

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 7]

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

31st Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Monday, 29th November, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Health (Absent - on leave)

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

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

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

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

The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Co-operatives and
Community Development (Absent - on leave)

Appointed Ministers

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

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

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

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

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

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

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

Other Members

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

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C.B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C. (Absent)
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P., (Absent)
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.,
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.,
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholu Persaud (Absent - on leave)

Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. L.D. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

United Force

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

(Absent - on leave)

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

OFFICERS

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair*]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**Leave to Member**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted for today's sitting to the hon. Member Mrs. Da Silva.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS**TOLL GATES ON CORENTYNE HIGHWAY**

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) (Mr. Ramsaroop): I wish, sir, under this item to make a personal explanation on the statement made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on Friday, 26th November, 1971, when he sought the leave of this House to move its adjournment on a matter of urgent public importance relative to the Toll Stations to be constructed on the Corentyne Road.

During the statement made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition the implication was clear that when I suggested to him to defer the debate on his motion dealing with the Toll Station to Monday, 29th November, I was doing so because I knew that the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply had arranged to hold meetings with certain organizations over the weekend on the same issue and that my suggestion for a deferment was motivated by an intention to allow my colleague the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply to hold the said meetings before the Hon. Opposition Leader's motion was debated.

I wish to refute this suggestion and to state to this honourable House that at the time when I spoke to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition I did not know about the impending meetings to be held by the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, in truth, the first time I became conscious of this fact was subsequent to the telephone conversation I have had with the Leader of the Opposition.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 6/1971

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approved of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 6 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 30th November, 1971, totaling \$9,207,917.

[The Minister of Finance]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, you will recall that when the Adjournment was taken on Friday last, we were on item 64, page 10. We will now continue with page 11. Will hon. Members who wish to speak, kindly indicate.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 65.

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): I would like to speak on this item.

Mr. Wilson: Items 65 and 67.

The Chairman: Page 12. The item is the same, and also page 13.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Page 11, item 65, Personal Emoluments. I only want to ask a few questions. According to this item it would appear that the Elections Officer is being strengthened, more people are going to be employed, and there will be regarding and probably changing of officers, and so on. Could the hon. Minister of Home Affairs tell us if some of the

officers who are in very senior positions will be removed and new officers placed in their positions, and secondly, in view of this extensive provision for changes and probably regarding and creation of new positions, if the Government contemplates holding elections early in the new year or at any stage during 1972? If the Government is considering holding elections in the new year, will the hon. Minister tell us if any step will be taken to have a new list of voters, particularly because of the strong condemnation of the present voters' list, charges that thousands of names on the lists appear but in fact those persons are not existing?

The list has got the names of persons who are under 21 years in violation of the various Acts dealing with elections. What steps is the Government taking, if any, to change the provision of the Elections Ordinance dealing with proxies in view of the strong criticism from the Opposition and, particularly, to revert to the original provision of 1961 on this question? If the Government has in mind to correct the many areas of corruption and fraud within the election machinery and to hold elections on the basis of fairness and justice, then, as a Member of this Parliament I will be justified this afternoon to lend my support to this provision on the estimate. But if the Government has absolutely no intention of correcting what is within the election machinery, proxies, phantom voters, names of non-existing people, persons under age, then I do not think that as a Member of this Parliament I can vote for this provision.

2.25 p.m.

We are going to vote money here to perpetuate fraud; we are going to vote money here to continue to subscribe to a fraudulent elections machinery. This is a matter that is fundamental in this country, fundamental in the sense that unless the population of this country can be assured by legislative measures, and by administrative measures, that the machinery of elections will be fair, then the whole country will continue to go to ruin.

Already we face a serious economic crisis; already the population is in a state of uncertainty. The only way by which the situation and atmosphere can change is if the

Government is prepared and willing to make the necessary basic corrections within the framework of the elections machinery.

It is only if the hon. Minister gives an assurance this afternoon that these things will be corrected and that this is a move to put the elections machinery on a basis of fair play, only then can I support and vote for this provision. Otherwise, I am afraid that I cannot support it.

Mr. Ram Karran: We are asked to vote here a very small sum of \$1, but as one will see the legend stretches over three pages of the Estimates with the necessary explanations. This is merely a reorganization of the office but, like my friend who has just spoken, one wishes to know whether the Government, having learned from its experience in 1964 and 1965, and having tried unsuccessfully to hold back the waves of criticism against it, justified criticisms of rigging and dishonest elections, proposed to continue with this machinery or to revert to the system under which elections were never questioned and where the machinery, even though it had been created in colonial times, had built-in security against frauds of this kind.

It will be recalled that during the last election more voters were cast in one constituency than voters were registered there. Surely the Elections Commission, or the registration section, ought to have been in a position to explain that departure from the normal set-up.

In this House, outside of this House and even beyond the shores of Guyana there has been widespread demand for a change in the electoral system, not necessarily a change from proportional representation to the first-past-the-post system, although no one can deny that that is the system to which we had grown accustomed; that is the system that was regarded as fair and proper. But, in order to satisfy our friends across the Table who could have won elections under no fair system, they stumbled on this Tasmanian system of first-past-the-post.

I remember that my friend the hon. Prime Minister said this when he was in the Opposition. [**The Prime Minister:** “Describe me properly. I am not your friend.”] He went

all the way to Tasmania to bring that system to Guyana. I am sure that it is not working as it is supposed to work, or as it worked in Tasmania or in any other country where proportional representation is the system used.

In this country, as I said a while ago, more votes were cast in one district than the number of voters registered there. In the Pomeroon district, ballot papers were tied up in rubber bands and inserted in the box. The same kind of thing happened in all the constituencies where elections were fought and in the local government elections, where the ballot boxes were tampered with by people who are very close to the People's National Congress, people who are activists in the People's National congress and some of whom are civil servants and very junior civil servants at that.

We would like to revert to the system where Magistrates in the districts had charge of these elections. Even though the judicial system is being manipulated by my friends across the Table, nevertheless there should be very senior people in charge of the electoral machinery so that, in the case of impeachment, they have something to lose. We would prefer this to the employment of hacks of the Government, with the most junior employees being in charge of this machinery.

Persons from outside the country have come here and have examined the system as it obtained here and abroad and they have come out in very clear criticism of the Government. This Government does not seem to care what happens in Guyana because it feels that, for the time being, it can contain the criticism, but it is concerned about what takes place outside the country.

Most of the people in the United Kingdom and in the United States who are interested in these things have seen the film "The Making of a Prime Minister". What was meant was "The Making of a Puppet of Anglo-American Imperialism."

If the Government is concerned with what is happening outside of Guyana, then it can be assured that its attempt to streamline this machinery for greater rigging is not going to go uncriticised, that it is going to be criticised not only in Guyana; its friends or so-called “friends” abroad are going to know what is happening here.

Somebody ought to explain what is meant by the reorganisation that is shown here. We ought to be told whether the Government proposed to change the system from a dishonest one to an honest one. That is all I am asking because if fair elections are held in this country, then there is no doubt at all that the People’s National Congress will remain in the background.

There is, of course, the question of proxies. It will be recalled that during the last Election the Chief Registration Officer, or the Chief Elections Officer, was unable or unwilling, or, at the diktat of the Government, refused to make public the number of proxies that were cast when requested to do so by the Opposition and the voters.

Obviously that is the skeleton in the cupboard. I challenge the hon. Minister of Home Affairs at this late stage to declare how many proxies were cast in the last Election. From that alone, any decent-minded person – and I cannot see any cross the Table – will recognise that there was intense rigging at the Election. We stand for fair elections, we stand for decency in Government, and we challenge our friends across the Table that if they do believe like us, in fair elections and in decency, then they will lay the cards on the table and let the Guyanese people be the judge.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Dr. Jagan.

Dr. Jagan: Decline.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: Decline.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Clarke): Mr. Chairman, the provision at item 6 is to meet the cost of restructuring and reorganising the Department dealing with National Registration and Elections. These proposals were arrived at after an examination by the Public Service Ministry, which Ministry is responsible for putting up firm proposals as to the structure of any part of the Administration.

The hon. Member Mr. Persaud asked whether this is a sign that elections are going to be held next year. All I should like to say in reply to that is that it is the hon. Prime Minister whose prerogative it is to tell this House when elections are to be held.

The hon. Member Mr. Persaud also made reference to the fact that this Department is concerned with the revision of Voters Lists and so on. That is true. When that time comes the hon. Member and his party will have an opportunity to make the necessary representations in keeping with the laws governing registration and elections.

We have become accustomed in this House to the allegations by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran. Therefore, I would say nothing in respect of those allegations.

The Chairman: Page 13 from item 66 to 69.'

Mr. Ram Karran: May I speak on item 67?

Mr. Wilson: Items 66 and 67.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak on both items. In doing so the first point I should like to make is to ask the Government to let the National Registration Office reflect in the office what is the ethnic composition of the country outside. When you enter that office you think that the people there were appointed by ASCRIA. I remember ASCRIA refused admittance to one Mrs. Chase to a lecture. I think that the Government must take serious steps to change that kind of appearance. It does not give confidence to all the people of Guyana – One People, One Nation, One Destiny. It does not sound true. You are inclined to think that it is a mockery they are making of our motto.

I should like to suggest that there should be a new registration exercise. One of my reasons for saying this is that only recently it was reported in the Press that a large number of photographs were spoilt. In one case I think only one come out correct out of nearly 2,000 photographs taken. This certainly shows great inefficiency and perhaps it is because of the recruitment policy of the Government why there is so much inefficiency. If people are being employed because of their ethnic origin and not with an eye for efficiency and qualifications it is easy to understand why such results should follow.

On the question of new lists the Minister in his reply to the criticisms on the last item said that he is accustomed to the charge of rigging and so he would not worry to say anything. The reason for this is because he cannot give any answer that we can believe. At least it shows that the Government is suffering some qualms of conscience why the hon. Minister has not been able to answer. At one time when the hon. Member Mr. Hoyte was the Minister of Home Affairs he could have openly said that things are being done properly, but he cannot say this. This Government has reached the stage where the thing is so obvious that in trying to justify the answer it will only make themselves ridiculous. The new Lists must be got out because people have no confidence in the Lists. There are many instances of inaccuracies or fraud in the way the Lists have been made up. As the hon. Member Mr. Persaud mentioned on those Lists there are a large number of persons who do not exist at all. Several of them are cases where persons have died, who have been hanged and actually voted.

I think that the Government should make a very serious effort to change this attitude if there is going to be confidence in elections. The entire country knows that the Government is in office by fraud; we know that they intend to keep themselves there by repression. But it would not do this country or the Government any good to take up such an attitude.

Look what happened the other day when we had the Local Government elections. In several cases the Opposing List secured just a few as thirty-five votes whereas the number of persons making up the families of those candidates far exceeds the number - -

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Wilson does this follow that the families voted for the candidates?

Mr. Wilson: Well we assume so of course, sir.

The Chairman: But you are making categorical statements.

Mr. Wilson: Or even the number of people who sponsor the list, in case where you have to get fifty or sixty people to sponsor the List, it means that even the persons who sponsored those List would not vote for the candidate? When you put that alongside - -

The Chairman: I think the hon. Member is more experienced than that.

Mr. Wilson: I know in one case at Albouystown, Georgetown South one candidate went to vote and he was told that somebody had voted by proxy for him already, and he did not sign any proxy. That is in the 1969 Local Government Elections.

Another criticism is the registration of overseas persons. It might be good or necessary to register Guyanese overseas for certain purposes, but not for the purpose of elections. Because of mismanagement of the affairs of this country, Guyanese taxpayers are saddled with a burdensome cost of living, unemployment, and a lack of certain services. The Guyanese overseas do not suffer these things, therefore, this is one of the changes which, I think, the Government should think of bringing about if there is to be confidence in elections, if the country is to be a democratic country. Because elections form the basis of democratic government; if the elections are fraudulent, then everything else will be fraudulent. It is no wonder we hear of so much corruption all through the fabric of the administration, so much so that one of their staunch supporters has named two Ministers for what is considered improper. If we are to be a truly democratic country, the Government must bring about the changes indicated, particularly for election purposes.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 67, National Registration. I observe under this Head that we are spending more than \$109,000, double the original estimate, after the sum of \$25,000, had been approved in supplementary provision. In other words, the voted provision at the beginning of the year was \$50,000, added to which was \$25,000, now we are asked to vote \$113,160. I wonder whether the Minister can tell us whether it was incompetence that caused the poor estimated or whether anything unusual has occurred in this Ministry to cause such a large sum to be put in at the end of the year. They have some experience now. At the beginning of the year, they must have calculated how many people would be registered and transferred from the register from 14 years to above 14, and there would have been an estimate to calculate how many would be coming to the voting age, how many dead people probably would be required to vote later on, and those who are there. Why, after having asked for supplementary provision during the year, come back at this last minute to ask for \$113,160? Can I assume, unless the Minister can say otherwise, that it is sheer incompetence, or that something unforeseen has happened?

