

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

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

30th Sitting

Wednesday, 28th December, 1966

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

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

Members of the Government

Ministers

- | | |
|---|--|
| The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C. | - Prime Minister |
| Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid | - Minister of Home Affairs |
| The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar | - Minister of Finance |
| The Honourable N. J. Bissember | - Minister of Housing and
Reconstruction
(Leader of the House) |
| The Honourable R. E. Cheeks | - Minister of Local Government |
| The Honourable E. F. Correia | - Minister of Communications |
| The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin | - Minister of Education and
Race Relations |
| The Honourable L. John | - Minister of Agriculture |
| The Honourable R. J. Jordan | - Minister of Forests, Lands
and Mines |
| The Honourable M. Kasim | - Minister of Works and
Hydraulics |
| The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E. | - Minister of Trade, Shipping
and Civil Aviation |
| The Honourable D. Mahraj | - Minister of Health |
| The Honourable C. A. Merriman | - Minister of Labour |
| The Honourable J. H. Thomas | - Minister of Economic
Development |

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Other Members

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

Members of the Opposition

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition	Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.
Mr. A. Chase	Mr. J. R. S. Luck
Mr. B. H. Benn	Mr. D. C. Jagan
Mr. Ram Karran	Mr. H. Lall
Mr. R. Chandisingh	Mr. M. Khan, J.P.
Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard	Mr. Y. Ally
Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.	Mr. L. Linde
Mr. C. V. Nunes	Mr. R. D. Persaud
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye	Mr. S. M. Saffee

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

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

Absent:

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

Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker - on leave

Mr. E. M. G. Wilson

Mr. M. N. Poonai

Dr. S. A. Ramjohn

Mr. E. M. Stoby

Mr. M. Bhagwan - on leave.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LETTER OF THANKS FROM HIS
EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received a letter from the Governor-General which I will ask the Clerk to read.

The Clerk read the following.

" GUYANA HOUSE,

Georgetown,

Guyana.

22nd December, 1966.

My dear Mr. Speaker,

I am writing to express to you my sincere appreciation of the excellent arrangements which you made to welcome my wife and myself to the Special Sitting of the National Assembly on the occasion of my appointment to the office of Governor-General. May I also take this opportunity of asking you to convey my gratitude to all Honourable Members for granting me the special privilege of addressing Parliament on this significant occasion. Will you please also convey my sincere thanks to the officers of the National Assembly concerned in the ceremony and in its preparation.

As I observed in my address to the House, no man could receive such an honour in his own country without a real feeling of humility. I

am most grateful for the very generous tributes which you, Sir, and the Honourable the Prime Minister addressed to me in the National Assembly. I am also most grateful to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for the kind words of welcome and encouragement which he addressed to me on the same occasion. I have written personally to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in this connection.

Mr. Speaker, there is little I can add to my address to the House except to re-emphasize to you and to all the Honourable Members my resolve, with the assistance of my wife, to dedicate myself to serve the people of Guyana in the office of Governor-General. We all have a great challenge to face and an opportunity to work together in the service of our country. As I commence my tenure of office as Governor-General it is my fervent hope, as I am sure it is the fervent hope of all Members and indeed of all our people, that the life of this first National Assembly of an independent Guyana may see our steady advance along the path of peace, national unity, and a better standard of living for all our people.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) David Rose,
Governor-General.

His Honour the Speaker,
National Assembly,
Georgetown."

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Leader of the House (Mr. Bissember): Before we move into Committee stage, I wish to say that I had indicated to the hon. Member Mr. Chase that we would stop at 6.30 this evening. If we do not finish the CARIFTA debate today, we will continue tomorrow.

2.10 p.m.

MOTION**APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER
NO. 5/1966**

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Statement by Minister of Finance re Unauthorised Excesses.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): Mr. Chairman, before proceeding with this Motion, I wish to make a statement with regard to Supplementary Provisions.

I want to inform this House that a request from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, for a Supplementary Provision of \$1.5 million has been refused since it was clear that the money had already been unlawfully spent or committed.

Furthermore, I suspected there was much wasteful expenditure going on. I wrote a minute to the Secretary to the Treasury requesting immediate investigation and such disciplinary measures as might be necessary.

I have had a report from the Director of Audit. This confirms both that the money has been spent or committed without authority, and that there is administrative confusion and lack of control in the Ministry.

I am of the opinion that unauthorised excesses such as these should be specially dealt with, as is indicated in article 112 (2) of the Constitution. Just to bring these excesses before the House as an Estimate of Supplementary Provision seems to me to make nonsense of the Financial Regulations.

Accordingly, I intend to recommend to the Cabinet that a Statement of Excesses be brought before the House in accordance with the Constitution as quickly as possible, so as to provide authority to pay suppliers for materials delivered to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics in good faith.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I signify that, in terms of article 80(2) of the Constitution, the Cabinet has recommended this Motion for consideration by the National Assembly. I beg to Move:

"That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5 of 1966 - Schedule of Additional Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending December, 1966, totalling \$1,535,681."

The Chairman: Page 1.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**Personal Emoluments**

Dr. Jacob: I am referring to Item No. 1. The amount sought here is \$274. It is stated, among other things, that the

amount is to be offset by savings on other subheads. When one looks through the last Financial Paper, one finds that this statement - amount to be offset by savings - occurs in almost every item. I should like to know precisely from which subheads of Head 4 will the savings be made. When one looks at the other items on this Paper, one finds that the subheads against which the amounts will be offset are precisely stated, but not so in the case of Item No. 1.

They are asking for an increase in almost every Item and, at the same time, they are telling the House that there will be savings on these Items. We would be grateful if the Minister of Finance would state precisely the numbers of the subheads from which he hopes to offset this \$274.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I cannot say precisely which subheads constitute the total of the savings, but I can make this statement in regard to the total Estimate as originally voted. The final provision exceeds, by very little, the original Estimate; therefore, the total of our Supplementaries will be offset by savings. To give details of this is difficult, if not impossible, but the details will come out when the final figures are published.

Mr. Luck: I am disturbed and alarmed by the statement made by the Minister of Finance in connection with the \$1.5 million. The Minister said that this money has either been unlawfully spent, or formally committed to be spent. I would ask the hon. Minister whether, when the

amounts are added up, he intends to come once more to this House for another million dollars?

This is the fifth Financial Paper and the total in these Papers must exceed \$10 million, which is a fabulous sum of money, having regard to our small national Budget. It is a very high proportion of our Budget. One wonders, listening to the hon. Minister of Finance, whether the \$1.5 million being sought by the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics is not the straw that broke the camel's back. The hon. Minister of Finance made a revealing comment when he said he objected this time, that is, in relation to the \$1.5 million. He objected this time, but one wonders how much of the \$10 million already voted by way of Supplementary Provisions represents money that had been unlawfully spent!

Before I can direct my mind to this Paper, I should like the Minister to let us know how much of these expenses represents money unlawfully spent or committed to be spent because, implicit in what he has said is the awful fact that this has been the practice on the widest possible scale! Squandering of the people's money without forethought! One would wonder how many of these items represent unlawful expenditure which the Minister has, in times past, sought to regularise.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I will simply remind the hon. Member of what I have already said, namely, that I intend to recommend to

[MR. D'AGUIAR]

Government that the Statement of Excesses be brought before the House as quickly as possible. When that is done, the hon. Member will have an opportunity to ask questions. The question asked by the hon. Member is not relevant to the matter before the House.

Mr. Luck: I take an opposite view. From what the hon. Minister of Finance has said, it would appear that the money he now seeks to get for some of these items will, in his view, be used in unlawful and illegal expenditure. If that is so, then our position on such expenditure must be different. If he would tell us what is lawful and what is unlawful, then we would know for which items we should vote.

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Rations.

Mr. Luck: With regard to Item 2, on page 1, not more than a month ago we voted \$41,000 for increased rations for the Guyana Defence Force. I said at the time that while \$41,000 would appear to be a small amount of money, it was proportionately a very large expenditure when we take into account the fact that \$140,000 was estimated for the year. I also said that I suspected that the Government was not being frank with the House in seeking \$41,000, because if that amount was necessary to meet the increase in the cost of rations resulting from an intensification of activities, then other expenditure would go up.

The P.P.P. would grudge no expenditure on the Guyana Defence Force if an attempt were being made to regain Ankoko, but we want to see frankness and honesty in dealing with matters coming before this House. One month ago the Government asked this House to vote \$41,306 for food, and today it is asking for another \$48,000 to feed the Guyana Defence Force. One wonders whether the increased activities on the part of the soldiers alone can cost so much. If the Guyana Defence Force needs more money for guns, ammunition, and so on, we will vote for it, but do not come here and tell us that the money is for food. Manifestly the expenses of the Guyana Defence Force in relation to its activities must have gone up.

The legend to this Item is misleading the House. You cannot say:

"To meet the increased cost of rations resulting from an intensification of activities."

You cannot make us believe that nothing else but food has gone up. Are these soldiers only eating? Do they not need more equipment? I should like the hon. Minister to explain how it is that the members of the Guyana Defence Force can eat 50 per cent more in food and not one other item of expenditure has gone up? Are they not getting heavier guns and better equipment to face the threat of Ankoko, or are they only eating? While it is true that an army marches on its stomach, our Army is not only marching.

The hon. Minister of Finance should explain this matter to the House. We read in the newspaper about blockage and sabotage in the Civil Service. I would ask the hon. Minister of Finance to state whether \$49,306 is required only for food, and whether he wants us, as reasonable men, to believe that nothing else has gone up in relation to the Guyana Defence Force? If that is so, then our army would be worthless.

[The hon. Minister of Finance offered no reply.]

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister of Finance sits there and will not attempt to give any satisfaction to the House. I merely wish to make an observation in relation to his own document *Highways to Happiness*. At page 94 of this document it is stated:

"LEGISLATURE

The Legislature must be run impartially.

It is presided over by an impartial Speaker. The debates are public and the Opposition is given a fair hearing."

So far as I know, we have never been given a fair hearing.

I will continue to quote:

"Opposition members are included on all Parliamentary Committees, and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee which scrutinises public expenditure is a member of the Opposition."

I think the hon. Minister of Finance wrote what is contained in this book himself. If he did not write it, then the person who wrote it has committed a fraud.

Is it not surprising that the hon. Minister of Finance stands here and recommends disciplinary action to be taken against an officer? He should have said that he asked for disciplinary action to be taken in the matter. Anyway, we will see the figures later. The hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics has said nothing in defence of his Ministry. I understand that he sits in a room with carpets up to his knees. I thought the hon. Minister of Finance would have called upon the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics to explain why these votes have been exhausted and why expenditure beyond what was provided in the Estimates was incurred.

