring out the point. In speaking of the examination, the Minister said that 1,577 persons applied, 1,000 turned up for the examination, 30 per cent or 300 passed. But the criticism was about racial discrimination. Would the hon. Minister say how many of the 30 per cent were Indians, and how many were non-Indians? That is the answer he should make.

Mr. Clarke: if the hon. Member puts a question down, I will get the information for him, but I would say that there is no truth at all in any allegation that anyone who passes the examination and who subsequently passes the other stages, that is, the medical examination and the other requirements for entry into the Force, is denied such an opportunity. *[Interruption.]*

The Chairman: Page 10.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Item 62

Mr. Wilson: Item 63.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 63.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Items 56, 58 and 62.

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

Mr. Balchand Persaud: It was on Wednesday that I raised the question of proper diets for the inmates of the prisons of Guyana. I have not seen certain Heads dealing with clothing for prisoners.

Mr. Chairman: We are dealing with dietary. I will allow you to debate the question of diets only.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 58, Bakery. The sum of \$2,367 is being sought because of unanticipated repairs to the oven. In the case of the New Amsterdam Prison, bread is baked by the Mental Hospital # is bad in the sense that it # and prisoners have to go there to collect their daily rations. The quality of bread baked at the Mental Hospital. While in Georgetown and Mazaruni, they bake their own bread, more precautions should be taken on the part of the Government or the officers, who are involved in supervising the baking of the bread, to ensure that it is properly done.

On many occasions prisoners suffer from stomach problems because of the bread they eat – they receive only two meals a day, they lose their teeth and suffer different forms of indigestion. It is important for the Government to pay some attention to the question of the

bread which is given to the inmates of the prisons. It is no point just voting the money. The Government must ensure that the money is properly spent.

On item 62 Gratuity Scheme for Young Offenders, I wish also to say that in the New Amsterdam prison, very little facility is there for young offenders. The position is, many people today, who are very young, just only 15 years old, are getting themselves involved in crime, sentenced by the courts, and are placed in prisons. There is no facility for reform. In fact, most of the young offenders, when they are sent to the New Amsterdam prison, have to be transferred to Georgetown or Mazaruni before they can be properly involved in the limited schemes, or in learning certain trades.

7.10 p.m.

The Government should do something to solve this problem. Reform is very important and unless the Government pays attention to this type of thing, a person may be sent to prison and, if he is not properly rehabilitated, he may find himself back in prison again. Eventually you will find nearly every citizen in our country will have a record. This is not what we would like to have in our society.

Therefore, the Government should examine this. On the last occasion I said that the Government must have a committee to go into the question of Prison Reform to ensure that prisoners enjoy more freedom even when in prison. In other countries, there are different laws, different regulations, whereby prisoners have more freedom. Even while they are in prison they can give advice and take care of their homes outside of the prison. In our situation we do not have this facility given to prisoners.

Another point is that young offenders need special attention. They need their parents and relatives to visit them, to give them encouragement. The facilities for visitors in the prisons are very limited. A person who is convicted of a crime is allowed one visit a month. If a person is in the remand prison he is allowed two visits a week – ten minutes is the period for each visit. The visit is conducted in such a way that the remand prisoner cannot discuss

anything with his relatives. The facilities are very inadequate. One has to stand between two pieces of wire mesh and it is difficult to talk as others are else - - - by one's side. There is a line of persons, prisoners and their relatives, parents or wives, and it is difficult to discuss anything.

These facilities have to be improved. Unless the Government does this I am afraid that the situation will worsen and eventually more crimes will be generated. Therefore, I wish to urge the Government to consider the question of Prison Reform and to set up a committee of knowledgeable persons with members of the Opposition taking - - - involving in it.

The last point is that most of the committees that are supposed to visit the prisons and to look into the grievances of prisoners are not really doing their duty. While they mean well, I do not think that are doing their duty because of the fact that they hardly ever visit the institution as such. They go to the superintendent's office and have long discussions with the superintendent. If a prisoner wants to speak with the visiting committee, he makes a request and is then taken to the committee. But the visiting committee hardly goes into the institution; it hardly ever goes into the kitchen to see how the food is prepared. The members of the committees hardly ever look into the condition of the dormitories, the cells or mattresses and sheets.

It is important for the Government to see that the visiting committee carries out its functions. If the members of the committee cannot do their duty the Government must put people who can do so. Nobody wants to make unnecessary criticisms of the Prison Officers; nobody wants to accuse them of things they have not done. But the fact is that members of the Opposition must be on these committees to keep the Government always on its toes and to ensure that things are running smoothly.

One would understand the limitations of the Government when it comes to funds, but the fact is that however small the funds voted to be expended for certain services, it is important that those moneys are properly spent and that people obtain those services. The only way to ensure that is to see that the Opposition is represented on these committees, and not only on these committees, but on all committees of the Government.

Mr. Wilson: I am sure it must be very painful to all right-thinking Guyanese to hear the record of many young offenders, to hear how often they have been sent to prison and to read in the Press the very harsh remarks made by Judges when these young offenders are convicted. I should like, in dealing with this matter, to suggest that the Government should do more to save young offenders from situations which will cause them to find themselves back in crime.

Item 62 deals with Gratuity Scheme for Young Offenders. Is the Gratuity adequate? For what purpose is it given? Is there any follow-up of the young offender when he comes out of prison? Is there any after-care treatment? Some have no homes to go to when they leave the prison. Sometimes they go to the Salvation Army, if they live in Georgetown, and spend a few weeks there. Ultimately they have no where to go and they find themselves drifting back into a company which will result in their finding themselves in trouble again.