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, I would have expected a more serious debate from senior Members of the Opposition and I would have expected some degree of honesty from the hon.

Member Mr. Wilson. It is time that we stop using this forum, where there is privilege, to talk about race and that sort of thing. The hon. Member Mr. Wilson has descended into the depths of racial mudslinging. The hon. Member ought to be ashamed of himself. He, in the end, agreed that it was necessary for nationals overseas to be registered, and his colleague, the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran disagrees with him for agreeing with the Government to register, and says that we did not anticipate, because we were incompetent, that we were going to have this exercise.

If there was no provision made for the revision of the register, provision has to be sought. The \$25,000 which was sought was an amount advanced from the Contingencies Fund and we are now seeking the full provision for the revision exercise. The hon. Member is aware that we are even now concluding the registration of those persons who have become eligible to be put on the National Register, and at the same time, we are upgrading and clearing the registers overseas of those persons who have either left those countries and returned home, or have left this country for those countries since the last registration. It is necessary for us to keep these lists up to date and this is what we are doing. The hon. Member must know that we keep lists of our residents overseas for many reasons, to facilitate those persons in addition to the other matters mentioned by him and he must also know that our Guyanese who live overseas benefit from this registration and they are glad to have themselves registered.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, I would like to make an observation on the statement made by the hon. Minister. He gives the impression to the House that this side of the House is simply telling falsehoods, but there is evidence which cannot be denied and which the Government should have investigated if it was not true, because it has done a lot of harm to the reputation of this Government and the country, that is, that people who were on the register, whether it is called the registration register, or the voters list, were not supposed to have been there. Their own organizer in the United Kingdom admitted in the television programme that he had registered 41 persons in Wolverhampton but there were over 200 persons on the list. How they got there, he could not say.

That is what we are talking about. People who checked the lists, researchers, said it was a disgrace that such a list was compiled at all. It went through the process of national registration and then it was christened with some water and made into a Voters' List.

What is being done about it now to see that this bogus affair does not continue? If the Minister says that we are making false allegations, would the Government agree to a United Nations team, from the Human Rights Commission, coming here to examine what is going on behind the barbed wire fences at Kingston?

Mrs. Jagan, when a member of the Elections Commission, gave several instances of people who should not have been on the register. When she wanted to have the records perused, she was not allowed to and that was because the Chairman of the Elections Commission refused. He went along with the Government. Naturally, he would go along with the Government, because he has a sinecure earning of nearly \$1,000 a month to do nothing. This is how these people corrupt not only the list but the country and they have the gall to come to this House and talk nonsense about the Opposition making all kinds of charges.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I shall not permit you to refer to the speeches and statements made by Ministers as nonsense. I think we have agreed by convention that we will not say anything disparaging against members of the House.

Dr. Jagan: If it is not nonsense, it is sheer rubbish. The Government knows that there are many areas under which fraud was committed in this country. Four wads of ballot papers with rubber bands came out of a ballot box! Why do they not explain these things?

We are saying that the Government wants to set up a one-party state. The Prime Minister said the other day at some meeting that they have other means of staying in power. Let them set it up, instead of going through this farce.

We have already said that the Government is carrying on another farce in this Parliament. Last week we made this charge. Dispense with Parliament! If you want to have a one-party state, you have the power; you have the mind; you have the police. Go ahead and set it up! Do not go through the farce of saying you want democratic elections, you want people to vote, and become the laughing-stock of the world and yet come here hypocritically to pretend that everything is right and proper. If everything is right and proper and they want the Speaker to have a say, then let them have impartial people to inquire into this exercise which is going on at the moment.

The Minister of Home Affairs(Mr. Clarke): The hon. Leader of the Opposition has said nothing new, sir.

The Chairman: Page 14. (Pause) Page 15. I would like all hon. Members to pay attention because I am not going back.

Mr. Ram Karran: I was paying attention all the time, sir. I was trying to draw your attention to the fact that I would like to speak on items on page 14. I was actually on my feet when you turned to page 15.

The Chairman: Page 14.

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to ask questions on items 70 and 71.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. Members that recently a number of persons, either in prison, as remanded prisoners, or as persons recently released from prison, have lost their lives.

I refer to the man who allegedly hanged himself from a door knob, Amin. Then there was one Christian who was released from prison after his trial for the murder of a prominent citizen in Georgetown. There are about five persons who lost their lives in circumstances that are not very clear. We read in the newspapers today that two policemen were criminally responsible - -

The Chairman: Hon. Member, what has that to do with clothing and bedding?

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 70 deals with Fuel and Light. Page 15.

Mr. Ram Karran: We have dealt with some of the items on this page.

The Chairman: The only items to be debated on page 15 are items 75 and 76. (Pause) Page 16 from item 86 onwards. Perhaps it would be better if we could go back to page 3 and complete those items for which the Prime Minister is responsible. Could hon. Members refer to page 32, items 13 to 15. Will hon. Members who wish to speak kindly so indicate.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Items 13, 14 and 15.

The Chairman: The hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Mr. Chairman, the legend against item 13, Personal Emoluments, states:

“to provide on the fixed establishment for the creation with effect from 1st July, 1971, inclusive, of one post of Agricultural Field Assistant on the A 32 salary scale.”

I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister, since it is clear that the person has already been appointed, if he can indicate where this person is stationed. Is there need for more persons to give the necessary assistance to the person who has been assigned these duties?

Item 14, the question of transport and travelling. The legend states:

“to provide for the payment of increased air-fares . . .”

This has come about because of the fact that the Guyana Airways Corporation has increased the charges for air transport to the Interior and other parts of the country. I wonder if this is Government's calculated policy in increasing to penalize those Amerindians in the interior. Government is using the air transport more than anyone else since we have observed that because of the increase in rates imposed by the Guyana Airways Corporation many persons have not been using the transport facilities.

From the inception of the Corporation it has not been showing any particular profits. In fact, it has been running at a loss every year and the Government has been subsidising it to the tune of \$150,000 every year. I wonder whether this is not another means by the Government of trying to help the Corporation to show profits.

Item 15, the question of telephone facilities. As you will observe nearly every Ministry there has been a considerable increase also in the use of telephone charges, and nearly every Ministry has been asking for substantial sums to pay telephone bills. Is this another case of inefficiency on the part of this Government, because what is virtually created by the use of telephones every often result in a lot of - - - chair generals. That is why no doubt the Government is finding a lot of difficulty in getting officers of the Government to go in the country areas to give the necessary assistance to the Co-operative farms and Co-operative Societies and various other departments of Government. They just discuss matters over the telephone which, to a great extent, is heard with one ear and goes through the other.

I wonder whether it is a wise move by the Government to provide such facilities. I hope the hon. Prime Minister will be able to give some explanations on this matter.

The Prime Minister(Mr. Burnham): Mr. Chairman, with respect to item 13, this post of Agricultural Field Assistant is being created to accommodate a Youth Officer who has been specially trained at the Guyana School of Agriculture and whom we would like to keep in the Youth Division so that in her working – actually it is a lady – amongst the youth in the district where she is stationed – West Coast Berbice – she will be able to encourage, advise and assist youths in terms of agricultural production. We are hoping that eventually we will find more and more of our Youths Officers and would-be Youth Officers being prepared to do courses of this type and accordingly to give them the same appointment opportunities as they would have got if, having qualified at the Guyana School of Agriculture, they went into the Ministry of Agriculture. It is an attempt really to kill two birds with one stone. Here you would have the type of officer who is trained, so to speak, in the social sciences and also in the agricultural sciences. I think that answers the main queries on this item.

So far as transport and travelling are concerned the legend I would have thought explains. In the first place, there has been an increase in the rates for individuals travelling, save in special cases, by Guyana Airways Corporation planes and also there was promulgated a short while ago an increase in the travelling allowances for all officers in the Public Service as a result of a report and investigation, consequent upon representations made by the Public Service Association.

I may thank my hon. Friend Mr. Balchand Persaud for informing this House of a fact of which some of his colleagues are unaware. I quote him verbatim: “From its inception the Guyana Airways Corporation has been incurring losses”. His history I am sure is good and I will remind him of the fact that it was the P.P.P. Government which established the Guyana Airways Corporation. His statement is accurate that from its inception the G.A.C. has been making losses and as a result of a careful investigation and overhaul recently we have decided that the Guyana Airways Corporation should operate differently. Economic rates and fares will be charged and in so far as it is considered necessary to keep any fares below the economic level the subsidy would come from the Ministries involved, as I explained when we were discussing the Guyana State Corporations Bill. For instance, it has been decided that the charges on

agricultural goods and commodities originating in the Hinterland should not be up to the economic level, so far as the producer is concerned. A proper economic rate would however be paid, the difference between what is paid by the producer responsible for transporting, and the economic rate being paid by the Ministry of Agriculture. This point was made earlier and I am happy for the opportunity of emphasizing it on the discussion of this item.

So far as the telephone rentals are concerned let me be the first to concede that there has been some tardiness in the submission of accounts in this case as in several other cases. Part of this sum which is being sought on this Paper is referable to an account submitted rather late for the 1970 indebtedness. The rest is referable to the greater use of the telephone.

Mr. Chairman, I agree that certain officers ought to get out into the field, but, on the other hand, it must be accepted that certain matters can be more expeditiously dealt with by telephone as by physical visit. It may be observed that the telephone is a more expeditious means of doing business than correspondence. It may be further observed that this particular Ministry's activities have widened in scope and in geographical extent. For instance, it is necessary for the Permanent Secretary or the proper officer to be in communication with Tumatumari from time to time. And what is true about Tumatumari is also true in some cases of Youth Officers who may be stationed as far away from Georgetown as the Berbice River. However, the Permanent Secretary has instructions to see to it that no irregular uses for personal reasons are made of the telephone facilities in this Ministry.

The Chairman: Page 4, items 16 to 20.

Mr. Teekah: Item 18.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Items 17 and 18.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 16 to 18.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 16, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries. May I with respect enquire from the hon. Prime Minister the reason for the increase in this Head from \$18,000 by an additional sum of \$8,300, and at the same time would he tell us how many ministerial private secretaries are employed and what is their rate of pay?

Item 17, I noticed for the maintenance and operation of vehicles, we have gone far higher than the original voted provision. Surely, the Ministry would have known, with the number of vehicles on hand, roughly, how much is required for the maintenance and operation of those vehicles. During this year, there was nothing extraordinary that would have required them to run vehicles more often. Surely, in one year, a vehicle could not have deteriorated to the point where they would have had to rehabilitate it at great expense. There must be some reason, unless there was incompetence in the Prime Minister's Office, as is evident in so many other offices, for them to require \$10,000 under supplementary provision previously and at the end of the year to come for the sum of \$14,800, merely putting in the estimate, "Voted provision inadequate on account of increased maintenance."

If the increased maintenance becomes uneconomic, it is time for the Government to dispose of those vehicles and acquire new ones. It should not squander the money, as is obvious, and tell us increased maintenance. Why? Do you want the vehicles to be sprayed twice a year? Do you want to run them more often than is necessary? I see them. I live in a place outside the general pathway to business and I see vehicles marked, "Office of the Prime Minister" – they do not come to me – running all over the place. In Hubu, one sees Government vehicles running. For what purpose? It is clear that the Government is not keeping a strict eye on the economy and vehicles are running helter-skelter with their friends, and the Prime Minister threatens he is not going to answer the questions. They do not care a hang about what is going to happen to the taxpayers of this country.