I have heard a lot of talk about the East Coast road. The hon. Minister told us the other day that the East Coast road was to be completed with the \$1 million we had voted. Now we are told that the road will be extended from Rosignol to Ithaca, and we have not yet finished the East Coast road!

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS - TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Personal Emoluments

Mr. Ram Karran: The legend against Item 4 states:

"To provide for the re-grading with effect from 1st January, 1966, inclusive, of the post of Engineer-in-Chief from F11 to F 8; of the post

[Mr Ram Karran]

of Executive Engineer from F14 to F12, the creation of 9 additional posts of Engineer on Scale A 4 in place of 3 posts of Engineer on Scale A 7 and 6 posts of Assistant Engineer on Scale A14 and also for the transfer of an amount for the payment of Watchmen for Telecommunications buildings throughout the country which was in error provided under Head 34, Sub-Head 1 - Personal Emoluments. Amount to be offset by savings under Head 34 - Sub-Head 1 - Personal Emoluments."

On the 1st January, 1966, he told us that at the end of the year he was coming for a provision of \$84,000. A few months ago he came here and said that the Telecommunications Department would be a separate department, and that he was going to set up some sort of corporation. I cannot understand the behaviour of this hon. Gentleman. How is he going to regrade people from the 1st January, 1966, when he will be setting up a corporation to take care of Telecommunications?

2.30 p.m.

This does not make sense: What is more, the notes on the first page relate to the regrading of posts under Ministry of Communications, Personal Emoluments, whereas the note on page 2 refers to "transfer of an amount for the payment of Watchmen for Telecommunications buildings throughout the country". As far as I know, watchmen are not paid under the vote "Personal Emoluments".

I do not know whether the hon. Minister of Finance, or the hon. Prime Minister, is going to look into the question of illegal payments, but this does not make sense. The hon. Minister ought to withdraw this Paper and prepare something proper for us to look at. We extend best wishes to the Minister and his Government for the Old Year and hope that the New Year will start in the right spirit, but this sort of thing does not make sense. I hope that the Minister of Finance will have something to say about it.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Rations

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): I should like to appeal to members of the Government to give us more information. I recall that when we were last discussing expenditure, particularly in relation to roads, hon. Members on this side of the House attempted, by all kinds of devices, to obtain information from the Minister, but we were not very successful. Now it has blown up! We now hear how money is being spent without authorisation, how money is being squandered, and we hear that there are thefts and corruption. We were told about these things long ago. We warned about them, but the Government refuses to give details. It prefers to spend taxpayers' money as it likes, and then to come to the Assembly and say how much it wants.

When members of the Government were in the Opposition they asked for full explanations. The Government must give us details. Where are the details? The last time, when the item of rations for the Defence Force came before the Assembly, we asked how this was calculated and whether the cost of rations had gone up. Is there a special rate for those who are serving in Ankoko? We have not been given the benefit of an answer. The Government has now come back for an additional sum of \$48,000 without any further explanation. This Assembly must be told. How is this sum calculated? If the Minister of Home Affairs does not wish to answer, then the Minister of Finance must tell us, because he must know about it before he puts it in the Estimates. He must have the details. The files must have been sent to him for him to know what additional sums were added before this amount of \$48,000 was listed here. We must be told what is the basis of this expenditure. Is it that the Government miscalculated? Are the soldiers eating more than they are supposed to eat, or are they receiving an extra allowance? Is it that extra forces are being trained and the Opposition does not know about it? We would like to be informed.

I think the Minister of Finance in defence of his own position - now that the thieves are falling out - should tell us what has happened so that not only the Opposition but the people of the country may know. The people deserve to know what is happening with their money, for very soon, no doubt, more taxes will fall on them. I urge the

Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Finance to give us this information.

I do not see that there can be anything secret about this expenditure. It may be that the Government does not wish to debate Ankoko, but let us be told how this expenditure, which was originally estimated at \$140,000, has been increased by \$41,000, and now another sum of \$48,000 is required. The size of the Army has not been increased from the time it was planned. [Interruption.] We want to know whether there is a secret Army somewhere commanded by a special commander. We request this information with due respect.

Mr. Luck: If the Prime Minister wants to be taken seriously, I would say that this country cannot afford an Army that feeds on *filet mignon*. If it is really true, I should certainly object to spending this money wholly on food. Two things arise in relation to this. We say it would be wrong if nothing but food is involved.

The Chairman: We are going to move away from page 1. No information is forthcoming.

Mr. Luck: Are we to move away without further information, when there is irregularity in the country?

The Chairman: Page 2.

[Hon. Members offered no comments.]

The Chairman: Page 3.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RACE RELATIONS

Supplies and Equipment

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to refer to Item 8, subhead 4 - Supplies and Equipment. The hon. Minister of Finance has told us on many occasions that the relations with the Crown Agents were to be discontinued because, allegedly, it is wasteful to make purchases through them. If the hon. Minister doubts me, I can find the *Hansard*. There has been criticism in the past about wasteful expenditure in relation to the Crown Agents. Clever as he is, I would have thought that the Minister of Finance would have put an end to this. Is it that the supplies were ordered prior to his being in office? If that is so, I can forgive him.

In view of all his criticisms in the past, the Minister of Finance ought to explain why he is still working through the Crown Agents, especially now that this country is no longer tied to Britain. This country is now Independent and the hon. Minister of Finance ought to be in a position to tell us that efforts have been made to obtain supplies through other sources and it was cheaper to purchase through the Crown Agents. He could have made inquiries through the several offices in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, especially in view of the vast expenditure incurred in keeping these offices. I know that there are a lot of things which one can buy from the Crown Agents cheaper than one can buy elsewhere. In fact, the technical and professional advice which

you can get from the Crown Agents is not necessarily available when purchase is made through private or business contracts.

2.40 p.m.

The hon. Minister of Finance ought to be honest and tell this House that his criticisms in the past were not justified and that these items can be obtained at better prices from the Crown Agents. I do not know if that is so in this case, but the hon. Minister ought to tell us something rather than sneak this Item in the estimates and expect us to accept it.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH - HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES

Dietary

Mr. Luck: Item 10. This sum of money is for food. I was a patient in hospital the other day and the food was far from good. I asked why the food was so poor, and I was told that the money under this vote had already been spent. If nearly a month ago the money had been spent, surely, the sum of \$30,000 would not be enough to carry through the hospital to the end of the year. I do not know which Minister of Health will reply to this question but, surely, we cannot have patients in a public hospital being denied proper food. I was in the best room available at the Public Hospital and the food there was not good, and one can only imagine that the people in the poor wards must be seeing hell. I would ask the hon. Min-

ister whether this amount will be enough. Let the Minister of Health reply.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Sanitary, Fuel and Light

Mr. Chandisingh: If the Minister is not going to answer my colleague, I should like to ask a question in relation to Item 11. The note states:

"To provide for increased cost of operation and maintenance of overhead tanks at the Hospitals at Best, Mahaica, Mahaicony, New Amsterdam, Canje and Port Mourant."

I am very much in sympathy with providing overhead tanks and water to these hospitals, but would the Minister give us the reason for the increased cost of operation and maintenance?

The Minister of Health (Mr. Mahraj): We have had the experience of a dry spell earlier this year and, on account of this, there was a lesser flow of water and a greater content of iron which choked the filter of the wells. The hospitals must have clear and clean water as this is a necessary service. It is not done annually; it is an extraordinary vote.

Mr. Ram Karan: Surely this explanation does not relate to New Amsterdam, and yet that is listed as one of the hospitals which cost more for its operation and maintenance. This legend could not be correct if what the Minister says is true.

Financial Assistance to Needy Patients

Dr. Jacob: Item 14. I am all in favour of assistance to needy patients, but the Item calls for the provision of \$500 and when we look at the note we find that this assistance to needy patients will be given at the expense of allowances to patients and discharged inmates of the Mahaica Hospital. What the Government is doing is digging a hole to fill a hole. It is going to give needy patients some assistance, but the money to provide this assistance will come from that which is already provided for patients and discharged patients of the Mahaica Hospital. What a callous Government! It is so indifferent to the suffering of the inmates of the Mahaica Hospital that it would deprive these inmates of certain things in order to give assistance to the needy patients! What the Government ought to have done was to provide an additional \$500, and not take it from savings which it will make on the allowances to patients and discharged inmates of the Mahaica Hospital.

Mr. Luck: I should like to support the observations of my hon. Friend Dr. Jacob. The sum of \$500, if it involves let us say 10 per cent, only works out to \$50. The patients who resort to this Hospital must be numbered among the most unfortunate of all mankind, and it is only right that we should try to give these people as much assistance as is possible within the financial resources of our country. The sum of \$500, added to the sum of \$1,000 already voted, makes a total of only \$1,500. There are

[MR. LUCK]

several hundred patients in this Hospital and, surely, even if the amount were to be given free and unencumbered, it must be adjudged miserably small. But when we consider that we will give \$500 and we will take it back from the amount set aside for allowances to patients and discharged inmates of the Mahaica Hospital, then the parsimony of this Government in important matters as opposed to its squandermania in other matters - Ankoko Island, for instance - is clearly apparent.

Mr. Mahraj: I regret to say that the speakers who challenge this Item are looking at it through "bilious" eyes - [Laughter.] - as they see the moon and the sun in the same colour. This amount of \$500 is to be offset by savings under subhead 21 - Allowances to patients and discharged inmates of the Mahaica Hospital. There was no need for this amount to be spent because the number of patients was reduced, the attendance was less, the demand was less. On the other hand, a paltry sum of \$1,000 was provided under subhead 30 - Financial Assistance to Needy Patients - and so the amount of \$500 will be brought over to this subhead.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Persaud: The hon. Minister is out of touch with what is happening in the Hospital. Every day patients come to me begging for help to go to their homes. An office was created for an Almoner who would assess the needs of the person who is to be discharged, and make recommenda-

tions for assistance. But, although this office was created and money was provided, the patients are still forced to leave the Hospital without any aid. Their travelling expenses are not even paid when they are discharged. I, therefore, urge that the Minister concerned should give consideration to this matter.

Dr. Jacob: I rise to comment on what the Minister of Health has said. He said that the sum of \$1,000 proved inadequate. This is exactly the point! We on this side of the House have always said that the Minister of Finance deliberately under estimates expenditure. That is why this \$1,000 has been described as paltry by the Minister of Health, and that is why we have all these Supplementary Estimates amounting to over \$10 million already.

The Chairman: Page 4.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 17 - \$9,000. I should like the Minister to state what are the areas that were supplied with pure water during 1965 and 1966, and whether these areas represent the proportion of areas that need to be supplied. In other words, what are the existing areas that need water supply and have not received it?