It seems that there is need for more attention to be given to the training of young offenders, not only during the time of their incarceration, but also long after they have left so as to give them an opportunity to be rehabilitated. I am sure that if the Minister has been studying the figures relating to recidivism among young offenders he will think that something more should be done to save these young offenders from building up a large list of convictions.

In a broader way, too, I think that the Government should think of a radical change in the economic system, whereby there will be less unemployment and full employment for young people. The Government knows that about 10,000 children leave school every year and a large number of them find themselves on the labour market. There is nowhere for them to go.

There is talk about an Advance Guyana Campaign. Some will go and weed a drain in a P.N.C. group hoping to get a job. Some will get into the Youth Corps, but these things cannot really absorb the number of young people who come out of school every year. They cannot really solve the problem of putting young people in a situation where they would not be tempted to commit crimes, where they would be saved from leading a life of crime from their youthful days right on to adulthood.

I am sure that the Government looks very seriously at this matter and that it will do more to save young Guyanese from this kind of situation.

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

Mr. Ram Karran: Mr. Chairman, I chose item 63, Transport and Travelling, to speak on, but I made an error. I should have selected item 64, Expenses, Training Courses. I do not think there could be any strong objection to my speaking on that.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Ram Karran: This House was given an assurance by the Government that a Fire Protection Station was being built in North Georgetown. The address of the station is North Georgetown but it is really in East Georgetown, at Campbellville. If one were to travel in that area one would see that even though there are a large number of houses, many of which are owned by poor people, yet many of them are Government built.

The Chairman: Are you speaking on item 64?

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, sir. I wish to observe that the assurance that the Government gave to this House that a Fire Station was being built in that area is really not accurate. All the equipment in that station is a small station wagon, a jeep which is painted red - -

The Chairman: Is that observation relevant to item 64, Expenses, Training Courses?

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, sir.

The Chairman: I do not agree.

Mr. Ram Karran: In the sense that since this station was built we have been told that training courses had to be conducted to man those stations. You do not need to train anybody to drive a station wagon with a ladder on it and with a few appliances to put out fires.

And the Government is insincere in so far as its declarations are concerned about the Fire Station in North Georgetown and I wish to take this opportunity, with your permission, to ask it to do something specific so that people in that area an area which contains perhaps as many houses as you have in the old Georgetown so that they will not sleep in fear of being burnt when the fires take place.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. R. D. Persaud.

Mr. Ram Karran: He has left already. He has asked me to discuss item 62 which I would have asked you to, but my colleague has done so well that I thought I would not bother.

The Chairman: Perhaps you should have intimated that.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am sorry I did not.

Mr. Clarke: The question raised on item 58 is not relevant to the item in the sense that this item refers to the Bakery and this money was with respect to repairs done to the Georgetown Prison oven.

Item 62, Gratuity Scheme to Young Offenders. The hon. Members Mr. Balchand Persaud and Mr. Wilson made a number of suggestions as to the necessity for young offenders to have better facilities, and that better arrangements are made at the Mazaruni Prison for the kept of young offenders. Except where they are serving very short sentences most of these offenders find themselves at the Mazaruni Prison where there is a special block of cells put aside for them. In addition, young offenders at the Prison are not contaminated by the more seasoned offenders in the institution, in that, in as much as they work on different plots and in various different places at the Prison. For instance, there would be a different plot of land which would be worked by the young offenders from the plot of land which will be worked by adult offenders. There is also a very deliberate attempt being made in the workshops at the Prison to ensure that the seasoned offenders do not use the workshop during the same hours and at the same time as the young offenders. [**Mr. Ram Karran:** "We want separate workshops".]

It was suggested by the hon. Member Mr. Wilson that there ought to be after care arrangements. There are such arrangements at the moment. In fact the Probation and Welfare Department, the money for which service does not come under this Head, does provide that service. They do offer a very good service in the sense that they assist a number of young offenders, particularly, in rehabilitating themselves after they leave the prisons. As is well-known, Prisons Authorities do not allow prisoners to leave the Prison without ensuring that their passages to get home are paid.

The hon. Member who was fortunate to spend some time in the New Amsterdam Prison was in fact at home and could not be expected to receive a travelling allowance. In fact, there are some arrangements which already exist to ensure that the young offender is properly taken care of. The whole question of dealing with young offenders and some adult offenders is presently being reviewed and considered by Government. We hope that during next year we would be able to bring to Parliament measures which are designed to make the lot of the young offenders and certain categories of adult offenders less penal as they had been in the past.

Mr. Chairman, reference was made under item 64 which is an item for the expenses for training courses of Fire Protection Officers at the Campbellville Fire Station. While I do not see the relevance which you yourself do not see, I am going to advise the hon. Member that the little land rover that he saw at the Campbellville Fire Station is very useful as a piece of emergency equipment. These stations do not take the place of the Central Fire Station but supplement the work from the centre. That emergency fire equipment that is at the Campbellville Fire Station while perhaps not being adequate to handle a very large fire is certainly going to be there early and in time to keep the fire down so that by the time the larger tenders arrive is in a position to tackle the situation.

There is at the moment a general shortage of vehicles, especially of Water tenders, in the Fire Service. Government hopes very shortly to correct the situation by the acquisition of some more water tenders. Incidentally, we also are extending this service to other areas not only in Campbellville but in the Ruimveldt area as well as in the Upper Demerara River area where fire

26.11.71

National Assembly

7.20 – 7.30 p.m.

stations have been contracted and these can be seen by members of the Opposition as living examples of progress and improvements.

The Chairman: Perhaps we will not take the Adjournment.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved. “That this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday, 29th December, 1971, at 2 o’ clock in the afternoon. [Mr. Ramsaroop.]

Adjourned accordingly at 7.30 p.m.