Looking at the other one, item 18, Personal Emoluments, out of an original vote of \$2,842,220, what is happening here? We do not have Ankoko; we do not have any threat from

Venezuela; we have no threat from Surinam. Why in this peaceful Year of Our Lord, the Prime Minister comes and asks for over \$1 million? Is the G.D.F. being increased? Let us know. We do not want to know their secrets. If so, by hoe many? Are they going to make more sergeants of the privates?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Speaking on item 17, where the government is seeking an additional sum of \$14,800 for the increased maintenance of vehicles, the original voted provision was \$12,000, and then there was a previous supplementary provision of \$10,000. I guess the main reason for the misuse of vehicles is that there is no proper supervision of the use of the vehicles. Certainly, the Prime Minister can give explanations on these matters and he can help himself by finding the answers to save the taxpayers some money, by ensuring that the vehicles are properly used. Then there is the problem of maintenance and servicing of the vehicles. What checks do they have to ensure that these vehicles are properly maintained and serviced? Normally, a person owing a vehicle services the vehicle once a month, or more than once a month. Many of the chauffeurs are not persons who care very much about the taxpayers' money and they handle Government vehicles in a very abusive manner. The Government has to be able to ensure that the chauffeurs use the vehicles properly.

Vehicles are seen on numerous occasions all over the place, when they are not on Government missions. It is important that Government pays some attention to ensure that the vehicles are properly used. Vehicles must be used on Government missions, not for personal use. Sometimes, late in the night 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, Government vehicles are seen all over the place, and more surprisingly, vehicles are not parked in front of Government institutions. They are parked in front of various rum shops, bars, various sporting houses. There is need for more supervision as to the use of these vehicles.

Speaking on item 18, \$1,318,000 is being sought. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran asked whether there has been an increase in the number of recruits in the G.D.F. or whether there has not been an increase but persons have been promoted, and as a result of this there is need for

additional expenditure. I wish to make the point that since the 1969 Budget, the Government has been spending about 45 to 50 per cent of the taxpayers' money on the administration of the country. One would expect the Government to be in a position to budget in such a way that it can save money for development and more emphasis would be placed on persons seeking self-employment. It seems to me the Government is taking on the challenge of employing more than 50 per cent of the work force. Is this a wise policy?

While the Government is building the bureaucracy, while the Government is saying that the G.D.F. is doing self-help, painting schools, etc., the fact is that these people are being paid from government funds, therefore one sees more expenditure because the more people the Government recruits for the G.D.F. the more expenditure there will be, and the taxpayers have to pay with very little result coming out of it. The Government has been saying that the soldiers have been planting and growing their own food.

3.25 p.m.

Where are the farms? There is supposed to be a farm on the East Bank of the Demerara River. If you pass by you will see only structures there. The place is full of razor grass and nothing is being cultivated there. You may see a small patch of land being dug, you may see a few dry ochro trees, but nothing else.

I want to know where the members of the G.D.F. are really planting crops. It satisfies the Government to spread propaganda, but we do not see the things they talk about in reality. The Government is spending large and larger sums of money to maintain the bureaucracy.

Why does the Government need to have a larger army? Special reserves can be trained and they can perform the normal duties thus saving the taxpayers' money. The people themselves can be earning a livelihood if the Government will give them the right incentive in agriculture.

We see the bureaucracy of the Government increasing every day and more money has to be spent on the state apparatus which is getting more suppressive. In other words, it is not only that the Government is spending money to get people to help to build Guyana. The Government is spending money in the army and in the Police Force for the purpose of maintaining the bureaucracy and the status quo.

I think that such a policy is very wrong and I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can offer some explanation as to what the Government intends to do. Does it want to have 50 per cent of the Budget spent on the Administration and 20 per cent of that used on the security forces? Surely this should not be. I hope that the Prime Minister can offer suggestions.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, I am very much alarmed and concerned at this request for \$1,380,000 for the Guyana Defence Force under item 18, Personal Emoluments, since the sum of \$2,842,220 has already been voted for this year.

It is a fact that we have had much quiet and peace on our borders since the signing of Agreements between Guyana and Surinam. There have not been any skirmishes recently. One must therefore enquire why this huge sum is to be voted for the G.D.F.

If the army is expanding it means that all Guyanese must be concerned because the Government is becoming more and more unpopular every day. One wonders whether a showdown between the Government and the people is to be expected. All democratic-minded Guyanese must be concerned about the statement made by the Prime Minister at the Critchlow Labour College the other night. He said that he had other means of retaining power than getting people to come here to vote for him. I therefore ask whether this is the means the Prime Minister is talking about, a huge army to maintain himself in power? Is it that the next drama to unfold in Guyana will be the Establishment versus the people?

If this is the next drama to be expected we must all be very much concerned and we must all speak out, because any Government which is gathering a large army must be looked at very seriously. This huge sum for the army must be the cause for great concern. It does not augur well for the future of Guyana in the light of the Prime Minister's most recent pronouncement at Critchlow Labour College.

The Chairman: The hon. Prime Minister

The Prime Minister(Mr. Burnham):Mr. Chairman, with respect to item 16, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries, I would require notice to provide information with respect to the number and the remuneration of each of the persons paid under this subhead. May I be permitted to observe that it covers not only the Ministerial Private Secretaries, which post was first created in 1961, but also the clerical, manipulative and messengerial staff. The work-load was such that these had to be increased.

So far as item 17, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles, in concerned, this extra expenditure has been brought about, I am told, largely because of very heavy expenses on vehicles using the Bartica/Tumatumari road, which is in a very bad condition and the deterioration of which had not been anticipated. Government, however, hopes to do something about the condition of that road during the next year and there is the concomitant hope that maintenance expenditure on repair of vehicles will decrease.

I have listened with interest to the accusations – perhaps some of them justified – made by the hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud, about improper use of Government vehicles, where Government vehicles are seen outside of places of entertainment. There are occasions on which that would not be an improper use, but there are occasions on which that would be an improper use. All I can do is to ask my hon. Friend to assist us in these instances so that the culprits may be brought to justice and disciplined by dismissal for irresponsible and improper use of Government property.

I would say that we did not receive any assistance from the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran. Says he, he sees a Land Rover with the mark on it "Office of the Prime Minister" all over the place. Now there is only one such Land Rover and that Land Rover is used primarily, though not exclusively, for distributing Cabinet memoranda. And Ministers are not restricted to living in Georgetown.

If, instead of indulging in a tirade of calumny, he were to show the public interest which his friend Mr. Balchand Persaud is disclosing today, we shall again be willing to listen and to take careful note of the complaints that he makes; we shall be willing to act and, if necessary, to call him as a witness of truth, we hope, in disciplinary investigations with respect to these matters.

With respect to item 18, Personal Emoluments, this increase has been necessitated by an increase in the size of the Guyana Defence Force. Before I deal with the significance of this, I am reminded of the old quip "There is none so blind as he who will not see." When my otherwise reliable and hon. Friend, Mr. Balchand Persaud, says that he does not see any evidence of farming and then, as if to correct himself apologetically speaks about some old drying ochros, as Minister of Defence I would like to invite him to accompany me on Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock to visit the farm on the East Bank which is run by the Guyana Defence Force. I will supply Government transport, of course. I am entitled to that and I will supply any form of refreshment which he may require or find necessary so that he may be enlightened, literally and metaphorically.

3.35 p.m.

But, Mr. Chairman, there is a great deal of craking about the sum asked for here. This sum asked for here amounts to slightly over \$4 million. This against a current budget of \$102,584,107, it means that this is a total expenditure of less than 4 per cent of the Current Budget on Defence. Nowhere else in the world do you find such a low expenditure and it is all

the more to be considered low because of the, shall we say, non-normal defence duties carried out by the Guyana Defence Force like indulging in the Advance Guyana Campaign, helping to build the road from Mahdia to Annai, assisting in the closing of the dam at the Tumatumari hydro-electric power works, and other activities like that. I think it is about time the public recognizes that this Government expends on the Army less than 4 per cent of the Current Budget.

The Chairman: Page 5. Items 29 and 30. Page 6, items 31 to 35.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 35.

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

Mr. Ram Karran: We notice here that \$40,000 will be spent on this new item which is for the maintenance and operation of a Hydro-Electric Station at Tumatumari. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister how much is estimated in the recurrent Budget for this exercise? In other words, how much is it going to cost the country to run this station at Tumatumari. The hon. Prime Minister just a minute ago told us that the Guyana Defence Force was responsible for the closing of the dam at the station. I presume purchase of material is not shown here in these estimates. Or is it shown here? Maybe the hon. Prime Minister would tell us. But more particularly I should like to know what is going to be the annual cost of running this station?

The Prime Minister: That is disclosed under item 35, for this is a request to meet expenses in connection with operation of the Station for the year of our Lord 1971.

The Chairman: Section "B" Capital Estimates.

Mr. Teekah: Item 3.

Mr. Sutton: Items 2 and 6.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 1, 2, 3 as well as 5.

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

Mr. Ram Karran: I ask the hon. Prime Minister what equipment the Government hopes to purchase for the President. It states here “Vote provision inadequate.”

When we revert to the Capital Estimates on page 42 one finds that this equipment really refers to a car. I want to know if it is a car if the price of the cars has gone up from \$15,000 to what is sought here and why has it gone up in such a short time.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran what I cannot seem to understand is that the Opposition Members ask questions, they answer and expect answers to be given contrary to what they have given. Do not pre-suppose what the answer will be.

Mr. Ram Karran: I only wish to refer Your Honour to earlier debates in this House and to observe that one must necessarily do so.

The Chairman: You mean to ask a question and answer it yourself?

Mr. Ram Karran: No, no. I am only supposing if the hon. Prime Minister gets up and say the price has gone up we are not permitted to get up and ask another question.

The Chairman: Why not? We are in Committee, you are permitted to.

Mr. Ram Karran: The second question. Item 2. I see here the Ministry of Economic Development has to meet expenditure on the Chronicle Project. In an earlier debate it was suggested that the Government ought to prepare a thorough examination of the Chronicle Project

and let us know in this House and let the nation know, how much we are paying to provide a free newspaper for the Government, not to count all the cost about competitors. But we see here bits and pieces all over the estimates: to meet expenditure on the Chronicle Project”. What is this expenditure? My information is and I hope the Prime Minister will deny it, that we are over-capitalised in this country and indeed over-capitalised at the Chronicle. I do not know if it is too much to ask the Guyana Government, through the hon. Prime Minister, to tell us exactly how much it will cost to acquire and to make up to date the Chronicle Project before the end of the year.

3.45 p.m.

Item 3, Hydro-Power Investigation. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to tell us when these investigations will be over and if a report is to be prepared for the nation. I also wish to sound a note of warning, as I have done before in this House, that unless we are able to move to hydro development rather quickly, we shall be indulging in load shedding in our plant in Georgetown, we will not have enough power to satisfy our needs. Of course, that will not be so if the present rate of degeneration continues. Businesses are leaving because of the unhealthy situation. Manufacturing might be reduced because of the unstable situation created in the country because of the terror let loose on the Guyanese people in certain areas, and we would not need more power than we have at the moment. But if there is healthy development in the country, then we need hydro quickly and we would like to know when we are likely to move in that direction.

Item 4, Specialist Assistance – counterpart contribution to technical assistance and salaries, allowances, connected with technical assistance. It is so bald, I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister will tell us what is this specialist assistance.

The last item on which I wish to speak is item 5, Community Development Projects. We are asking for \$53,000 to meet, among other things, expenditure on the Advance Guyana

Campaign. Of course, (a) of the explanation is to provide for the extension of St. Bartholomew Anglican School. Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister will tell us where this school is, and why the obvious discrimination. They are extending the St. Bartholomew Anglican School and they are refusing to even repair the school in the Black Bush Polder, and there are very many schools in the country where they tell us: “Oh, you must indulge in self-help, “but when it comes to special schools, the Government is prepared, although the taxpayers contribute to a greater extent than before, when Government was responsible for all the buildings, built the schools expanded them, painted them and maintained them. But it is this joke I want to refer to, the Advance Guyana Campaign. The hon. Prime Minister told us that the G.D.F. is carrying out the Advance Guyana Campaign and we on the East and West Coasts, and indeed - -

The Chairman: He said they are assisting in carrying out the Advance Guyana Campaign, which is not the same as what you are saying.

Mr. Ram Karran: Where is this Advance Guyana Campaign taking us? We are voting money for it. If it was a case of the merchants contributing their cutlasses, and the people moving towards weeding trenches, painting their houses, and that sort of thing, it is all right. It is a good thing. We ourselves said at the outset that we agree. But the Advance Guyana Campaign must start at the right placed, but not to tell us about Advance Guyana Campaign when you are taking Government funds to build your house at Belfield and telling us that you are entitled.