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Mr. Bissember): This amount is not only for pure

water supply but to meet some arrears in payments that were incurred in 1965. They are as follows:

D'Endragt and Courbane Park ..	\$ 2,026.40
Enterprise ..	393.28
Annandale Swamp and Reef Section	393.28
Mon Repos (North)	579.92
Hope	766.56
Vryheid's Lust (North)	480.56
Owing to Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee	4,640.00
Nooten Zuil.. ..	3,871.04

From what I have just enumerated, you will see that the amounts vary from \$4,640.00 to \$393.28 to meet the supply of water in those areas.

As far as my information goes, there is no area at the moment which is not supplied with pure water. There may be some areas which are not getting a proper supply as one would expect it to be, but all these displaced persons' areas are supplied with pure water.

Mr. Lall: I crave your indulgence --

The Chairman: Item?

Mr. Lall: Item 15.

The Chairman: We are on Item 17. We are not going backwards.

Mr. Ram Karran: In view of this difficulty, I beg to suggest that we consider item after item. For instance, I would not know --

The Chairman: The Opposition should act in consort. You should consult your colleagues. I am not going backwards at all.

Mr. Ram Karran: In that case I would suggest that items be called out.

The Chairman: That is in-keeping with the Standing Order.

Mr. Ram Karran: By the time you have a chance to stand on your feet, the whole page is passed.

The Chairman: Page 5.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

Expenses of Officers

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 22 -- \$10,000. A few weeks ago we had an item where \$15,000 was spent allegedly because of unexpected termination of appointments of expatriate officers as a consequence of the attainment of Independence. Your Honour will recall that that item was very severely criticised. I had made mention of the fact that it was very easy for any Government, with a little bit of intelligence, to work out in advance which of the expatriate officers would leave.

I presume the hon. Minister is going to be as dumb as he has always been on that side. He was quite vociferous when he was sitting on this side of the House. Are we going to get any more of these Supplementary Estimates in 1967? Are more expatriate officers going to resign or retire in 1967? Is this the

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

final amount? Surely, the Minister, or his adviser, should be able to say how many officers serve this Government, and how many have gone. This is a simple matter of subtraction.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I cannot predict what the officers will do, or when they will resign. I can make this statement though. This subhead refers to 10 officers who have resigned, and 13 officers who have been recruited since Independence. In the case of recruitment, very often advances are made by the Crown Agents, and there is usually some delay before those advances reach the Accountant-General. That explains the late entry of the increases in the Estimates.

Mr. Ram Karran: That is all the more reason why this House should not be left in this way. We thought, all along, that the persons referred to were persons who served the Government all these years, and who, as a result of the accident of Independence, decided to leave the Service. Now it turns out that the people are those who have been recruited. If they are recruited by the Crown Agents, they are certainly not going to be recruited on a day-to-day basis, they are going to be on a contractual basis.

3 p. m.

Surely, the advisers to the Minister would tell him that, say, 30 men are employed; 10 will resign after 3 years' service; 2 will retire after six months' service, and so on, so that adequate provision could be made at

the beginning of the year in order to avoid presenting this hocus-pocus to the House. This matter should be done in a proper manner. It is true that an officer may decide to remain for another two or three years and the money will have to be provided. Surely, the hon. Minister should not treat us like a set of little children. We want to know the facts.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Revenue Protection

Mr. Lall: With reference to subhead 9 - Revenue Protection, I notice that the hon. Minister is asking for an additional \$10,000 to suppress the manufacture of bush rum. The voted provision was \$20,000, then there was additional provision in the sum of \$60,000, and he is now asking for this additional \$10,000 for revenue protection. So far as protection is concerned, I should like to know whether the revenue will be increased as a result of the large sums of money spent. Can the hon. Minister tell this House how much revenue the Government will collect?

I want to refer to the serious epidemic in this country, but Your Honour will not allow me to do so. There is a serious epidemic known as gastro-enteritis in New Amsterdam, and a lot of children are suffering and dying almost every day through lack of medical attention. The

other day a child died at New Amsterdam through lack of medical attention. The child waited for two hours without receiving medical attention. At this very moment there are 26 children in one little ward. I do not see why this \$10,000 should be spent on the suppression of the manufacture of bush rum at the moment. So far as the health of children is concerned, the Government should take immediate steps to provide medical attention for them. Is it because the hon. Minister of Finance is concerned with the sale of rum that he is asking for protection?

Mr. d'Aguiar: In reply to the hon. Member, I can say that the revenue has increased by approximately \$1 million. There have been 475 illegal stills destroyed; \$187,368 has been paid in fines. [Mr. Luck: "Everybody paid fines?"] The fines were paid. There are cases pending where the sum of \$102,000 is still awaiting the decision of the Appeal Court. If ever there was justifiable expenditure, then this is one glorious example of it.

Mr. Persaud: The hon. Minister is speaking about the whole year, and not in respect of the \$60,000 approved by this House a few months ago. I know that bush rum is not a good thing. It is a social problem, and it ought to be taken care of in a different way. The Police Force and the Customs Department can take care of persons manufacturing bush rum. Persons who possess distilleries for the manufacture of bush rum can be arrested by members of the Police Force. I feel that it is exorbi-

tant to use \$90,000 in one year in order to suppress the manufacture of bush rum. I have no doubt in my mind that the money is being properly spent in order to have people who are making bush rum arrested, but I know some of it is being used to pay decoys and informers.

We have already said in this House that, under the Emergency Regulations, exorbitant sums of money have been spent to pay decoys and informers. Today we are asked to approve \$10,000 to be used to prevent people from manufacturing bush rum. There is also need for law to be introduced to prevent persons from indulging in the excessive use of alcohol. I know that bush rum as well as the excessive use of rum is destroying many families in this country. I am told that some of the spirit dealers produce worse rum than the people who are manufacturing bush rum.

While the Government is asking us to vote money to help stamp out the manufacture of bush rum, I think that serious consideration should be given to the sale of rum as a whole. I wonder whether some members of the Government are under the influence of cognac when they are making decisions? I should like the hon. Minister to withdraw this provision from the Estimates. Some time ago we voted \$60,000 to suppress the manufacture of bush rum, and I think it is ridiculous to come here today and ask us to vote another \$10,000 to take care of the same matter.

I feel sure that the Government can use the Police Force and the Customs Department in order

[MR. PERSAUD]

to suppress the manufacture of bush rum. The Magistrates have been charging heavy fines for such a crime. I am against the voting of this money to pay decoys and informers, because the policemen are not paid from this money.

3.10 p.m.

The people who give expert evidence in bush rum cases will also be paid from another source. This money will be used to pay decoys and informers and perhaps to search for the producers of bush rum. Persons who are attracted to this drink will produce it in secret.

The Chairman: I should like to turn to page 6 now.

Mr. Persaud: I should like to urge the Government to do something about it.

INLAND REVENUE

Refunds of Revenue

Dr. Jacob: I should like to speak on Item 25, Refunds of Revenue, Inland Revenue Department. At the beginning of the year, the Minister asked for a sum of \$750,000. We are told in the legend that "expenditure on this subhead is unpredictable." I admit that to a certain extent these refunds are unpredictable, but I observe from this Paper that the refunds will total over a million dollars. This

confirms the charge I made that the Minister of Finance was dishonest when he presented the Estimates to the Assembly.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I very much regret that the amount required for refunds was underestimated, but so was the payment of tax to the Inland Revenue Department underestimated by approximately \$5 million.

Dr. Jacob: I am reliably informed that the Minister of Finance refuses to take official advice. Surely there are competent people in the Inland Revenue Department who can make these estimates. The Department does indeed present estimates, but they are discarded by the United Force Minister of Finance. That is why he is finding himself in this embarrassing position today. He will be further embarrassed when he comes to present the Estimates for 1967.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I must report that the estimates made by the officials were too low and I increased them. My estimates were also too low. I apologise for not being able to estimate the exact amount. I do not think that anybody could.

The Chairman: Page 6.

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HYDRAULICS

Drainage Trench at Salem and Naamryck

Mr. Ram Karran: I notice from reports in the newspapers that the Prime Minister was

draining the whole-of the West Coast, Berbice, over the week-end. Six inches of rain fell over the Christmas week-end. Some time ago the hon. Minister of Finance said that if he had engineers he would be able to drain a flood equal to that faced by Noah in Mount Ararak, yet here we are asked to pay counsel's fees and make *ex gratia* payments to seven persons for crops lost through construction of a drainage trench at Salem and Naamryck.

There are three cases pending in the Garden of Eden area, which was flooded over the week-end. The Black Bush Polder area is in shambles. I know the hon. Minister of Finance has his knife in the people of Black Bush Polder. Outside of this House he said it was not properly planned, and when the consultant wrote a letter to him he apologised. He said he was not referring to that area, he was referring to Torani. I wish he would say it outside of the House again.

What does this Government propose to do with this area which floods regularly and which can be developed so that flooding can be avoided? What is to happen with Garden of Eden where trenches are not properly maintained, due to the incompetence of the Ministry of Works and Hudraulics? I do not say it is due to my hon. Friend's personal incompetence. He has a great deal to carry already, but the Government is squandering money. This list gives an indication of the underestimation that takes place and of the wasting of funds. At the same time nothing is being done with respect to

important matters in the life of the nation, providing food, maintaining people, and reducing unemployment.

In the Garden of Eden area, the trenches are all silted up and no effort is being made to clean them. Where a few trenches are being cleaned, the contracts are given out to friends of the Government. No proper system of making contracts is in force and, as a result, the rainfall over the past week-end is going to cause a tremendous amount of harm to the farmers. People who are not prepared to go hat in hand to the Government; people who are prepared to provide food for themselves, for their families and for the nation are going to suffer.

I hope that the Government, whether it be the Attorney-General's Office or the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, will pay outstanding claims to people who have suffered losses from floods or from drought, and that the canals will be drained so that there will be no recurrence of flooding. I hope the Government will make a fresh start in the New Year.

The Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Kasim): I should like to draw to the attention of hon. Members that this damage was done during the term of office of the last speaker, when he was Minister of Works and Hydraulics. It happened during 1959 and 1960 because of the incompetence of the last Government.

Mr. Ram Karran: Drainage and irrigation fell under the Ministry of Agriculture from 1957 to

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

1961. There were three floods during the period because of the construction of dams in certain areas.

Mr. Kasim: I am rather surprised to hear that. If it happened at that time, the former Government could have settled the claims and not left it to us.

The Chairman: I am turning to the next page.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Water Transport

Mr. Benn: I should like to find out from the hon. Minister of Agriculture what is the "increased activity in extension services in the interior" that is mentioned here, and how many officers are stationed in the Rupununi and in the North West District.

3.20 p.m.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. John): The increased expenditure is due to increased activity relating mainly to changes in practices as we are moving from the coastlands to the interior. It will not be possible for me to give the exact number of officers.

Mr. Benn: Can the hon. Minister tell us what is the position with respect to the agricultural activities at Monkey Mountain? Secondly, what is the position in relation to cattle in the Rupununi? The Trinidad Government had refused to purchase our cattle because of the foot-and-mouth disease. I wonder if the situation has improved.

Mr. John: The officers stationed in those districts are doing their best to give whatever services are available.

Mr. Benn: Surely, the hon. Minister can give us a better answer than that. Can the hon. Minister tell us what is the position at Bara Cara? The hon. Member Mr. Blair used to raise a hue and cry about Bara Cara when he was on this side. I understand that for several months no agricultural officer has visited Bara Cara, and the people are finding it difficult to send their produce to the Government department. In addition to this, the people in the Berbice River area are also suffering. The agricultural officer was to be stationed at Torani or somewhere about. Can the Minister tell us something about this?

Mr. John: Agricultural officers continue to serve these areas as best as they can. It takes quite a lot of time to get around to these areas.

Mr. Benn: Is the hon. Minister saying that an agricultural officer visited Bara Cara recently? Can the hon. Minister tell us if there is an agricultural officer stationed at Torani serving the people in the Berbice River area?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Botanic Gardens

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 2. The note states: "There has been increased expenditure on labour and other charges" - I do not know what these other charges

are - because of the necessity to prepare the Gardens for recent important celebrations and supply and transport flowers and plants for decoration of Government buildings." If plants from the Gardens are being transported to Government buildings, provision is made for transportation under the Head dealing with Agriculture.

I cannot understand what Head this is. There is no file number here and, unless the Minister has something to tell us, I suspect that this is a fish-catching arrangement. I understand that a number of boys are employed to go and catch fish in the Gardens to provide exercise for the Prime Minister. But put it under the correct Head, do not hide it here. I am sure that every Member here is prepared to give the hon. Prime Minister something to do in his spare time. He ought to get someone to catch fish for him.

I challenge the hon. Minister of Agriculture to bring the file here and satisfy this House that the sum of \$9,000 was expended or is to be expended under this Head. I think that the Government is hiding this fish-catching business under this Head.

Mr. John: There were important celebrations this year and it was necessary to transport flowers and plants to decorate and improve the appearance of Government buildings. I think the hon. Member will agree with me.

The Chairman: I want to move away from this.

Mr. Benn: I am sorry, but it is my responsibility to deal with agriculture and I should like an opportunity to deal with a few points.

Purchase, Production and Distribution of Seeds and Plants

Mr. Benn: I wish to speak on Item 3. The note states:

"To provide for the increased demand for planting material the sale of which will result in increased revenue."

I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture what is being done in relation to the payment of bonuses. I understand that many persons have planted coconuts and they have not secured their bonuses. They have made repeated requests to the Ministry and no notice has been taken of them. Can the Minister say something about this? Secondly, are the bonuses still to be paid? Thirdly, has there been any increase in the price of cocoa plants, citrus plants and coconut plants?

Mr. John: The question of payment of bonuses does seem to take some time and we must bear in mind that, in some instances, claims are submitted in places like the Pomeroon district and these claims have to be processed. There are also certain instances where investigations have to be carried out.

I am not aware of any increase in charges, but I should like to remind the hon. Member that, very often, the charges are sometimes less than 50 per cent of the actual cost of production.

The Chairman: Are you satisfied, Mr. Benn?

Mr. Benn: Yes, sir.

The Chairman: Page 2.

Maintenance of District Offices

Mr. Benn: Item 5. About two weeks ago I paid a visit to the Black Bush Polder Land Development Scheme and the Garden of Eden Land Development Scheme. I discovered that the office of the agricultural officer at Garden of Eden is in a terrible state of disrepair. Several farmers have complained that they have not seen the officer and that they are troubled by some disease in avocado pears. It appears as if the officer has too much to do. I hope the Minister will look into this.

As regards the Black Bush Polder, I discovered that the demonstration plot, which used to be looking well with cabbages and the like, is now under very high grass. I do not know if the hon. Minister is now dealing with cattle there, but the grass is as high as a staircase and the agricultural officer's house is covered with grass.

3.30 p.m.

The hon. Prime Minister is saying every day that we must buy local. A lot of cabbages used to be produced at Black Bush Polder. The quantity is considerably less over the last year or two. The hon. Minister should tell this House why.

Mr. John: We have always listened to complaints made by farmers. That goes for Black Bush Polder or any other place. The hon. Member talked of the quantity of cabbages that used to be produced at Black Bush Polder. But he should also tell the House that he did not have proper arrangements to market them, and that a number of people ceased to produce because of that.

Mr. Benn: Perhaps there is a new arrangement. People at several places are cultivating cabbages and the Agricultural Station has "sour grass".

Dairy Farming Expansion - Maintenance Expenses

Mr. Benn: I wish to deal with the next item, that is, item No. 6, Dairy Farming Expansion - Maintenance Expenses - \$12,000. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what happened to the revolving heifer scheme and, secondly, if those farmers who had been set up some years ago all over the country to show other farmers how to carry on, are still carrying on?

Mr. John: The hon. Member knows that the revolving cattle scheme was discontinued before we came into office, the reason being that sufficient training has not been given to some of the people to care for the cattle.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Minister is not answering the question. Perhaps it is very good for agriculture that he is being removed from that Ministry. Could the hon. Minister say what is the Government's policy - I believe there is a policy - on the question of the Rice Assessment Tri-

bunal? Do not tell us that the P.P.P. was in office for seven years and it did not do anything. You said you could do better, so let us hear what you have been doing.

Mr. John: The term has been extended by one year, and we have explained in this House that the Government is examining the Ordinance with a view to making the necessary amendments.

Mr. Benn: Do I understand that the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Producers' Association will be consulted when this takes place? I read recently that appointments were made to the Rice Assessment Committee, and the Rice Producers' Association, which used to be consulted was not consulted.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

The Chairman: Page 2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Transport and Travelling

Mr. Luck: I am very sorry that the hon. Minister of Finance is away at the present time.

The Chairman: What page are you on?

Mr. Luck: Item No. 1 of the page you called, which is to provide for payment of Crown Agents Vouchers.

The additional provision now sought is \$14,400. I should like to have some further information

on this item. We are not told in relation to what these Crown Agents vouchers were issued, and I would like to know whether this is not a case of unlawful expenditure by the Government Service which, *ex post facto*, this House is being asked, to regularise by voting money. What is this money supposed to do? Surely, we are entitled to be told! I would ask that some spokesman on behalf of the Government tell us what is involved in this particular item.

[No reply was offered.]

Mr. Ram Karran: I thought that the hon. Prime Minister would have answered the question in view of the fact that he is taking charge of external affairs. I want to deal with the same item. It is stated in the legend that the amount is to be offset by savings on other subheads of Head 4. Surely, the House should have been told what are the subheads from which the savings will be offset! This House should not be treated in such a cavalier manner. It should not be treated with such contempt. In all my years in this House I have never seen a Paper prepared like this. As my hon. Friends pointed out just now, it is to provide for Crown Agents vouchers, but that could not be so unless "transport" is for the High Commissioner in London.

3.40 p.m.

Of course, the legend continues:

"...to provide for travelling expenses of the offices in New York and Wash-

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

ington which could not be precisely anticipated in the early part of the year."

I respectfully suggest that this Financial Paper be corrected, so that it will not go down on the records that this House has been treated in such a manner. At no time at all, as far as I can remember, has this matter been dealt with. This sort of thing will create a precedent which will give this Government an opportunity to hide expenditure by not stating the facts.

I repeat what the hon. Minister of Finance mentioned in his party's manifesto:

"The Public Accounts Committee should have as its Chairman a member of the Opposition."

The Public Accounts Committee does not meet. [Mr. d'Aguiar: "Members of the Opposition refused to sit on the Committee."] Very early in the history of this House, the Leader of the House made a statement that we on this side had refused to serve on the Public Accounts Committee when in truth and in fact nobody, with the exception of Mr. Bowman, had spoken to him. It has been recorded here that the hon. Leader of the House is a stranger to the truth.

I have already pointed out that this House is performing the functions of the Public Accounts Committee which does not exist and on which there is no member of the Opposition. I feel that the entire nation ought to know what takes place

in this House so far as the spending of money is concerned. There are two suggestions I wish to make, unless the hon. Prime Minister or one of his Ministers can tell this House exactly what is meant by the statement contained in the legend. Please tell us under what subheads the savings will be offset. The hon. Minister of Finance has already said that he cannot tell us. If he cannot give us the necessary information, then this Financial Paper should be withdrawn and the necessary amendments should be made to it. Certain things can be hidden in these votes without an indication being given of what is actually taking place.

The Chairman: Page 2 of the second part.

Redecoration and furnishing Residence of High Commissioner

Mr. Luck: I should like to speak on Item 8, Subhead 17 - (New) - Redecoration and furnishing of the High Commissioner's residence - \$18,000. This seems to be a hardy annual, and the hon. Minister is coming before this House for money to be spent on this Item every three months. Why are we spending so much money on one man? It is quite clear that the Guyana High Commissioner, having regard to the financial position of this small country, must be one of the most expensive diplomats in this world. What is the purpose of our having a High Commissioner in London?

We have to keep an eye on this expenditure. I remember some time ago we were asked to vote \$40,000 and, previous to

that we were asked to vote \$60,000 to take care of this matter. I would think that providing housing accommodation for this gentleman must have cost this Government nearly \$200,000 to date. Today we are asked to vote an additional \$18,000, and the hard pressed taxpayers of this country will have to foot the bill.

We are one of the most heavily taxed people in this world. Weighed with taxes, we are asked to spend another \$18,000 to provide for redecoration and refurnishing of the house in which Sir Lionel Luckhoo has to live. Every Member in this House knows that this Government has already spent nearly \$150,000 on this item. When will this sort of thing end? This gentleman receives a sum in excess of \$40,000 as allowances. The Government gave him a car for \$16,000; he does not have to pay his chauffeur or the maid to look after his children; he does not pay house rent; he does not pay for light and fuel; he does not have to buy clothes for his wife and his children. In addition to all of this at this time of the year - Christmas - we are asked to spend an additional \$18,000 on Sir Lionel Luckhoo's house! How much are we going to spend to maintain this gentleman?

Sir, we all know that this gentleman is well fixed. We know that, having been the Attorney for Reynolds Metal Company for several years, he does not have to work in this high office. I speak with feeling on this matter, because as I was coming to this House I saw a family in the direst need. The whole of Camp-

bellville is now flooded. Bookers keep pumping water on our land, and the area is flooded. [Interruption.] I do not grudge anybody living in style; the hon. Prime Minister has his own expensive style. Must we pay for him as well as Sir Lionel?