One would expect that the members of the Government would themselves make sacrifices as an example, to show the Guyanese people, but do not tell hungry people who are without employment, the majority of whom are without food, to come and advance. Strong P.N.C. people came to me and said, “This Government is shameful. They do not find work for us and they tell us Advance Guyana”. Those who are normally employed are told, “nothing doing, you must advance Guyana”. This is not going to take us anywhere.

A question was asked by one of my friends behind here. Who was given the contract for the painting of certain buildings? Government contracts used to be spread out among as many people as possible. One man has got the contract for three big buildings in Georgetown. It is

not going to advance Guyana. It will probably advance the pockets of few, in Water Street, and some of those from among members of the Government and the P.N.C. whose mouths are hanging out to the Water Street people. This Advance Guyana Campaign should be deleted. It is not advancing Guyana, it is advancing only a few individuals.

Mr. Sutton: In respect of item 2, Industrial Development, on the Supplementary Financial Paper No. 5 laid before this House about a week ago, I made then certain points in relation to the Chronicle, which I will not repeat today. The chief reason in trying to get more detailed information on the Chronicle project naturally flows from the coming into operation of the Capital Issues (Control) Act. In forcing this Bill through the House in such a short time, it was impossible for any member of the Opposition to constructively contribute to the debate on it.

The government took on itself the absolute responsibility that that Bill in every respect will operate to the advantage of the citizens of Guyana, because the main reason for pushing the Bill through was said to be the taking care that investors were not taking advantage and that all matters relevant to the issue of shares of a company could be examined to ensure that prospectuses of companies truly set out all the factors pertaining to the success, or what, in fact, may be a loss if the factors were not properly set out in the prospectus of the would-be company. This must naturally bring us to the question once again: it is now imperative, it is an obligation of Government, in the light of its declared policy to ensure that people do not invest in companies unless all the factors could bear the light of day in order to see that the people are not hoodwinked into enterprises that were patently bad.

In view of the fact that the Government has stated that it is taking every possible precaution to ensure that the corporations which are now run by Government are run on business lines, the establishment of Guystac was intended to create an institution which would, day by day, be responsible and guard over the operations of these corporations and companies.

3.55 p.m.

It would appear that it is now not only desirable but vitally necessary, it would appear that it is obligatory on the Government to put forward a statement or a White Paper in order to

satisfy the citizens of Guyana that the Chronicle Project, as the Government now sees it, is properly conceived and, as such, it is recommended to the people of Guyana. The Government must say that success is projected, if not in a year or two, then in six or ten years, or what you will.

We know that a tree grows from the bottom up, not from the top down, and if the Government considers the Chronicle Project a viable one, we would like to be certain that it is insisting on building into its corporations the protection which is insisted on for other enterprises so that the public of Guyana may be protected. We note that the original voted provision for the Chronicle Project was \$1 million.

The Prime Minister: Please, sir, may I help. The million dollars has nothing to do with the Chronicle Project. It has to do with other industrial development. The legend is referable to the supplementary being sought, and not to the original vote under the subhead. This is a general subhead relating to industrial development and covers a number of items.

Mr. Sutton: I am now told by the hon. Prime Minister that the million dollars provided for industrial development does not bear any relation to the Chronicle Project.

The previous supplementary provision of \$904,113, which is stated on this paper, does bear on the Chronicle Project and now we have a provision of \$395,887. If we add them together this would be a sum in the vicinity of \$1,300,000. Whether the provision is \$2,300,000 or \$1,300,000, it would appear, in the light of the Government's statement within the last couple of weeks, that it is necessary to ensure that investors are protected. In other words, it is necessary to ensure that people are not permitted to spend money until the facts relating to their investment are properly put before the Government.

One wonders if the Government considers that the facts have been properly disclosed in this case. One wonders if the Government reserves the right to say what must be paid for this risk or that risk. Will the Government ensure that the facts are put before it and that the amount paid will depend on the investor as happens in any part of the world, provided the facts are properly portrayed?

Coming back to what I was a moment ago, it would appear necessary for the Government to put out a White Paper in order to show a projection of the Chronicle Project. If, in fact, the Government considers that the Chronicle is so important to its aims and objectives, we would want to know whether the projection is properly constructed or shows a loss that we will have to face. If so, we must know that the Government thinks that this particular enterprise is sufficiently important to be subsidised. We will then know what the exact position is.

Another matter on which I hope that the Prime Minister will give us some information relates to the capital issue of the Daily Chronicle. Is the capital issue fully subscribed or are shares still available to the public? Is the sum of money that is advanced to the Daily Chronicle by way of loan, or by way of picking up unissued shares?

If it is by way of loan, seeing that this is supposed to be a business enterprise, what steps is the Government taking to see that the investment is properly protected which, in the case of a normal commercial enterprise, would be done by the obtaining of suitable debentures of sufficient quantity to ensure that its investment is fully protected. This is absolutely necessary in the light of the Government's statements concerning the protection of the public and investors.

If the Daily Chronicle shares are still available to the public for sale, it is only fair, right and proper that a projection should be published relating to the business expectations of the project, so as to justify whatever price the share is being put on the market for and the number of shares that will be available at the price.

Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister would be good enough to say whether any part of the Daily Chronicle's capital issue is available to the public or whether all the available capital issue is being taken over by the Government and, if so, what is the proportion of Government's involvement. Is it 60, 70 80 or 100 per cent? If it is 80 per cent, who are the persons that will be involved in the difference between the Government's involvement and the total capital involvement of the Daily Chronicle.

Again, will the hon. Prime Minister say whether the amount that the Government is advancing is by way of picking up the balance of capital issue available? Is it by way of loan or

how is it constructed? And since the Daily Chronicle appears still to be a limited liability company, will it continue to operate as such? Will it be governed and controlled, as it has been previously, under the Companies Ordinance whereby, in the case of a public company, the balance sheet will be filed with the Deeds Registry in due course with other necessary documents so that the capital structure could be inspected by interested persons?

Is the Daily Chronicle going to operate like that or is it going to operate as a closed corporation, subject to the Government audit alone so that nobody will be able to trace, year by year, what is the success of the Government's venture in this matter?

It would appear that it is absolutely vital for the public to know what is the picture so that they will know what the Government is letting itself in for and, if these shares are available to the public, what the public is letting itself in for as well.

I shall now go on to item 6.

The Chairman: Perhaps this is a convenient time to take the suspension.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.05 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in committee of Supply.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: On item 6 which is a new item, Food Programme, calls for an allocation of \$150,000. According to the legend it is to provide for the extension of the Ruimveldt Food Bond.

The Chairman: I do not think that is correct. It calls for supplementary provision of \$1.

Mr. Sutton: We in the House are up to now unfamiliar with the Government's intentions and how this new system operates. Perhaps the hon. Minister would be good enough to tell us how this programme operates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Sutton, may I draw your attention to the legend? It is supplementary provision for \$1 and it is to provide for the extension of the Ruimveldt Food Bond.

Mr. Sutton: That is what I am asking about. I want the Government to tell us, as it is a new item and this Bond is being extended, how the bond operates. We want to get an idea how it is intended for this food bond to operate and give us some idea of how the Government intends to operate and give us some idea of how the Government intends to operate it for the benefit of the people who will eventually get the food.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, on item 31 recall on the eve of the 1968 General Elections the Prime Minister in a rather flamboyant speech boasted about when he will have won the General elections he will set up a tremendous hydroelectric power station at Tiboku. This is one of the promises made by the Peoples National Congress during the 1968 General Elections campaign. After the 1968 Elections and the same Prime Minister headed the Government, we have not heard anything so far about the much touted Tiboku project. Therefore, it is important that we ask what has happened to the Tiboku project. Could the Prime Minister tell us?

Mr. Hamid: Mr. Chairman, in relation to this very important item 3, Hydro-Power Investigation, I am sorry that the hon. Prime Minister did not find it possible to be in his seat now that we are discussing this particular head. I notice for the 1971 Capital Estimates, the 1966/1972 Development Programme that an amount of about \$5 million was earmarked for this particular project. In 1969 the sum of \$41,053 was earmarked, in 1970 the Approved Estimates showed \$200,000, but for 1971 it was rather strange that no money was provided for in the Estimates and here at a late stage, at the end of 1971, we see here the Government is asking for Supplementary Estimates in the amount of \$27,500.

Surely on two occasions the President's Address stated that hydroelectricity was something which was much needed and that an approach will be made. Two years have passed and we have not seen anything. I was questioning, even at the early part of the year when the Estimates were put out, why was no provision made. It was said that the Tiger Hill was an area in which a study was taken but did not show that it would bear much fruit and that the Tiboku Falls in the Essequibo River was one which could be looked into so as to see whether hydro electricity could be produced in commercial quantities. Another time also I made the remark about the need for power if the Government intends to take over Demba, now GUYBAU, and if the Government has boasted on running this particular industry then surely it must not only run it to produce alumina but the finished product, aluminum.

I noticed during last week the Prime Minister made a statement that louvers must be produced locally. We do not want to produce alumina, send it away to be manufactured into aluminum and from that produce local commodities. The Government must be in a position, in establishing GUYBAU on a sound footing, to have running simultaneously with this project so that GUYBAU can be able to produce aluminum, and at the same time it would be building the nation. I feel that this amount \$27,500, that has been earmarked is a very late stage at which an amount should be voted. I do hope that the Minister will be able to explain to the House what was responsible for it to come at such a late stage, at the same time to tell us what progress has been made in the study of developing hydroelectricity in Guyana.

4.35 p.m.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$11,979 against item 1 represents the difference between what was originally estimated as the cost of the President's car and the actual landed cost.

The supplementary being sought in relation to the Chronicle brings up the amount sought through this House for this year to \$1.3 million. It represents part of the Government's

capitalization of a \$2 million company. There are still some private members, if one may so describe them, of the company who were members of the company prior to Government's acquiring the controlling interest and there is provision to make available, shares to the workers, who were given severance pay and in most cases re-employed. The system proposed is that if they so desire, they may convert part of their severance pay to shares, but there is nothing compulsory about that. In addition, an offer has been made to the co-operative run by the Printers Union to acquire shares. That offer is now under discussion. May I say that the normal documents which have to be lodged annually with the Registrar of Companies by a company of this kind will be lodged from time to time, and the company is liable to suit and/or prosecution because it is not a Government corporation but a limited liability company.

My friend, Mr. Sutton, seems to misunderstand, if I may say so with the greatest respect, the rationale behind the Act which was passed in his most unfortunate absence last week. It is, if I may repeat for his benefit and subject to correction by my learned and hon. Friend, the Minister of Finance, that when shares or securities are offered to the public, and under company law the only way to offer shares or securities is by prospectus, the offer has to submit certain data to the Minister of Finance to gain approval or conditional approval, and the Minister of Finance has to be assured that all the relevant facts are disclosed.

It is not my proposal to re-debate what is now law but it may be useful if I observe that there is nothing unusual in this legislation. It is the type of legislation which one would find in the ideological Mecca of my hon. Friend, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and as for those who have other Meccas on the Black Sea, it is not as stringent as the provisions to be found with respect to this subject in countries of Eastern Europe.

Mr. Chairman, if you will permit me I shall deal with items 4 and 5 before I return to item 3. Item 4 represents a number of things; not only counterpart staff but it is used, and we are legally advised is being properly used, in cases where qualified or expert Guyanese have returned and are not yet posted out, physically sometimes, or sometimes theoretically. They are paid from this Head, but on their appointment to one Ministry or another, the Ministry then issues a warrant to replenish this fund, again theoretically, because under the regulations, the

fund does not actually get the money back but that money goes into revenue. Looking at the matter globally, not the full amount really represents absolute expenditure because some of it is recoverable and would be found elsewhere coming in as revenue. In any case, it is a recovery from another sector of Government.

Item 5 does not represent any discrimination and if perhaps my hon. Friend had limited himself to making an enquiry, he would have discovered there was no discrimination. It would appear that the church authorities were able to persuade U.S.A.I.D. to make available a certain sum for materials for a self-help exercise and Government naturally would not object to that. Government has its own policy with respect to denominational schools, and what this sum really represents is an accounting item to bring into account the value of the materials given by U.S.A.I.D. to the authorities for the exercise that was carried out in relation to the extension of St. Bartholomew Anglican School on the Essequibo Coast. I do not, with respect, recollect anything of coherence or significance said about (b) in the legend against item 5, and you will forgive me, sir, if I do not consider it necessary to make any remark thereon.

4.45 p.m.

I was here to hear, but I restrict my hearing to coherent contributions of certain minimum level of intelligence and significance. The hydropower investigation is in relation to the matching of the grid, if we are to produce hydro-power, to the present system, the thermal-power system. This really represents primarily local costs, because other costs will appear elsewhere.

I am grateful, and the Government is grateful, to the hon. Member Mr. Maccie Hamid when he observed that smelting is or has to be premised on cheap power, preferably hydro-power. One of my lecturers in law would say of his remark that he showed a remarkable insight into the perfectly obvious.

It was my impression that one of my hon. Friends had asked to speak on item 6, Food Programmes, but I have no note of any contribution on item 6.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Sutton spoke. He asked how it operates.

The Prime Minister: It would take a long time to explain. This is merely to provide a bond in which to keep the food. We have a number of programmes in which there is food aid. There is the normal community development. There are youth projects which now get food and an Agreement was signed with F.A.O. some time last year, under which a larger quantity of food will be given to certain institutions to permit Government to use the funds which had been previously allocated for feeding in these institutions for other purposes connected with the institutions.

As a result the accommodation, so to speak, for food has become very tight and it has been found necessary to extend the bond which was in existence before. It was in existence before and consequently it never appeared for extension or building on the Estimates. That is why the sum of \$1 is put in here to permit work on the extension.

I understand that there will be savings from related heads which would make it unnecessary for any more than a token provision for the extension of the Ruimveldt Food Bond.

Mr. Teekah: The hon. Prime Minister was not in the Chamber when I asked about the Tiboku project. Could he say what has happened to the Tiboku project?

The Prime Minister: The Tiboku project was the subject matter of a Report. Then there had to be a further examination. Government has decided at the same time to make an examination of other hydro-power potential. *Pari passu* with this, I may mention that Government is examining the feasibility of using charcoal as a cheap source of power. [*Mr. Ram Karran laughed.*] The idiots will laugh, but they do not know that Stockholm is lit on power from charcoal.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, you will recall that under Section "B" Capital Estimates, we had commenced discussion of items 19 and 20 on page 3. The hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, had completed speaking on item 19 and was on item 20. Perhaps he may wish to continue speaking on that item.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I had made several enquiries from the hon. Minister of Agriculture on item 19. I was making several points on item 20, Resettlement,

when it was suggested that the debate on the item be suspended until the return of the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Agricultural development is a dynamic process. The Government merely indulges in postulations, so far as agriculture is concerned. The Government has failed to show by one deed what it has done to improve the agricultural economy of Guyana.

I was pointing out where the Government was squandering millions under this particular head of resettlement. I enquired: Where are these farmers to be resettled? Will the hon. Minister name the areas? My view is that there is no plan so far as agriculture is concerned and thousands of acres of land are lying idle throughout the length and breadth of the coastland of this country.

There are thousands of persons with the necessary skill who are anxious to get land from the Government so that they can contribute to the agricultural development of Guyana. The Government continues to look at agriculture in a very partial way and by approaching it in this manner it has not been giving any consideration to those people who really need land for agricultural development.

There is need for the Government to rethink its whole position on agriculture. There is need for the Government to stop bringing pressure to bear on legitimate farmers who are already settled on various schemes in the country. Only today we received a telephone call that the Government is again moving to break down homes at Black Bush Polder. **[Mr. Ram Karran: “Shame!:]**

A few persons came to Georgetown this morning. I spoke to one man who has many children and this man was in tears. He said that he has already been told by the Administrative Officer in Black Bush Polder that his home is going to be broken down.

In several other areas, the Government started summoning people for rent for this year, 1971, and the Government is still telling us that it is interested in agricultural growth and in agricultural development.

Unless the hon. Minister can satisfy us in this House how this large amount will be spent, as I suggested earlier when I moved the deletion of item 18, we will have to have a vote for it.

If the hon. Minister can remember all that I had said when he suggested the suspension I would like him to answer the questions raised and so assure this House. We have had assurances and we have great reservations about the assurances of the Government. Nevertheless, we would like to hear the hon. Minister on all these points. In particular we would like him to tell us if again the Government is moving to disrupt peaceful living at Black Bush Polder by breaking down people's house.

4.55 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: I had put my name down to speak on items 19 and 20 but I am going to speak only on item 20. Perhaps what I wish to say about item 20 will also include item 19.

The point I wish to make is that the Government's practice in accounting is most undesirable to bulk together large amounts of money unless these things relate to one item. Several subjects – resettlement, it is as wide as the Atlantic Ocean. I will ask the hon. Minister to tell us, if he can from his notes, where are these resettlement schemes – particularly where – so that we might be able to know how this large sum, \$3,082,000, nearly \$4 million, will be spent.

I make this point because the Director of Audit has already commented adversely about the way in which Government bulks together large sums of money for several schemes. It is most undesirable and it is for this House to know exactly where these resettlement schemes are so that when the auditing of these things are done we would know whether one vote has been expended and the money has been applied without authority to another head, or, if anything untoward has taken place.

We had to make this comment particularly during Elections year when a very large sum of money was placed under the Head "Office of the Prime Minister" for election purposes although it was alleged to be for development purposes. I hope that we will never have such a

thing recurring and I hope that in the future, after the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture has told us what is this money going to be used for, that it will never again appear in the Estimates in such a manner, that each project should be shown separately so that they can be properly audited. That is the idea. We are not accusing the Government, but in this House we cannot know what is in the Government's mind so far as its Budget is concerned. The taxpayers outside who contribute would not know, therefore the Estimates should be so framed. It was so in the time of the Greeks, it is so in the United Kingdom and India and in all democratic countries where at the end of the year the auditors should be able to say, "Well, you have voted so much for such and such a project and we have satisfied ourselves that it has been spent in such a manner! If they are bulked together, as in this case, then the auditors or nobody will be able to say how it is spent. I strongly urge the government, that it should start now if it wishes to create a proper system of control in this country for posterity.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture: (Dr. Reid) Mr. Chairman, the points raised under item 19 you will remember have already been debated and a conclusion was arrived at that any Member in this House or any person outside of this House should feel free to take the matter to the Ombudsman. That was a decision after full debate in this House. I do not want to repeat all the questions on that.

But, Mr. Chairman, there were several bills to be paid on this head, that is why my friends have not observed that this is to take care of 1970 accounts. Government had to be satisfied that these bills were just, that they were correct, that everything was all right, before the payments were made. In that examination several bills were discarded as not being correct and at this time when that examination has been completed this item comes up to regularise this matter.

Government is pursuing a policy of diversification of agriculture. Some people are saying that the money should be spent at Crabwood Creek or at Black Bush Polder. Probably they have their reasons for saying that, but substantial sums of money are still being spent year after year at places like Black Bush Polder. Then they quarrel about the rents. Even though millions, not two and three, but we talk in terms of \$23 million and still Members are saying that

houses are being threatened to be taken down because rents are not being paid. I do not know how we are going to maintain the scheme if after over \$20 million expenditure and the people are not paying the rents. *[Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Hamid.]* My friend is saying do not worry to collect any rent, do not send any notices, leave them to themselves and continue to spend large sums of money there. Probably he can answer the question: Where should the money come from?

This policy of diversification of agriculture is so important that you have to find new areas and settle people in some of these new areas. This is because certain crops that we need to grow can be grown better in some of these far off areas and we must make sure that we move towards this or else we would be pottering around all the time and still importing the \$40 million of food commodities in this country. This is the exercise that is going on now. But development of new areas and new crops must have a price and unless we are prepared to pay that price we will continue the next ten years to say that we are importing more and more food and cannot grow any. Government is moving forward in this exercise at places like Matthews' Ridge and Kibilibiri. Notwithstanding what type of research you do generally for the country, even in the areas, you must do large-scale production to make sure that when you produce the crop it is a viable proposition and farmers can then take hold of it because you are satisfied that once the crop is grown properly the farmers will make a decent living. We do not want the farmers to have all the problems and difficulties and then we blame them; sometimes this happens to the poor farmers. In this case we are determined that we must take the risk and the difficulties, resolve the problems so that when we tell a farmer, "Here you have ten acres of land", we ourselves must be satisfied that if this cultivation is done properly that farmer will be able to make a decent living.

Some Members have said certain people can never learn anything. I am surprised at that, because I did not know that there is a master-race thinking in this House, that certain special skills and abilities were specially designated to certain people in this country. I believe that if people are given the opportunity to learn all of us have the ability and capacity to learn. This is what is coming out more and more as we move into new areas to grow these new crops. People

who at one time were miners are now doing farming and proceeding to grow more crops that we never grew in this country in any significant quantity. I am convinced that before long we will not only satisfy our own needs but we will have for our export market because we are not only growing annual crops we are also preparing for the production of permanent crops. Those who are familiar with agriculture will know that a permanent crop does not benefit you in a year or two, it is three years sometimes six, seven years. But unless you do it at a certain time you will not be able to reap anything at all and we are proceeding along this direction. You cannot balance out the initial cost in a year, it will take a long time. This is work that must be done or else we will continue to import Matouk's orange juice, then we will be quarrelling that we cannot produce because we in this House were afraid to take the initial step and make the initial investment.

5.05 p.m.

I do not like to talk too much. I like the deeds to talk. Some of these places, which they are criticising, are producing. They have been to several places, New River, Moco-Moco, Matthews Ridge, Arakaka, Kaituma, Baramita, Wauna, Yarakita, all these are places where there is need to establish settlements and to link them by roads. We do all sorts of work to make these projects viable and attractive, so that when people go into these places they would not think of coming back home to Georgetown. They will look upon these places as their homes.

Let us talk about Kibilibiri, which, not so long ago, was a waste of land. Nothing useful, as far as we are concerned, was growing there. Today for the crop that has gone, we had 1,400 acres, and right now there are over 1,000 acres already under cultivation. This is the other place on which Opposition members have laid so much emphasis, and they have their own reasons. They tell you not to worry with those places, but we are concerned with all the Guyanese people. Some of my friends have been there and they have seen, and they know that something is being done in those places, but still they say they are producing nothing. That is a statement that can be challenged with the facts. Now they are doubting.

We have at Matthews' Ridge harvested more corn than we have ever reaped at any one time in this country. Over 100,000 pounds have already been shipped to Georgetown and when one thinks of the foreign exchange that is involved, for people who never did farming, this is quite an achievement. Soya beans, 15,000 pounds already harvested; peanuts, already reaped, 1,800 pounds and we have a projection of reaping 8,400 pounds more. Some of it is sold even on the spot. Citrus, we must plan for this. We have already on the ground, over 50,000 citrus plants growing. Some have already started to bear. In another two or three years, more will be bearing. We continue to plant month by month but you do not get money back from them in a week or two. That is a permanent crop. Not calaloo. Even when he gets old the farmer will have something to support him. When anyone wants to see the best cattle ever grown in this country, go to Arakaka. They have been grown only on grass without any of the expensive inputs.

Fish. A new idea. You used to talk of a fish pond, and you dig a two by three thing and you say you have a fish pond. Some of my friends went to Matthews' Ridge and as soon as they returned, they asked the Fisheries Officer to advise them how to establish a pond of that same kind. I am not talking about the Leader of the Opposition – *[Interruption.]* - but he has a right, if he is the man who has done that. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for being so observant that he could think of this thing as a viable scheme, because we have three acres of fish pond and this Christmas coming, those people will reap over 2,000 pounds of fish, and month after month they will continue to reap. We intend to put 100 acres under fish.

If we do not train our own people to work with speed and skill, we will have to take others from outside. Those schemes include training of our people. It is a worthy investment to train our people. My friend went there and saw this useful project and he thought it was time for him to start a fish pond. Our agricultural officers are getting a chance to use their imagination and skill. If anybody goes there, he will see what they planned and designed – a dryer for the corn and soya bean, and they fire it with wood. The soya beans were dried by the dryer which was designed by the people of Matthews' Ridge. Unless people are developed, the things that we do will not last. That drying unit would cost thousands of dollars. They put it up for a mere \$1,500. It can dry a thousand pounds of corn within 12-14 hours. If we did not pursue in

establishing this project, then these imaginations would have been dormant, and people would never develop such useful expertise.