On the other side of the Atlantic we have to look after Sir John Carter. We notice that for every \$20,000 spent on Sir Lionel we have to spend \$25,000 on Sir John, and I predict with certainty that we will soon be asked to provide more money for the New York office.

3.50 p.m.

Where will this end? Time and again in this Assembly we have criticised the fact that representatives of a mendicant country - and this is a mendicant country - should live on this scale. It is a sure sign that something is wrong with this country. How can we, in all honesty, have our representatives living off the best in the world, when those same representatives have to visit poor, hard-pressed countries - England is even more hard-pressed than we are - to beg for food to feed our children? Our representatives go in top-hats and scissor-tail coats and this is wholly inappropriate.

I hope that hon. Members on the other side will join with us in this matter. I see my hon. Friend, Mr. Carrington, the trade unionist sitting there. He has to see 60 workmen from the Transport and Harbours Department laid off while \$18,000 is to be voted for the purchase of curtains. I cannot see for what

[MR. LUCK]

else this money would be required because the High Commissioner has everything he needs: the Rolls, the nanny, the fireside.

This type of expenditure is infectious. It started in "The Residence" and has pervaded the whole Government apparatus. The Minister of Works and Hydraulics sits on a pile of carpets, as my friend Mr. Ram Karran said. Nobody would object to people living in a reasonable style provided they paid for it themselves. I would never object to a man living as he wished, provided that he paid for it, but this gentleman, Lionel Luckhoo, has cost us too much already, putting aside the Reynolds deal. Men who are millionaires should not ask us to put more money into their pockets.

The Prime Minister: It may be that a certain amount of ineptness induced by the holiday season has caused my hon. and learned Friend not to notice that this is a new item to provide for payment for redecoration and refurnishing expenses in connection with the residence of the High Commissioner. The House was bought and had to be redecorated. Naturally it had to be furnished. Accounts have now come in from the Crown Agents, who were responsible.

If the hon. Member would only look at the document, and cast aside the blur induced by excessive drinking, he would notice that this is a new item for redecoration which is a normal process when one is moving into a new house. With regard to his

verbal perambulations and inaccuracies in respect of the Rolls Royce car that is owned by the Government and used by the High Commissioner, I may say it is an ordinary Austin Princess, which is the type of car diplomats from the poorest countries use in London. There is nothing extraordinary about it, except that it is a limousine. I find it is a little difficult to understand the tirade. If my hon. and learned Friend wanted to choose some other item for criticism, he might have done so.

Mr. Luck: I should like to ask the hon. Prime Minister to consider again his statement. Is he saying that we have not previously redecorated and refurnished the residence of the London High Commissioner? I clearly recollect that the sum of \$60,000, was voted for redecorating and refurnishing the house of the London High Commissioner

The Prime Minister: I am not a person who is afraid of saying he is wrong when he is wrong. I shall do so whenever my hon. and learned Friend can find elsewhere this item which appears as a new classification and which I have on the information of my Permanent Secretary is a new item. This looseness in one who has the good fortune to be trained in the law and who masquerades as a teacher cannot be tolerated. If the hon. Member recollects this and if he can bring evidence of it, I would be the first to apologise and to say I was wrongly informed by my Permanent Secretary that this was a new item.

The Chairman: We shall turn to the last page.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone Corporation

Mr. Ram Karran: On the last page I notice that the hon. Minister of Communications is asking approval for almost double the amount that was originally estimated for the establishment of the Telephone Corporation. A few days ago legislation was introduced for the establishment of the Corporation. The Minister, as hon. Members will recall, was very vague with respect to what was going to take place. I assume that this amount has already been spent because a large sum of money like this could not be spent between today and Old Year's Day, and I cannot imagine that this allocation is for next year.

I wonder whether the Minister will tell us what stage has been reached with respect to the setting up of the Corporation, and whether this money is for additional chairs or telephones. Will he also tell us where he is setting up the Corporation?

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia): The amount of \$17,560 is required for offices, equipment, stationery and as an advance to an accountant for his car. These are initial expenses.

Mr. Ram Karran: Will the Minister then say how the original vote of \$18,000 was spent? Has it been spent?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Loans to Local Authorities

Mr. Ram Karran: While I am on my feet may I mention that this Government, which has been so solicitous of poor persons, particularly those in rural areas whose votes they requested, comes to this Assembly and tells us that about \$200,000 will be owed by these persons over a number of years. The Local Authorities did not pay this money over the years, so now it is to be "squeezed" out of them. The money that is owed is to be converted into a loan and persons who can hardly meet their normal expenses will be expected to repay this amount over a period of five years.

The Members of the Government - the Minister of Finance in particular - have always spoken about free services to the community, especially with respect to water. This action is shameful and shocking in a country which is subject to floods and drought, and where there are epidemics such as gastro-enteritis and other water-borne diseases.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.36 p.m.

On resumption —

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: The last page.

Mr. Ram Karran: When the suspension was taken I was dealing with Item 2 on the last page and I was trying to draw the

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

Government's attention to the very grave burden which is being placed on the shoulders of the Local Authorities and on the taxpayers in these Local Authorities. I recall that, on another occasion, when the previous Government sought, at the request of the Local Authorities, to impose a minimal 5% on outstanding amounts owed by the taxpayers to the Local Authorities, those Members who now grace this Chamber on the other side were most pernicious in their condemnation of that measure, even though it was at the request of the Local Authorities. Today we see these hearts turned into stone and, from all appearances, from all the facts available to me and to Members of this House - even those on the Government side - it is impossible for these Local Authorities to find and pay this very large sum of \$200,000.

We were told that they were very shortly going to embark upon Marshallisation. The hon. Minister is not in his seat; he is always absent at the most important times. Are we going to saddle these young Local Authorities, who will shortly be called upon to shoulder additional burdens under the Marshall plan, with this huge sum of \$200,000? Surely, the hon. Minister of Finance can find some way in which this amount can be written off. Many of these Local Authorities are very, very small. There are Local Authorities like Relief and Support - the names alone indicate something. Buxton, too, must also contribute to the payment.

I remember that on the rare occasions when my friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics addressed this House, he used to make a strong appeal for this 5%. I wish he would raise his voice in protest against this very large sum being saddled on these Local Authorities, including Kitty. Water is very important to these people, particularly at this time. I emphasise "at this time" because water-borne diseases are affecting the whole country; even in Georgetown there are cases of gastro-enteritis.

4.40 p.m.

I see that "Reconstruction" is being struck out of the Ministry. Perhaps the Government is not concerned whether the persons living in the displaced persons' area have gastro-enteritis. Since this is, I hope, the last Supplementary Provision for 1966, I strongly urge the hon. Minister of Finance and his colleagues to do justice to the people and to wipe out this incriminating evidence in so far as the Local Authorities are concerned.

The Chairman: I am putting the Question.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. d'Aguiar: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has come to a Resolution in respect of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5, without amendment. I, therefore, move that this House agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We will resume debate on the Agreement.

GUYANA'S PARTICIPATION IN CARIFTA AGREEMENT

The Assembly resumed debate on the following Motion:

"Whereas on the 15th day of December, 1965, an Agreement providing for the establishment of a Caribbean Free Trade Association was signed on behalf of the Governments of British Guiana, Barbados and Antigua;

And whereas the said Agreement was laid in the House of Assembly on the 25th day of April, 1966;

And whereas there was laid in the National Assembly on the 20th day of December, 1966, a further Agreement supplementary to the Agreement first above mentioned dealing with certain matters which had arisen in connection therewith and signed on behalf of the Governments of Guyana, Antigua and Barbados:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that this National Assembly approve of Guyana's participation in the said Agreement and her becoming a member of the Association accordingly." [Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation.]

The Minister of Economic Development (Mr. Thomas): When the House adjourned last Thursday, I was about to summarise my arguments to the Motion. I pointed out that this Agreement must be seen against the back-

ground of world affairs, and against the background of those countries that are attempting to find some solution to the economic problems. I am convinced that, in an attempt to analyse the CARIFTA Agreement, we must postulate some body of principles upon which we can argue for or against the Motion. I deliberately selected the German Zollverein because I think that we can learn from the lessons of history. We can learn about what took place some time in the past, and also see what pitfalls are likely to be met and how these pitfalls can be avoided.

In analysing the first attempt at economic integration, we were able to see what accrued directly or indirectly from the movement, and also to see the trend that world economics took since 1834. The year 1871 was regarded as the high-water mark of the free trade movement in Europe. We can well ask: Why is it that, with Europe in the nineteenth century bent on liberalism and free trade, there was a movement away from these even though the Germans had put forward a plan which worked excellently and which continued to work excellently? The economic integration of Germany had made Germany strong economically, and the result of this was a strong political lineation.

I further pointed out that, in spite of the good that Europe had seen emanating from this, there was the mad scramble for empire after the eighteenth century, which resulted in the rape of Africa. We saw that good intentions can fall by the wayside if men's hearts are not bent on

[MR. THOMAS]

achieving reasonable integration. Britain attempted in 1931 to piece together the economy of a shattered empire, and we had the Ottawa Conference of 1932 which left us with the imperial preference system.

Then came the war in 1939. We do not know exactly what were the causes but there were many. I do feel that during the period 1933 to 1939 Germany was bursting at its economic seams, and if you had followed closely the machinations of the Western countries to enclose Germany, you may have seen how Germany manoeuvred her way out.

4.50 p.m.

Why was it that Germany marched on Poland and then blockaded the Rhine by blockading Belgium and the low countries from 1933 to 1945 when Hitler was in power? There was full employment and increasing productivity in Germany because there was a unified economic system, and it is the power of Germany of which Western Europe is afraid. The Soviet Union will never agree to the unification of Germany, because she regards Germany's economic might as a threat to peace.

Arising out of what I have said, I may postulate that it is the economic strength of a nation that will determine its political strength and not *vice versa*. I further stated that there can be no political unity unless a nation's economy rests on a firm foundation. I even suggested

that the break-up of the West Indian Federation was due to the absence of economic unity.

I further tried to show that after the war of 1939 - 45 we saw a second move by the nations of Western Europe making a conscious effort to have some kind of regulation in international trade, and the result was, as you know, the Havana Conference which led to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The International Monetary Fund and the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development came in 1946.

In the light of these international movements to stabilise economic forces, can we sit idly by, arguing among ourselves on political issues, without making some conscious effort at economic regulation or economic integration by pooling our resources so that we can break away from this vicious circle of poverty? Where do we go from here? What have we learnt from the lessons of history? Firstly, taking the formation of the Zollverein in 1834 into consideration, I am postulating that one or two countries in this Caribbean area must take the lead. Whether this lead comes from Guyana, or Barbados, or Antigua, is irrelevant to the main argument. Somebody must take the lead economically. In this case Guyana together with Barbados and Antigua made the first move.

Again, I say that, with the lessons of history before us, it is quite evident that in their own interest other countries in the Caribbean will follow suit. It is not unlikely that

another group may be formed in the Caribbean. I am taking the lessons of history as my guide. I have stated that the Northern States of Germany, led by Prussia, made the first move; the Southern States, led by Saxony, made the second move; and the Central States decided that they would join.

If I may digress for a moment, it is interesting to note that in 1837 Austria made a move to join the European Common Market - exactly 100 years ago. History is most interesting, because it shows that it was to the mutual benefit of those countries that they should come together. I made a statement to the effect that, because of our own poverty, it is right for the countries in the Caribbean to stick together in their adversity because the European free trade area may fall apart. We know that Austria tried to opt out of the free trade area by joining the European Common Market, and we saw England, almost on her knees, begging to become a member of the European Common Market. If Austria and England move out, then it is very likely that the free trade area will dissolve. All of this is speculation, but I have no intention to speculate on this matter.

I assume that some people may be piqued because Burnham made the first move. Again, that is just a matter of opinion whether he made the move or Errol Barrow made the move. In any case, Guyana has been in front. I must point out that others had the chance to make the move but perhaps they preferred to play for higher stakes in the

international field and to ignore the immediate area of economic activity. That, again, is a matter of opinion. I still feel that we should attempt to solve our problems in Guyana and in the Caribbean before we attempt to get into the international sphere where we may be used as pawns in some international game bigger than we can afford to play.

I am attempting to jump the gun and show the arguments that are likely to come forward from the Opposition Benches. The least likely arguments to come from those who are against the Motion would be that the capitalists and imperialists will attempt to entrench themselves in our country. But I ask: What would prevent them from entrenching themselves if we were separated?

5 p.m.

At the moment we are separate economic units and what do we find? Canada is wooing one Prime Minister; America is wooing another Minister and keeping them apart. There are jealousies on all sides. Why cannot Jamaica and Guyana get together to attempt to solve their economic problems as regards bauxite and aluminium? We are separate entities and yet the capitalists have entrenched themselves. Therefore, the argument that if we come together the capitalists and imperialists will entrench themselves does not hold water.

Let me revert to the fact that bauxite is to be found in these territories. Up to 1963 Jamaica and Guyana controlled 30 per cent of the world reserves

[MR. THOMAS]

and output of bauxite, but we never smelted one ounce of it. Canada does not produce one ounce of bauxite, but it refines 15 per cent of the world output of aluminium. The United States has 8 per cent of the known reserves, and her output of aluminium is 40 per cent. We see, therefore, that two countries, Canada and the United States, together produce 8 per cent of the bauxite in the world and produce 55 per cent of the world's supply of aluminium while, on the other hand, Jamaica and Guyana together produce 30 per cent of the world's supply of bauxite but not one ounce of aluminium.

There is the question of divide and rule when we are separate. There are slaps on the back and gifts, an aeroplane here and a road there. You are happy because you can do nothing. I warn the Members on the opposite side, who are thinking of nationalising bauxite, that they should start thinking again, because when nationalisation takes place, the big companies Kaiser, Alcan, Alcoa and the others will keep us out of the markets. We will have nothing but mud. They will not allow us to sell in their markets. That is one reason why they will see to it that there is no smelter in this country. If there is a smelter and then nationalisation takes place, people will buy ingots. They do not "make styles" with ingots.

There is still a fear that Dr. Jagan will come back to power and will nationalise industries. I postulate that we will have

to come together with other Caribbean territories. The argument that, if we do so, the capitalists and imperialists will entrench themselves, will not hold, because if we remain separate they will do much better for themselves.

An argument may be put forward that when this Free Trade Agreement for economic integration comes into force, the foreign capitalists will join forces with local capitalists and form a market for their goods. But they do not have to wait for the formation of a customs union or a free trade area to do that. They have already started to do it and they can continue.

Another argument that is likely to be advanced is that the move is political. I say that political motivation is only incidental. Hon. Members could not possibly believe that one would go into an Agreement of this sort and ignore the political consequences of the move. Let us be a little more mature and argue like this: Since man is by nature basically selfish, it is very unlikely that people in the small islands of the Caribbean will flock into Guyana for the sake of some political party when their economic well-being is ignored. Do hon. Members believe that the ordinary inhabitant of Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Lucia or Antigua, will leave his native soil to support a political party? Let us be realistic. To say that this is politically motivated is begging the question, because it is implicit in any such Agreement that political factors will have to be taken into account.

I shall not detain the Assembly much longer. Perhaps this will be my last major speech in this House, but to round off my speech I should say that hon. Members on the opposite side must look at this whole question in the context of economic integration in the Caribbean in the interest of relieving poverty. As stated in the Preamble to the Agreement, the Governments of Antigua, Barbados and British Guiana:

“CONVINCED that such elimination of barriers to trade can best be achieved by the immediate establishment of a Free Trade Area and the ultimate creation of a Customs Union and a viable Economic Community for all the Caribbean Territories who so desire;

HAVE AGREED as follows:”

We are not thinking in terms of a narrow political strategy; we are thinking of the future of an area with people who have a common background of immigration, exploitation and so on. It is necessary for us to think as a mature people and to get our sights on the target. It is only then that I can see economic survival and a forward economic movement in the Caribbean as a whole. [Applause.]

5.10 p.m.

Mr. Luck: This Agreement establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Association constitutes the most significant and far-reaching proposal to be put before this National Assembly for

it seeks the creation of a free trade area within which there would be free and unhindered movement not only of goods but of persons as well. Indeed, so important are the proposals herein contained that it is a matter of deep regret that the Government did not think it right to involve and consult with the official Opposition in all the negotiations which led up to the signing of this Agreement.

In Great Britain, it is common knowledge that both the Government and the official Opposition are intimately bound up in the negotiations which would lead to Britain's entry into the European Common Market. In this country, we of the official Opposition represent the largest single party in this country and we were merely asked by the Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation (Mr. Kendall) to give our comments on the Agreement after it had been signed. In this way, I presume, our Government fulfils its pledge to establish, in this country, a consultative democracy.

We in the People's Progressive Party are not unaware that the creation or the establishment of an economic viability in countries as small as Guyana is a matter of consummate difficulty, if not an impossibility. We are aware that the terms of trade over the years have been changing in a way that is very detrimental to countries such as ours. We are aware that we have to export twice as much to get the same amount of goods as we got previously, and this, more than anything else, is the great problem facing underdeveloped coun-

[MR. LUCK]

tries - the problem of the ruinous change in the terms under which we export our goods abroad. If we were exporting coffee, I would suspect that we would have to export twice as much coffee for the same amount of an ingot of iron as we previously got. This is a great and challenging difficulty.

It is quite clear that we should seek, in this country, to establish a new pattern of trade, new trade relationships, new partners in trade, but our opposition to this Agreement comes not only from the fact that we were not consulted but also from the fact that this idea, great and good as it is, has been perverted for narrow party advantage. I would suspect that because this matter has been brought into the realm of party and personalities, it dooms this very sound idea to failure at the outset. No one can deny the necessity for a wider free trade area than Guyana. We must have larger markets for produce but as I listened to the hon. Minister of Economic Development (Mr. Thomas) in his remarkable and learned discourse, or excursus, on the history of free trade area movement, I was struck at the unreality of it all. As I listened to the hon. Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation (Mr. Kendall), a man of sound commonsense, I was struck by the fact that here we were having an exercise in unreality.

The first thing we should do in seeking a larger free trade area is to consult our trading figures. We should try, based

on an analysis of our trading figures, to go into partnership with those countries with which we exchange the most produce. An analysis of our trading figures shows that this Agreement cannot be considered a serious economic agreement, whatever else it is. I will read from the very nice and handy *Economic Survey of British Guiana* for 1965 published by the Ministry of Economic Development. These are our trading figures for the year 1964: We imported \$150 million roughly. Our imports from Antigua for that year were \$2,058. Our imports from Barbados for the same year were \$364,429, out of a total import of \$150 million roughly. Can anyone doubt that the figures for Barbados and Antigua represent a very infinitesimal amount of Guyanese import for the year 1964?

In 1964 we exported \$160 million. We exported to Antigua a paltry amount of \$541,000 and to Barbados a mere \$2,797,000. Here it is clear that we do no important trade with these countries which are now to be our closest trading partners.

The failure of this Government to involve Trinidad in every stage of the negotiations which led up to the establishment of this Caribbean Free Trade Area must be accounted the most remarkable failure of a Government - remarkable only for failure and confusion. In 1964, we imported from Trinidad and Tobago \$16 million as against Antigua's paltry \$2,000, and we exported to Trinidad and Tobago an amount of \$13,719,000. These are substantial figures and, when taken

against the figures for Antigua and Barbados, they clearly reveal that the failure of the sponsors of this movement to involve Trinidad in this Agreement was a remarkable failure indeed.

5.20 p.m.

For the period from January to September, 1965, we imported from Antigua \$20,000 out of a total import figure of \$127,476,898, and we imported from Barbados \$284,638. It will be clear to the smallest school child that our trade with Barbados is not substantial. If those are our present figures, what are the potentialities for doing increased trade with the territories, sovereign or otherwise? The only imports we could get from Antigua would be Antiguan. In Barbados and Antigua sugar dominates in a way no single industry dominates any other country in the whole world. Indeed, in the little textbooks it is stated that Barbados is the classic and worst example of an island dominated by a single industry.

For the year 1963, there were in all, on the island of Antigua 57,473 persons. This includes all the tourists who were there. Ninety per cent of the exports of Antigua came from sugar. Is that a flourishing place? I have the export figures of that territory for the years 1960 - 1964. In 1960 the export figure for the entire sovereign territory of Antigua - I think it is still a colony - was \$3,755,000. In 1961 it was \$3,800,000. In 1964 it was still \$3,677,000. This is the Antigua with which we are now

to be joined. It has a total export trade of \$3 million whereas our figures exceed \$160,000,000.

The position of Barbados is not much different. The Barbados economy is entirely dependent on sugar, and its principal exports throughout the years have been sugar and Barbadians. I do not mean to insult the Barbadians. By all accounts they are a very estimable people. But let us be frank. Is this an economic proposition? Does this Government seek, as we say it ought to do, the creation of a vast trade area?