Land clearing is going on all the time. People think that it is only crops we are growing. To make people comfortable in a place, you have to put in roads, and this project is concerned with the roads. We have been able to connect Kaituma to Matthews' Ridge with a road. It is not an all-weather road; we still have 8 miles to surface properly out of over 30 miles of road. That road is a better road than the one from Anna Regina to Charity. When it is completely surfaced, we will have that road communication. Further work is going on to connect Mabaruma with Matthews' Ridge and Kaituma. They are continuing to work to finish that 75 miles of roadway. This is how the money is being used for resettlement and we think it is a just investment for the development of Guyana.

There was a sawmill in the region at Barima Bridge; the owner did not want to operate it any more. The project has taken it over and anyone can go there now and see the men pulling the logs to the sawmill, turning the logs into material to build their homes. We believe that in time more of this work will continue. Guyana will be able not only to feed itself but to export to overseas territories. As a matter of fact, we can export from there without coming to Georgetown.

5.15 p.m.

Much work is being done in this area and this kind of expenditure for the work that is being done is really justifiable. If one used to get co-operation in other parts of the country similar to the co-operation received in this area, much more would have been done.

I invite hon. Members not to accept what I say but to visit the area and to taste some of the produce since they are saying that nothing is produced in those areas. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister has strayed from the question that I asked about such large sums of money being put in projects of different kinds. Is he saying that this huge amount is for the projects in the North West District?

Dr. Reid: I mentioned New River. The hon. Member did not hear me.

Mr. Ram Karran: I heard the hon. Minister speaking about New River and the North West District, but is it possible for this House to have a list for the record so that we may know how much for Moco-Moco, how much for Butenabu, how much for New River, how much for the North West District?

May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is disposed to tell us how many of these are co-operatives in this co-operative Republic?

Dr. Jagan: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister tickled me on the question of fish ponds. Is it not a disgrace that after so many years the Government is now experimenting with growing talipia at Matthews Ridge? Talipia was brought to Guyana during the time of the P.P.P. regime. One would have thought that during the past six years we would have had talipia all over Guyana.

These people merely talk about agricultural development. The fact is that the hon. Minister invites Members to go and see that factories. When I went to the North West District to see this scheme at Matthews Ridge, I was informed that the Chief Administrative Officer of the area would make time to show me everything, but when I got there everything was cancelled.

The hon. Minister told us all about the beautiful cattle and the fish ponds. What he has not told us is that of the 17 co-operatives that were there 15 have failed and only 2 are functioning.

Secondly, they are paying the workers \$4.56 a day. One has no quarrel with this, but I should like to find out whether a feasibility study has been carried out. We are not talking about oranges or whatever permanent crops are going to be had in one year, as the Minister said when he was speaking about reaping callaloo, but surely any intelligent planner will tell you, when he is going to go into a project, whether with short – or long-term crops, that all this will be taken into consideration in an economic evaluation of the whole exercise.

I am asking: Has this been done with a wage rate of \$4.56 a day and on the basis of time work? [Mr. Green: "How much do you suggest we pay?"] I am merely asking you a question. You have failed in the co-operative venture. We know that the prices that Government pays, whether it is for rice, for milk or for other produce, cannot operate on the basis of a wage rate of \$4.56 per day.

Go into the Pomeroon right now! Farmers in the Pomeroon are not producing new cultivations of coffee. You have a Member here from the Pomeroon district. He will tell you. Coconut production has fallen. Will the hon. Minister and the Government say whether the prices fixed for copra, for coffee, for milk, could be evaluated on the basis of a labour input at the rate of \$4.56 a day.

As I said, we are not opposed to \$4.56, but this is the dilemma of the Government. It cannot industrialise the country, which would provide employment for its friends, its supporters, therefore it puts them into agriculture and pays them a wage which, by the Government's yardstick, the project cannot meet.

The sugar industry, which is protected by Commonwealth preference and by guaranteed prices, cannot pay and is not paying \$4.56 a day. [Interruption.] The Minister is talking about time workers. What about all the people who are working on the basis of task. The majority of the work in the sugar industry is done on the basis of task. There are tasks like cane-cutting, cut and load, weeding. What about all the other tasks? The Government does not know what is happening in the country.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, *Dr. Jagan*, I do not know which item you are speaking on. I have treated you with patience.

Dr. Jagan: This is a debate arising from what the Minister has just said.

The Chairman: The Minister was speaking on the Kibilibiri Land Settlement Scheme and New River settlement. You have digressed.

Dr. Jagan: I shall wind up. We are glad the Government is putting a lot of effort into agriculture. The Government is now trying to grow corn and other things so that foreign exchange can be saved. Well and good, but the Minister knows that in the United States agriculture is done not only scientifically on a large scale, but it is subsidized by a two-price system. Farmers are paid high prices because the Government gets income from the industrialized sector, which is the dominant sector, to subsidise agriculture. There is no such thing here. We do not have an industry and the Government cannot find an income to subsidise an agricultural economy.

I am asking the Government to put before this House the feasibility projects for all the schemes where the Government is going in for state farming. Co-operatives have flopped. Since it is going in for state farming it must have feasibility studies. No Government would go into any project, run by the state, unless it had a feasibility study.

5.25 p.m.

We are not opposed to Government going in for state farming, we want to make the position clear, but the Government must come to this House and say whether the people of Guyana will be called upon, from time to time, to put subsidies into these schemes so we would know from the start what we are doing. Otherwise the Government will simply be moving in the dark, just drifting, if it does not have such studies and the Opposition would not be any better off in order to be able to criticise constructively or otherwise without these facts.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, my friend there is getting mixed up with all sorts of things. I do not expect him to do otherwise because he did not intend to speak until I tickled him. He said the Peoples Progressive Party brought this in many years ago. What does that mean? We can say the same thing then years hence if we do nothing now. His quarrel is that something is being done now – so useful and so good – even though he is calling it waste. He himself is now making arrangements to get a fish pond.

We must proceed to train people in scientific agriculture that is going on there the inputs and what you expect from a crop so that they can go on working properly. The co-operatives

are not farming as such. He said there are only two co-operatives but he has to go and find out again. They are engaged in learning co-operative work which they never did before, they are learning about Thrift and Credit Societies which they are not accustomed to. All this is foundation work for development in this area.

He criticises the wage rate. Does he want us to come in here and say that we are underpaying the people for the work they are doing?

The Chairman: I do not think the hon. Leader of the Opposition criticised the wage rate. He said he has no quarrel about it.

Dr. Reid: But this is the wage rate that this Government will pay. We are satisfied that as soon as people have got the skills they will be able to produce and we must train our people; we cannot go outside and look for other people and leave them untrained. We are not prepared to do that. This it is a worthwhile investment to train Guyanese people so that they could make a decent living. This is the exercise that is going on now.

Mr. Chairman: Page 15, items 75 and 76 only. Page 16, items 86 to 89 only.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Item 89.

Mr. Chairman: Yes hon. Member.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Mr. Chairman, we are asked to vote an amount for the contribution to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. We find that there is prospect of a lucrative trade in meat and meat products among the West Indian neighbours but discriminative pressures from the United States of America has destroyed the meaning of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Could the hon. Minister say if anything was done to help Guyana relieve her mounting unemployment by putting up a good picture and by impressing other CARIFTA Governments to purchase our meats, timer, our wallaba posts, and our sleepers, as Trinidad and Tobago is doing with her products?

The Minister of Finance(Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure the hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally that this Government, and in particular the Ministry of Trade, is continuously seeking markets for Guyanese exports; but the hon. Member must understand that you cannot sell where there is no demand. Whenever there is a market, wherever there is the slightest possibility of a demand, particularly within the Caribbean Free Trade Area, Government is always making efforts to ensure that Guyanese exports reach that market.

Mr. Chairman: Page 17.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 64.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Items 93, 94 and 95.

Mr. Wilson: Item 94.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. M. F. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 9. We are asking to vote the sum of \$2,900 to meet outstanding accounts for previous years. I am a bit alarmed at the words “previous years”. One would have thought that we would have been told for last year, but for previous years seems to suggest a list of outstanding accounts for years going back before last year. Could the hon. Minister give us the details about this?

Item 94, I see the rather astronomical figure of 4972,804 being asked for as supplementary. The original amount voted was a mere amount of \$150,000. Obviously our estimates could not be possible realistic if you ask for \$150,000 and then in supplementary you ask for as fantastic a figure nearly \$1 million. I should like to have details of this figure if the hon. Minister could give us. Because as I said it is alarming that we can suddenly be asked to vote as much as \$1 million. What are these accounts? For what years? What is the nature of the debts – the accounts which are due by the Guyana Airways Corporation? Why the necessity for the Government to be asked to vote an additional \$1 million? It needs some serious explanation.

Item 95: Here again, the original amount voted was \$5,000, Contribution to Universal Postal Union, and we are asked to vote an additional \$4,000, nearly as much as was originally voted. How can we have realistic estimates when we have such figures as much as and sometimes exceeding the original vote? The legend states: "To meet the balance due on the contribution in respect of previous years." Can we have a breakdown of these previous years? Let us have the figures.

5.35 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 94, Subsidy Guyana Airways Corporation. I merely wish to observe that the supplementary provision now sought is nearly \$1 million on a vote which has a paltry \$150,000. Surely, it needs an explanation from the least articulate of the Ministers. "To enable the settlement of outstanding accounts due to other Airways Corporations." Is it a force debt? Is it a loan? Will the Minister kindly tell us?

Mr. Wilson: I do not think I will ask anything on item 94 but, sir, I crave you indulgence to ask a question on item 96, Personal Emoluments. I would like to know to what extent the volume of the work in the post office has increased to warrant the creation of such a new post of Assistant Postmaster General. I would like to ask the Minister what plans are there for ensuring that men, who pass through the postal service from apprenticeship, are able to reach the highest post in the postal administration.

I see there has been a dispute between the Postal and Telecommunications Workers Union and the Guyana Public Service Association. I think the time has come when this sort of misunderstanding should discontinue. There should be a definite policy where the men can come from the bottom to the top. It is happening in the Police Force, where a man from the ranks can become Commissioner of Police. My policy was that this should be so, and that is why I established a postal training school. I had plans for members of the service to receive overseas training in order to equip them for appointment to the highest posts in the postal administration.

Mr. Sutton: May I be allowed to ask one question on item 94, in view of the fact that the legend states: “To enable the settlement of outstanding accounts due to other Airways Corporations.” I previously mentioned that this looks like a colossal sum of \$972,804. This is not a general expense in the normal workings of the company, but it is for a specific purpose, accounts due to other airways corporations. What strikes this section of the Opposition is that all airways corporations are agents of one another, and they collect fares for other carriers. It is the practice of airways corporations to keep accounts and make allocations to the airways, when one corporation collects fares for another corporation, once a period, after deducting its commission for having sold a ticket on behalf of another airways. Are we to understand that the Guyana Airways Corporation has been collecting monies for fares, etc., due to other corporations and has not been paying them periodically after deducting its commission? Could the Minister explain this thing in detail and let us know how an amount of \$972,804 could be owed to other airways corporations, which are separate and distinct? If it is for the purpose of buying planes or other things, we would understand.

The Minister of Communications: (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Chairman, on item 93, this amount is requested because of the late submission of accounts by contractors, and also, due to an increase in travelling, which was decided recently.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh asked whether the accounts were from previous years. He asked whether it was 1969, 1970 and 1971.

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, they were late accounts from previous years, 1970 and 1971.

On item 94, this amount was collected by Guyana Airways for the various corporations, B.W.I.A. and B.O.A.C., and it will have to pay.

Item No. 95, Contribution to Universal Postal Union, a meeting was held in the latter part of 1969 and it was agreed to give an increased contribution to the Universal Postal Union to meet the cost of running the organisation. Sir, these are all the explanations that I have to offer.

The Chairman: Page 18.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 101.

Mr. Ram Karran: Items 101 and 102.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Item 99.

Mr. Wilson: Items 99 and 104.

The Chairman: Please proceed hon. Member *Mr. Feilden Singh*.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Item 99, Lighting. Again this strikes one forcibly. These unrealistic figures are passed to us when passing estimates. The voted provision was \$45,000. We are being asked to approve an additional \$27,000, more than half the amount previously voted, and the legend merely states: “To meet unforeseen additional expenditure on electricity supplied to district post offices.” Has there been such an alarming increase in the number of district post offices? Are they better lighted to the extent that there are lights all over the place? I do not think this is apparent to any one of us going into the districts. Why this big figure of \$27,000 for unforeseen expenditure? What does it mean? What was unforeseen? Let the hon. Minister explain what the word means. District post offices have to be lighted. They need electricity to be lighted.