We see the necessity for the establishment of new trade patterns and new relationships. But you should not limit your purview merely to those areas formerly administered by the West Indian despots and the British Colonial Office. We want the Caribbean Free Trade Area, but we want all the territories in the Caribbean to be included. Were it not for the Ankoko affair, I would have spoken with much more firmness on this matter. I think that forward-looking Guyanese should look again at this question and not think only in terms of ex-British colonies. I could think of remarkable advantages accruing by the creation of a free trade area with Venezuela.

You will have noted that I said that Barbados and Antigua are entirely dependent on sugar. It is well known that Britain is today trying very hard to enter the European Common Market. Naturally, with Britain's entry to the European Common Market Commonwealth Preference for sugar

[MR. LUCK]

would die, and with the death of Commonwealth Preference for sugar, Barbados and Antigua are dead. Quite clearly this is a political rather than an economic matter.

My party's view of migration to this land is very simple. As intelligent men we know that it is unrealistic and absurd to keep out of use in perpetuity the vast lands which form Guyana. If the lands of Guyana are to be utilised, it must mean some immigration to this territory. But while there will be vast distress in Barbados and Antigua, and while their only cure for that distress so far would be migration to Guyana, despite its vast acreage, as set down in the geography books, the inhabited portions of it are very small and we have in this territory land-hunger as keen and as terrible as is faced in many other countries of the world.

5.30 p.m.

Unplanned migration to Guyana must mean the most serious distress in this country. Some of the great problems in this country, absurd though they may appear, are the high birth rate, the rising population, and the slow movement of our economy. This country has one of the highest unemployment figures in the world - in excess of 20%. Trade unionists in advanced countries, whether in England or the U.S.A., rise up in arms when their unemployment figures exceed 4%. In this country, according to official figures, unemployment exceeds 20%, but in my own estimate

it is over 30%. According to official figures, we have one of the highest unemployment rates in the world.

People have been laid off in the Transport and Harbours Department, because of the squandering on the part of this Government. Today men who have been working in that Department for ten years have been retrenched. Our most important problem at the moment is to deal adequately with our people rather than bring in outsiders for partisan reasons. One of the safety valves of this country has been the migration of some of the finest people to places where they can find work and be treated with the respect due to human beings. How can we dream of importing large numbers of emigrants to this country, when 4,000 Guyanese had to leave this territory in search of employment in 1964?

I will quote verbatim from the *Economic Survey of Guyana*, which was published by this Government. In 1965 even more Guyanese had to leave this country in search of employment. I reiterate that the trade we do with Barbados and Antigua and the potentialities of trade with these countries combined prove positively that this Agreement is not economically motivated. The fact that Trinidad is not involved in these negotiations will spell doom for our people. Even if the objective of this Agreement is to alter the electoral balance in this country, the Government must tell us so.

This party does not object to a wider area within which there can be free movement of goods and of people, but any Agreement, the

main purpose of which is to alter once more the electoral system of this country - we have already had the electoral system altered by the "Sandys' fraud"-is not the way to run a democratic government. It is my respectful submission that this is not the way to successfully run this country, for implicit in this stratagem is the assumption that this Government intends to ride roughshod over half the people of this country whose rights may be pushed aside.

If proposals of this nature had been brought before this House by the P.P.P. Government, the existence of this country would have been at stake. Let us understand that. Some people are proud of their strength, but it becomes increasingly difficult to understand the motivations of the first Government of Independent Guyana. It assumes as its first premise continued hostility against the majority of the people who live in Guyana. That is the premise upon which this Government stands.

Sir, who can forget the days of the P.P.P. Government, when every measure, just or unjust, brought before this House was said to be raising racial tension in this country? No country can be run properly if those who inhabit it take up positions directly opposed to each other and talk about racial tension. [Mr. Bowman: "You ran."] Let me tell Mr. Bowman that, if ever I have to run, it will not be from fear. [Interruption.]

5.40 p.m.

It is the deliberate intention of the hon. Prime Minister to spoil this broadcast.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Chandisingh: I beg to move that the hon. Member be granted an extension to continue his speech.

The Prime Minister: No!

Dr. Ramsahoye: An attempt to make a free trade area in this region is not to be belittled, and I do not for one moment wish to convey the impression that closer association with Barbados and Antigua in an economic trading form is not to be desired. I think it is to be welcomed and we on this side of the House approach our present problems with this idea in view, but since the negotiations for the conclusion of this Agreement were carried on without any reference to the Opposition and we are now asked to debate the Agreement, it is worthwhile for us to tender some measure of advice to the Government, which seeks to have this Agreement ratified.

The Agreement poses many problems. As it is drafted, it is confined to a narrow area of trade and to a particular type of trade. More than any other type of trade, the Agreement contemplates trade in those industrial products which are manufactured in the three territories in circumstances in which much of the raw material is obtained from outside the Area. In other words, the Agreement in form boils down to a pandering to those businessmen in the three territories who carry on that type of activity. I refer, for example, to soap and paint manufacture.

[DR. RAMSAHOYE]

We in this country, however, cannot fail to be aware that there are many more pressing problems than those to be attended to. This country has one of the highest birth rates in the world; it has one of the lowest death rates in the world. At the moment, of every seven of the population five are dependent upon the other two. The population is going to double itself in 18 years. At present there are more children than adults in the population.

These are pressing problems; these are problems which a Government conscious of its duty must necessarily try to grapple with. We on this side of the House have always felt that concentration upon the development of agriculture will in great measure assist us to grapple with these problems. I would never have thought that the Caribbean Free Trade Association in this form would have been a matter which could have taken up so much time of the Government, pressed as it is from all sides with more urgent business.

Even so, we must not forget that, in the industrial world, cold war considerations do have their effects. In this country every effort is being made to stifle trade with eastern bloc countries. The trade which we have tried to maintain with eastern bloc countries is trade in non-strategic goods. It is trade in the type of goods which people in England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are buying from eastern bloc countries. We may find ourselves in this position: Some of the basic

materials referred to in the Schedule at page 27 of the Agreement may be obtained by one or other of those countries carrying out a more independent foreign policy, and that country will then be in a position to compete with us and to undersell us in our own markets.

The foreign policy of this Government is very restrictive. The foreign policy of this Government, however it is dictated, tends to lead us into the position that we have to trade by buying from dearer sources. What is going to happen? Antigua is going to have a special relation with the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom will be responsible for her external affairs and defence, but the United Kingdom is trading with these countries and the United Kingdom will find it very difficult to tell Antigua that she cannot buy some or most of these materials, which are listed on page 27, from cheaper sources. If Antigua is able to buy from cheaper sources, she will then have a big market in Guyana, a market which, fifteen years from now, will be double.

On the other hand, if our foreign policy continues as it is, we will not be able to buy from the cheaper sources and we will not be able to compete for trade in the products contemplated in this Agreement. Free trade in these territories will be one-sided for all practical purposes.

Neutrality has become, among other things, a state of mind no less than a question of fact. Neutrality in its modern concept means an avoidance of the conflicts which lead to monopolies

and which lead to the suppression of smaller nations, which become pawns in the game of the cold war. We need to develop an independent foreign policy.

The hon. Minister is right when he says that we cannot have political strength without economic strength, but we must address ourselves to our internal problems and try to bring about unity, national cohesion and consensus, and try to promote the economic strength of this country. Then we will be able, with our own voice, to hold an independent position in international affairs. So long as we do not try to strengthen our economic system, we will not succeed. No external aid will be given, not a single penny, unless the persons who are giving it are going to dictate how we are to conduct our affairs and our economy both internally and externally. Never forget that!

What we need in this country is a national consensus, an attempt to weld the people together under a responsible leadership, so that we will all be able to work together to strengthen our position internally and then branch off to these things which are definitely related to our foreign policy.

This is one of my greatest sources of fear. It is not that I do not welcome the Agreement. I welcome any attempt to have closer association with Antigua, Barbados and other territories in the Caribbean. We know, however, that if foreign policy is weak, then instruments of this nature serve no purpose and amount, in great measure, to a substantial

waste of time. The problem of competition makes more intractable the problem of poverty. We need to strengthen our own position first; we need to concentrate on our foreign policy.

5.50 p.m.

We must reflect that until we can live internally in such a way that we can maintain political strength, we cannot get any real benefit out of an agreement of this nature, welcome though it is. I have no fear myself that an agreement of this nature is well meant and, given the foundations, trading relationship will improve. I cannot help thinking, however, that in the present position, with the limited areas covered, Guyana is necessarily at a disadvantage.

I might say so for this reason: Antigua is now going to have a wide market, a Guyana market. Barbados is in the same position. Barbados, with a wider population than Antigua, but very much smaller than Guyana, about half the size of Guyana, will now have a big market available to her by virtue of Guyanese population. Guyana, in turn, while sacrificing her own position to these two small countries, will have these small countries to face if she wishes to export consumer goods of the type indicated by these territories. This shows that we have to reflect, we have to consider our own position and we have to consider what sacrifice we will be making. I do not, for one moment, say that we must not sacrifice, but we must make sure that we are getting something in return.

[DR. RAMSAHOYE]

I want to know what we are expected to get in return for this Agreement. If we are not to get anything now, I should like to have a prognosis of the future. Let us know what we will get in return for this Agreement which, *prima facie*, appears to be carrying benefits to Barbados and Antigua only. I am sure that once its attention is directed to this question, the Government should address itself to it.

There are many details in this Agreement which are causing some apprehension. For example, in the provision dealing with deflection of trade in Article 6, reference is made to the occasions upon which trade is deflected and deflection, of course, is related to an increase in imports which would cause serious injury to production which is carried on in the importing Member Territory. What is necessary, in this case, is to make sure not only that the duties and the charges levied by the exporting Member are not out of proportion, but we can only protect ourselves if we keep down costs. We must keep down costs because an exporting Member Territory could easily say, "I am flooding you out with cheaper goods not because the goods are coming into my territory with particular duties or taxes, but because they are coming into my territory, in the first place, at lower costs wherever I can get them from and, therefore, this Agreement does not apply to me. So long as the basic raw materials are coming into my country at a low cost, I can produce and dump them in your country and you cannot quarrel about it."

In the same Article provision is made for referring the matter to the Council for discussion and recommendations may be made, but in a provision of that nature one needs to circumscribe the type of recommendations which can be made. If possible, the provisions should include the type of action which is contemplated when there is deflection of trade. We know how difficult it is to enforce recommendations once you get difficulty. Months pass, letters pass between High Commissioners and Governors and so on; there is a bulk of correspondence and nothing is done. Years and years go by without result. So it is necessary, in my view, for measures which may be taken in the case of deflection of trade to be set out in the Agreement.

If this is not to be done and this Agreement is to be passed in this form, it will be to that extent valueless and the Government will need to go before the Council and have agreement right away on what steps may be taken in the event of deflection of trade. Because of cold war transformation, because of the fact that, today, industrial production in the Eastern countries is going ahead to such an extent that they could, sooner or later, afford to undersell Western producers, we need to know our position very clearly with respect to trade and the purchase of materials.

I notice that this Agreement also contemplates that it is to be signed by Member Territories which are colonies. That appears to be quite clear from the terms of paragraph 1 of Article 35 which states:

" 1. If a Member Territory, upon becoming a sovereign state recognised internationally, intimates its willingness to continue to participate in this Agreement, then, notwithstanding its having become such a state, this Agreement shall continue to have effect in relation to it."

I would have thought that when the supplementary Agreement was being drafted, before ratification, this point ought to have been observed and an appropriate Amendment made to that Article to show that it would be possible for a country with sovereign status to join with a colony in promoting the Agreement. From the terms of this paragraph, it is contemplated that colonies will sign. Having regard to the long delay, two territories have acceded to Independence and there have been no changes to Article 35(1). That, however, is a small matter. It is not so much the form of the thing that matters, it is the substance. I would wish, once more, to commend these points to this Government.

I think that this Government ought not to try to build upon foundations which do not exist. The primary thing is to strengthen the foundation and then we can have the structure built. It looks very much, in this case, as if the Government was trying to do something which is very superficial. That probably was never its intention, but when one looks deeply into the narrow limits of this Agreement, one must be inclined to feel so.

There is also provision, in this Agreement, dealing with the movement of men. I wonder whether it is intended by Article 20 of this Agreement to enable the free movement of people of any sort or type not connected with trade. I would have thought that if this Government was intending, by this Agreement, to allow free immigration between the three territories, it should come out quite clearly and say so. The way this thing is drafted makes it exceedingly ambiguous and paragraph 5 of Article 20, taken by itself, could probably mean that a person from any of the territories is free to move into another territory except for reasons of public order, public health or morality, or national security, and I do not think that that really could have been intended. I think it was intended that people having trading relationships, business relationships, should be able to move from territory to territory, and paragraph 5 must have been framed upon that wide provision.

6 p.m.

If the Government feels that there is to be free-for-all travelling within this country, then it must examine its population figures. Around 1870 about 70% of the population was a working population. In 1916 about 28% of the population in this country was working. In the space of a century the figures have turned around completely and this country now has a population of which, out of every seven people five are dependent upon two, and I do not think for a moment that in our present position we can afford to increase

[DR. RAMSAHOYE]

that figure. In my view, we would be increasing that figure of dependency if we were to use the CARIFTA-Agreement to allow people to come into this country from Barbados and Antigua to solve their population problem.

We would not like to see people come here and suffer. But there are some people who hold the view that this immigrant population will be pawns in a political game, and they will vote in a certain way. Those of us who have followed historical patterns and trends would not place that sort of reliance upon an itinerant population. I would warn this Government that it would be unwise to believe that people coming from Barbados and Antigua under its auspices will vote for it. Immigrants from any country are the underdogs, although I do not think this Government realises that it has given that impression in this country. [Applause.]

Mr. Hubbard: I have been actively engaged in the promotion of regional co-operation among the territories in the Caribbean, such as is envisaged in this Agreement. There is little about the economies of the territories which are to be members of this Agreement, and the needs of the other British territories in the region, which permits a complementary exchange of goods. The basis for any forward-looking economic arrangement must be the possibility of complementary exchange.

I remember well, upon assuming office as Minister of Trade and Industry in the past Govern-

ment, writing territories in this region which produced goods that we normally import at high cost from North America and Europe, giving them figures of the potential market and inviting them to help themselves. The result was a dismal failure because they got around to looking for difficulties. In spite of the fact that there was a Federal Government with a federal transportation system including refrigeration accommodation, the opportunities offered were never taken up.

However, I have had other opportunities to participate with these territories in the operation of Agreements which were in being and had been in being for a long number of years. One such Agreement was the Oils and Fats Agreement. It was an Agreement to protect coconut producers in the area against any calamitous fall in the price of copra, and to guarantee a market comprising the whole of the British Caribbean Territory. The Oils and Fats Agreement crumbled, and I would be surprised to learn that it is still an Agreement with any force at the moment. The formalities are gone through and there is at least one territory in the area whose existence largely depends upon copra. I have been at pains, where St. Lucia is concerned, to find out whether she could not receive the consideration of her sister territories apart from Guyana, which would guarantee her the difference between destitution and prosperity.

These are the attitudes upon which this Government is naive enough to depend for the working and growth of an Agreement whose complexities are numerous, and

which requires a great deal of self-sacrifice from the territories. That is a stumbling block which will be met, and it may be even a rock upon which this ship may founder as all other attempts at closer association foundered, including the Federation of the West Indies upon which Britain placed such high hopes.

6.10 p.m.

I would have expected that the Government, finding the cost of its bureaucracy so expensive that it had to shed two Ministers - possibly it will have to shed more - would have been more careful. I am surprised that the presentation to this House of this Agreement has not been accompanied by an estimate as to what it will cost this country to be a part of this Agreement. It has been my sad experience that in the two years of this Government's life it has concentrated on considerations of status: our High Commissioners must have more than we can afford: our Prime Minister must have more than we can afford. I very much fear that further accretion of the bureaucracy which this will entail may also be approached on the basis of status symbols, and we may find ourselves again having to fork out money that we cannot possibly afford.

My hon. Friend Dr. Ramsahoye, speaking just before me, has emphasised the importance of a realistic trade policy. I have seen nothing in the actions of this Government to suggest that it approaches the all-important question of trade with any realism at all. We had a trade policy which permitted us to get

cheap goods into this country on the basis of open licences for some territories and free imports from others.

North America, to assist the Imperial Crown and the British Treasury, was a closed market and hard currency was reserved for conversion of the pound sterling. The consequence was that goods from North America and from these regions in the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico, which were hard currency areas, were excluded and closed to our importers. We changed all that, because it is hard currency that we have a surplus of. It is in the dollar area where this country has a trading surplus, and we saw no reason for closing the dollar area to importers just to help the pound sterling which was not too keen on helping us. Therefore our regional co-operation has been practical while encouraging the development of trade between the traditional trade partners, and we extended it to include those sections which America loves and that section which America hates, and that was done to the great advantage of the people of this country.

Today we have returned to the old days of monopoly. We find that quotas are being established with all the corruption that that promises and, consequently, added cost to the consumer. It affects not only the cost of the material that we are bringing in, but it also affects the cost of production of goods. It was necessary to put up the retail price index in 21 months by 7.8 points as a result of this Government's trading policy and other maladministration. This Government

[MR. HUBBARD]

6.20 p.m.

has now placed itself at a disadvantage in relation to the other partners in this matter.

This Agreement necessarily involves following further the trend which has been characteristic of this Government. It involves the whittling away of the authority of this country as a whole, because when you enter an Agreement like this you surrender some of your sovereignty and the particulars in which our sovereignty is compromised in this Agreement are grave.

References have been made to the movement of people in general and of the possible political motive behind this, but I would like to refer to Article 20, 6(b) where it states:

"'economic enterprises' means any type of economic enterprises for production of or commerce in goods which are of Area origin, whether conducted by individuals or through agencies, branches or companies or other legal persons."

[It] seems to me that the definition of "economic enterprises" is wide enough to include any possible activity in Guyana including the activity of farming, and it seems to me that under the terms of this Agreement it is possible that the Governments of Barbados and Antigua may contend that citizens of Antigua and Barbados are entitled to equal consideration with Guyanese citizens for settlement on land development schemes carried out in this country. [Interruption.]

I have to thank the legal adviser, but I do not think that lawyers will be working this Agreement. The politicians will be working it and, bearing in mind, the surrender of sovereignty which this Agreement entails and, bearing in mind, the majority vote which is operative for the Agreement, I am slightly terrified that money which we spend on land development schemes will bonify lands that Barbadians, Antiguan, and citizens of whatever other territory may join in this Agreement, may benefit from by their claim that they have every right to consideration in respect of those economic enterprises as have Guyanese.

This Agreement has little to recommend it while we have no idea of what it is going to cost us to operate it. The hon. Member, Mr. Luck, quoted the figures of trade between the territories concerned. I admit that the Agreement contemplates going beyond those territories concerned but, as the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye has said, the emphasis is upon the protection of manufacturing industries which have been developed as a result of special incentives. A whole section of the Agreement deals with that and with the other question of movement of persons. The term "economic enterprises" is defined so widely as to catch ordinary farming.

We do not know what this is going to cost us. We should like to be told something about the establishment which it is envisaged shall run this Agreement. Antigua is to be the headquarters and we should like to know what

it is going to cost us. Whom are we going to send to Antigua and what are the Antiguan going to do about providing offices and all the rest of things?

I want to say, too, that the Caribbean Free Trade Association Agreement may be used as an excuse for continuing the present trade pattern which has developed since this Government came into office. We must look outward; we must move outward and our argosies must sail further and further carrying the produce of our land. We must make ourselves self-sufficient and we must, at the same time, ensure that our trade is so oriented that we give and get in return, on terms favourable to ourselves.

This business of selling our rice to a broker and paying him a commission to buy it, while he makes all the profit on the sale and we do not even get the credit of having supplied the rice to the territories where it goes, is most unsatisfactory. I thought that in the New Year, the new Minister of Trade would come to a new understanding of the realities of our trade and that he would upset this little apple-cart so that some of the profit would come to us and not all of it would go to the Americans.

As I said, I fear that this Agreement will be used to continue the exclusion of Cuba and to continue the exclusion of the socialist bloc countries from whom we can buy and sell to advantage. I should like to remind this House that it was because of our trade with Cuba that the price of fuel oil to our Electricity Corporation came down. I see that my fuel charges

are rising on my electricity bill and I am beginning to pay for the absence of Cuban competition in oil. In consequence of the low price of oil which the Cubans were able to supply us, we were able to fix a ceiling price for fuel oil for those companies which were in the habit of buying oil at high prices and obtaining a rebate somewhere else for the difference, free of income tax.

I do not know whether the Minister is continuing to protect the income tax and general interest of this company by continuing this practice. I do not know; I do not have access to files, but I recommend that the Minister should look at this and do what is necessary.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the time which the Government has spent on this could have been better spent on promoting more urgent tasks for this country. I should like to say that, in spite of his eulogy, the hon. Minister Mr. Thomas, spent a great deal of time comparing unlike things. The point about the Common Market is that members of the Common Market Agreement constitute complementary economies, while the members of this Trade Association are members constituting competitive economies. We learnt at school that the first fallacy is to compare unlike things.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Thursday, 29th December, 1966, at 2 p.m."
[Mr. Bissenber.]

Adjourned accordingly at
6.30 p.m.