5.45 p.m.

What was unforeseen to the alarming extent of not \$1,000, \$2,000 or \$3,000 but to the extent of \$27,000?

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: One part of my question has already been covered by what the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh has said, but there is this addition. Have so many new Post Offices been established since the Estimates were prepared to warrant the increased expenditure? I have not seen the number of new Post Offices mentioned.

Item 104, Net Deficit on Transport Services: I think that the supplementary provision sought here, \$288,000, is rather too high for the Transport and Harbours Department now that

the train services have been cut down, One would expect that the deficit, or the subsidy, would be less. Instead of that we find that the subsidy is being increased.

The Chairman: Hon. Member *Mr. Wilson*, please read the legend. The legend states “To meet unforeseen additional maintenance costs and to enable the write-off of redundant stock.” There is no question of subsidy.

Mr. Wilson: My point still stands because, if the services are being reduced, then all around costs should be reduced. It is for the hon. Minister to explain the additional maintenance costs. In what areas has the cost of maintenance been increased?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 101, conveyance of Mails, seeks an additional amount of \$250,000.

“To meet outstanding accounts due to other Postal Administrations in respect of previous years and also increased expenditure on account of an increased volume of mail by air this year.”

We are asked again to spend \$¼ million to ensure that the mail services of our country are up to date. There are grave doubts in the minds of many Guyanese as to whether the mail services are very efficient. There are instances where a letter posted in Guyana takes over a week to reach its destination. Sometimes people prefer to travel by car, which is faster than the mail services.

On the question of telegrams I can say this: I sent a telegram to the office of the People’s Progressive Party in Essequibo, asking for someone to meet me at Adventure Stelling. When I arrived the telegram had not yet been received. The telegram reached the office when I had already spent two days at Anna Regina. That is very bad service. Surely the Government should do something to ensure that the telegram services are more up to date.

I wish to ask the hon. Minister if he will be kind enough to name the Postal Administrations which we owe and if he will state how much is owed. Secondly, I would ask why this item did not appear before. What excuse does the Government have?

Thirdly, for an improvement in the postal services it is expected that the Ministry would have carried out a survey in various parts of the country, especially at Christmas time when so many Guyanese are involved in posting letters and postcards to their relatives and friends. Does the Government not see the need for more letter boxes at appropriate places? In some places there is difficulty in finding a letter box. Sometimes one has to walk two or three miles to find a letter box.

Has the Minister thought it better to have more postal agencies to sell stamps and money orders? I am certain that no new postal agencies have been established. If any were established, they are very few. There is need for people to have better facilities. The Post Office is a business organisation and wishes to make money. The Minister should therefore think of ways and means of facilitating its customers so that the Post Office Department can make more money.

Lastly, the postal services in the riverain areas are very poor. Sometimes you can obtain stamps but you are told that no money orders are available. The banking system is very poor. That is why this department is under so much pressure from the public. The Ministry does not look into all these matters. No doubt the officers mean well, but the fact is that unless the Government sees the Post Office as a business institution it is not likely to provide the satisfaction which is so necessary for Guyanese.

Mr. Ram Karran: I shall not pursue my question in view of the contribution made by my hon. Friend.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Communications.

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Chairman, additional provision is required under item 99, Lighting, because of the expansion of rural electrification. The Ministry now has to provide lighting for various Post Offices. Also, for security reasons, lights are kept burning in Post Offices throughout the night for the protection of the property of the inhabitants of this country.

Item 101, Conveyance of Mails: The amount provided was an estimated amount because one cannot visualize the quantity of mail that is going to be posted by the inhabitants of the country.

Item 102, cost of printing Inland Postal Orders: This also was an estimate because no one can visualize the number of Inland Postal Orders that will be needed. At the commencement of 1971 or during the latter part of December, when the Estimates are prepared, no one could tell what the volume of business would be. These token amounts are provided and if the volume of business increases, supplementaries are sought. For the information of the Opposition, these amounts are recoverable.

Item 104, Net Deficit on Transport Services - \$288,000: Thank you, sir, for explaining to hon. Members that this is an amount to be written off. The sum of \$100,000 will have to be written off for obsolete equipment and spare parts. When they are sold a substantial amount will come back to the country.

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

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Minister said that the additional provision under item 99 is due to expansion of rural electrification. Will he say whether it is the intention of his Ministry to provide lights in those Post Offices not yet reached by the rural electrification system? Does he not consider it necessary to make some kind of arrangement with persons who have private lighting plants so that the Post Offices may have lights?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: With due respect to you, sir, I do not think that the hon. Minister answered the question which I asked. I specifically asked if the hon. Minister would be kind enough to tell this House which Postal Administrations his Ministry owes and why the account did not appear before.

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, the Post Office has to pay for postal administration abroad. You have people handling mails in Canada, the United States of America, in the United Kingdom and we have to meet those expenses.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: That is one part of the question. The other part is why did not the account appear before?

The Chairman: Page 19.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Items 105 and 106.

The Chairman: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak? The hon. Member Mr. Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to ask the hon. Minister why the need for these Superintendents? Secondly, what are the functions they perform? Thirdly, will they replace the Co-ordinators who were previously appointed by the Government before? Fourthly, I wonder whether the Minister proposes to have both the Co-ordinators and the Superintendents?

The Chairman: What about item 106?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 106. I wish to ask the hon. Minister if it is true that the wife of the hon. Prime Minister is provided with a chauffeur and vehicle by his Ministry? Secondly, how many officers will benefit from the travelling allowances now authorized?

The Minister of works, Hydraulics and Supply(*Mr. Green*): Mr. Chairman, as I hinted from my seat I was hoping that Members will not waste time with these questions.

Mr. Ram Karran: On a point of order. I object to the hon. Minister saying that.

Mr. Green: I withdraw, sir. District Superintendents. With the increase of activity in the Ministry and the number of qualified Guyanese we have coming home from abroad and from the Remigration Scheme we were able to implement proposals we had made some time ago, that

is, to split some of the large areas so that there can be a more efficient administration. For example, Lethem at one time which came under the large Essequibo district, we have posted a District Superintendent there. In places like the North West District and in other areas we propose to do this what with the expanding agricultural programme.

The function of the Superintendents is self-evident. A Superintendent superintends the facilities of the Ministry, the particular geographic area to which he is assigned.

The other question of Co-ordinators: I made it very clear that the Co-ordinators had a special and unique function in terms of the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. They have nothing at all to do as such with the function of the District Superintendents. Therefore, to answer the next question, we retain District Superintendents and we will also retain the Project Co-ordinators, much to the displeasure of some of my friends across the Table.

Transport and travelling has nothing to do with a chauffeur for the wife of the Prime Minister or the wife of anybody. This vote is not to pay chauffeurs; it is an amount as indicated in the legend for paying officers of the Ministry who are expected to travel in the course of their duty.

With respect to the other question about the number of officers, all I can say is that this vote covers all officers who have to travel on Ministry's business.

The Chairman: Page 20.

Mr. Ram Karran: May I ask a question on items 113 and 116?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 113.

Mr. Wilson: Item 115.

Mr. Teekah: Item 119.

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

Mr. Ram Karran: Mr. Chairman, I know it is impossible for the hon. Minister to have a list of all the premises, but the sum sought by supplementary provision is relatively small compared with the original sum. Would he therefore be in a position to tell us how many new buildings have been rented, if the whole sum represents the amount due for rental of additional premises? It might be, I am not sure, that the rental of old premises has been increased. If such is the case will the hon. Minister kindly tell us?

The Chairman: It states clearly in the legend it is - -

Mr. Ram Karran: The legend is not always clear. If it is for new premises I am sure the hon. Minister¹ will be able to tell us what the new premises are.

May I turn to item 116 and ask a few questions of the charming lady Minister who is answering questions for the first time in the House? I wish to congratulate her. The legend states: "Temporary filling of vacancies", and it says that it is to provide funds for provision as it is now inadequate on account of retroactive appointments and for temporary filling vacancies. What is the Ministry's policy with respect to filling vacancies temporarily or to fill vacancies permanently? How long have these three vacancies been there? Will the hon. Minister kindly explain?

The Balchand Persaud: I wish to ask the hon. Minister if he would be kind enough to explain to this House – or if he knows or whether it falls within his Ministry – who is the owner of the Belfield House.

The Chairman: How is that relevant?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Rental of premises. I want to know if rental is being paid for that house.

The Chairman: The hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked what the additional premises are.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran had that in mind. I wish to be more specific and ask who is the owner of the Belfield House? Does it fall under the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply?

The Chairman: How does that answer the question? If you wish to ask a proper question you should ask: Is the Belfield House being rented by the Ministry?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I will put it this way. Does the provision cater for rental for the Belfield House where the Prime Minister lives? Is this amount which is being paid for rental of offices or for officers' residences?

Mr. Wilson: I should just like to ask one question on item 115, Rates on Government properties. The voted provision was \$500,000 and now we are being asked for supplementary provision of \$200,000. It is a fact that since the Estimates were passed there have been several local authorities set up, and it is the case that these local authorities much charge Government the normal rates and private individuals will pay. We would like to know whether this \$500,000 covers all the new properties which now come under local authorities which charge rates.

6.05 p.m.

Mr. Teekah: Item 119, Grant, University of Guyana. I view with concern the sum of \$40,400, being sought for the University of Guyana. I see in the legend that this sum is intended for the Diploma Course in Social work. Early this year, the University had requested \$8,000, and Parliament had voted that sum. I also know that the University of Guyana had planned several courses, Diploma in Social Work, Diploma in Public Administration, Diploma for Medical Auxiliaries, Diploma in Pharmacy, Certificate in Medical Technology, Bachelor's Degree Course in Public Health Engineering, and Bachelor of Education Course.

As a matter of fact, the Bachelor of Education course was advertised, and 58 applicants wrote the examination. They paid \$10 each, but after that, there was a crisis at the University of Guyana over these courses. The social Work Course, like the other courses I mentioned, is termed a service course by the Ministry of Education, and the crisis arose between the University of Guyana and the Ministry of Education as to the selection of students. The Ministry of Education contended that it was the Minister concerned with each of these courses, who ought to make this selection. The course in Public Health Engineering, for example, the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply had the final say in that. He wanted to select the applicants. The medical auxiliaries, the Minister of Health wanted to make the selection, and so on, and the Academic Board of the University of Guyana and the Ministry of Education came to loggerheads.

The University of Guyana contended that it was for a four-tier procedure laid down by the University in the past in accordance with statute 14 (2) (e) of the University Ordinance, which says that it was the Academic Board which had the right to regulate the intake of students, therefore, the Academic Board reserved that right to make the selection. The Ministry of Education said it would not allow this. The University of Guyana said that in accordance with past procedures, it should be allowed to carry out the four-tier procedure of selection whereby, (1) the University advertises the courses, (2) the Academic Board fixes the entrance examination, (3) the Academic Board short lists the applicants, and (4) there is a panel, and on that panel there will be representatives of the University of Guyana, and representatives of the Ministry of Education and representatives from the various Ministries to which the courses are related.

The Government on the other hand refused to allow the University to satisfy statute 14 (2) (e) of the University of Guyana Ordinance, and immediately the \$800,000 voted in June was frozen by a letter sent by the hon. Minister of Finance to the Bursar, saying that the \$800,000 voted by Parliament should not be made available to the University of Guyana.

What is relevant is that we are going to vote \$400,000, and what is operating in my mind is whether the University will have this sum at its disposal after it is voted by supplementary

estimate, in view of the fact that the Minister of Finance did not release the money to the University notwithstanding the fact that the University of Guyana was in deficit to the extent of \$120,000. This was clear blackmail, because the Government did not want the University to make the selection of students. It is very important for this House to know the facts relating to this Social Work Course, the facts relating to the \$800,000 which was voted earlier, and what could possibly occur in relation to the vote of \$40,000.

The Government went so far as to reconstitute the Board of Governors, and to reconstitute the Finance and General Purposes Committee to prevent the University from carrying on the courses. This Social Work Course was only allowed to continue because it had already started. Although we will vote this money, we on this side are not sure whether the University will have it at its disposal. This is why we want to bring all these facts to light in the Parliament so that the hon. Minister would clear the air.

Right now, at the University, with the Board of Governors reconstituted, with the Finance and General Purposes Committee reconstituted, it is important to know that the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply leads an anti-university group. There are so many threats at the University of Guyana that now it is very regularly said that if you oppose the Government, you stand the risk of being miniaturised, and they are using the example of Kathleen Drayton, who was the most qualified person for her post, who had a contract, who re-applied for the post, the Appointments Committee recommended her to the Academic Board, but the Board turned down her appointment. Let the hon. Minister of works, Hydraulics and Supply say this is not true. Cynics at the University now say that the letters "U.G." do not mean "University of Guyana," they mean "University of Green."

He is the man who waves the power wand all over the place. He is the man who struts around like a Caesar.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, will you please come back to the matter in hand?

Mr. Teekah: Thank you, sir. It is very important that these facts be made known to the Parliament and to the nation so that the University will not be subverted. Although the sum of \$800,000 was voted in June this year - -

The Chairman: have you not made that point already?

Mr. Teekah: I have additional information. Up to now \$500,000 of that sum of \$800,000 has not been given to the University. The University has had the benefit of only \$300,000. Therefore it seems to me to be a mockery on the part of the Ministry and the Government to come and ask for an additional \$40,400 when the sum of \$500,000 is still to be given to the University.

The latest circular from the Ministry stated that the University would be given the money by the 1st of October. Today is the 29th November and, although Parliament approved the provision of \$800,000, the University has not yet received it. Here we are voting another \$40,400.

We sincerely hope that the University will be able to have this money and that the University will not be subverted by the Government. It must not be the case that if academics do not agree with the Government and exercise their democratic right to criticize they should stand to be miniaturised – I use the term of the Government – they should stand to be kidnapped, to be victimised, and to be shot down in cold blood.

A new Minister has been appointed since that crisis took place and everyone on the campus and all who pay some attention to what is happening at the University look forward to the new Minister of Education taking a new look at the whole University and seeing to it that it is

allowed to function, that it is not subverted by the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, Mr. Hamilton Green.

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Green): Mr. Chairman, there was a question with respect to rental of premises. The note makes it clear that the provision was inadequate owing to rental of additional premises this year.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, we are expanding in the Government sector and rents are very steep these days. We try to bargain as hard as possible. This is a result of that situation.

In New Amsterdam, for example, we had to provide additional premises for the Judges and we had to rent premises in the absence of having buildings of our own. Rents are very high. The Government is paying between \$3,000 and \$4,000 annually for the office of the Leader of the Opposition. This is an example of the type of figures we have to contend with.

With respect to item 115, Rates on Government Properties, the additional sum was required for the fact that, with the implementation of the new areas, the new authorities can bill and have billed Government for rates like any other individual. Formerly, in areas outside of Georgetown and New Amsterdam, the Government did not pay rates on its properties. We now have to do this.

The Minister of Education (Miss Baird): With respect to the temporary filling of vacancies under item 116, Personal Emoluments, the provision proved inadequate for the following reasons: There was no provision in the 1971 Estimates for job evaluation analysts and job evaluation analyst were provided for working on the job evaluation exercise. In one instance a senior officer was interdicted from duty and another officer was appointed to act.

I have to inform this House that the Ministry of Education has organized a Curriculum Development Unit, which is an important aspect of our attempt to reorganize education. We had to make provision for a Curriculum Development Officer and part of the Personal Emoluments went to this Officer.

With respect to the comments made on the University of Guyana by the hon. Member, Mr. Teekah I wish to state that the Ministry of Education, as we know, is not only committed to provide basic education to all citizens. The Ministry of Education is committed to provide professional education for all categories of workers. To this end the University was asked to mount a course for social workers, providing professional education for Probation Officers, Social Welfare Officers and for persons who work with prisons. I think I am in a position to inform this House that the social welfare course is one of the most successful courses in the University of Guyana.

I have also to ask the hon. Gentlemen (Mr. Teekah) no refrain from misleading this House because to date we have released \$600,000 to the University of Guyana.

With respect to the reference to Mrs. Drayton, the Academic Board informed the University that there was one other candidate who was better qualified than Mrs. Drayton. I should like to emphasise: it would be difficult to accept that this Government is attempting to influence the University in its job. As far as I am concerned, harmonious relationships exist between the University of Guyana and the Ministry of Education at the moment.

The Chairman: That point does not arise. Page 21.

Mr. Teekah: Items 120 and 121.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Teekah: The legend against item 120, Grants to Aided Secondary Schools, states that this sum of \$110,000 is to provide for the payment of:

“(A) with effect from 1st January, 1971, inclusive, an increased grant to meet.

- (a) additional interim relief allowances to teachers of government aided secondary schools;
- (b) the related National Insurance contributions;

(B) 1970 laboratory grants.”

Now that is very good. But the Government has given interim relief on two occasions, 6½ per cent and 7 per cent respectively, and what has happened is that in the government aided secondary schools the first interim relief was implemented but the second interim relief of 7 per cent has not been paid to the staff of such schools although the Government has paid its 7 per cent contribution to the schools.

6. 25 p.m.

I have one specific case which I want to mention, that is, the Guyana Oriental College, in that it has been receiving the interim relief from the Government but the Board of Governors has not been passing on their portion of it to the staff. This is a very important matter, it needs investigation by the Ministry.

According to the 1957 Government Aided Schools Ordinance there should be regular inspection of these schools as far as administration and facilities are concerned. And it is very important that regular inspection of these schools be carried out. This is very rarely done. As a matter of fact too, the laboratory grants although many of these schools have received these grants from Government they have not replenished the stocks in the laboratory, they have not bought new equipment. [The Prime Minister: “Who is the Chairman of that Board?”] I do not know. I only know the Principal. These schools have been receiving Government aid for staff, for equipment, but they are not implementing the decisions of the Government. That is where Government has fallen down, in that according to the policy of Government it is necessary to appoint one Government nominee to each Board of Governors of each Government Aided Secondary School. But what has been happening is that the Government nominees themselves do not attend the Board meetings and that is why the Government ought to have a closer look at Government Aided Secondary Schools. It is important because there is maladministration; the whole thing is in chaos.

For example, once I went to the Indian Educational Trust College. I saw in the lowest forms fifty, sixty students and over and education rules say that not more than forty students should be. These forms have the youngest children and it is important that the officers from the Ministry visit these schools to see what is happening because when this is not done these Principals, who in most cases own the schools and they are chairmen of the Boards, they get away with murder, and it is the children who stand to lose. That is why I want to urge the Government to see that, first of all, its officers visit the schools regularly, secondly, that it makes it compulsory that these boards ought to have regular meetings. They should probably hold meetings once a month or at least once per quarter. For example, the Tutorial High School Board has not met for over a year now. Nobody knows what is happening at these schools. For instance the Government nominee at this school is one Mr. T. Anson Sancho. He has not attended one meeting. He himself told me that I should raise it in Parliament.

It is very important that Government takes a greater interest in these schools. Just do not give money and do not know how the schools are being run. The students stand to suffer because in most cases these Principals are the owners of the schools, and they just use the money and do not provide the facilities. I want to urge upon the Government very strongly that there should be better liaison between the Ministry of Education and these Government aided Secondary Schools.

The Chairman: You dealt with both items 120 and 121?

Mr. Teekah: No, sir. I was looking at the time; it is now 6.30.

The Chairman: Perhaps it may be a convenient time to suspend the Sitting. Let the Assembly resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker. This Sitting is suspended until 8 o'clock.

Sitting suspended at 6.31 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: At the Suspension of the Sitting the hon. Member Mr. Teekah was speaking. Will you now proceed on item 121.

Mr. Teekah: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. This item says in the legend that among other things this amount is for the additional funds for the expanded training programme. I do hope, and I sincerely urge too, that the expanded training programme should involve the Essequibo area. I do not know if the new Minister of Education has in mind to have an In-service Training Centre set up in Essequibo. It is a fact that during the term of office of the P.P.P. Government there were two training programmes: one was at Anna Regina and one was at Vreed-en-Hoop. During the life of the Coalition Government and during the life of the ex-Minister Mrs. Gaskin those two training centres were closed down, so now the whole country of Essequibo, the largest country in Guyana, is without a Teachers Training Centre, in-service or pre-service. There is a great need today for a Teachers Training Centre in the Essequibo area either in-service or pre-service.

Since we are discussing the In-service training programme I want to strongly urge that the Essequibo area be taken into consideration because teachers in the county of Essequibo have as the nearest Centre at their disposal the In-service Training Centre in Georgetown and they are brought from the Essequibo to the Georgetown Training Centre. It does not look wise to me that teachers have to be brought from Essequibo to Georgetown. It is the policy of the Government I understand, and it is a good policy for any Government I understand, and it is a good policy for any Government, to see that trained teachers reach the remote areas. It would be much better, I think, if there was a centre in Essequibo it would have been able to service that area and when teachers are able to go through that centre it means that it would be right there, in the area, and they would be much closer to the School because there is much difficulty in getting teachers from the urban or suburban areas to go to these remote or interior areas.

As a matter of fact only last year there was a delegation to the Deputy Chief Education Officer for Primary Schools asking for a Head teacher for the No. 10 School at Mahaicony. All over the country in these remote and interior areas we do not have best qualified staff.

8.15 p.m.

This problem will be solved if we are able to expand our teachers training programme to these areas, and assigning one training centre in the country of Essequibo would be a very wise thing.

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, with respect to item 120, Grants to Aided Secondary Schools, this request was made in order to meet Government's contribution to National Insurance contributions and to interim relief allowances to the teachers in government-aided schools; also to carry the cost of laboratory grants for equipment.

With respect to the comments made by the hon. Gentleman on the organization and administration of schools, I am a bit surprised, because the chairman of the Board of the school he named was no other than Dr. Balwant Singh. All I can say is, that we are looking into this business of government-aided secondary schools. We have already met members of the staff and we are looking into the administration of government-aided schools.

With respect to the in-service teacher training programme at Linden, I have to inform this House that the situation at Linden is crucial, for we have found at the moment there is an average of 76 per cent of the teachers untrained at Linden. Being an industrialised area, the people who qualify for teaching refrain from going into that profession and prefer to go into industry, therefore, we have a movement away from the district and it is difficult to attract people in that area. This is why a training programme was urgently needed for Linden.

The Chairman: Page 22.

Mr. Teekah: Item 123.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 128.

The Chairman: I would have reminded you to speak on item 128.

Mr. Chandisingh: Items 124 and 127.

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

Mr. Teekah: Item 123, Personal Emoluments. This legend states: “To provide on the fixed establishment for the creation with effect from 1st September, 1971, inclusive, of one post of Librarian on the salary scale A 31.” I am glad that the Ministry of Education has seen the wisdom in appointing a librarian for Bishops High School. I made this call in 1969, in this very House, because it was my information that the books in the library were thrown all over the room and there was no supervision. The then Minister of Education, Miss Field-Ridley, said that that was not true and there was no need for a librarian. I explained that the staff was only giving part-time attention to the library and the library needed correct and precise attention. I strongly pleaded with her but she said no, it was not urgent. I am glad that now, what I asked for in 1969, this Government, under a new Minister of Education, has seen fit to allow.

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, all I have to say at this moment is that the request for supplementary estimate in the sum of \$1, as the hon. Gentleman knows, is a token provision because it is envisaged that savings will be effected through other personal emoluments votes.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 124, Personal Emoluments. I merely would like to make an observation similar to the one made by my colleague, Mr. Ram Karran, when he spoke on another item earlier today on the temporary filling of vacancies. I find it hard to understand, and would like an explanation from the Minister, why such a large sum is now being voted in order to provide for the temporary filling of vacancies. Depending on the Minister’s reply, perhaps, we can have a follow up on that.

- On item 127, Pharmacy and Poisons Board, we note that the sum of \$6,592 is now to be provided in addition to \$20,000 already provided, and here we are told that this is due to the creation of additional staff posts. Here again, I think the Minister should give us an explanation on this item, what are the additional posts, and how the additional officers in this department will function. In the past, may I remind the Minister, we have made the point that the work of this Pharmacy and

Poisons Board did not seem to be effectively carried out because, perhaps, of the absence of sufficient qualified personnel and perhaps this is a means of doing so, but I should like the Minister to give an explanation for this amount.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, I wonder whether we must not defer this item. The hon. Minister of Health is not here, perhaps we may discuss another Ministry and then revert to this one. Perhaps, we may proceed to page 25, items 138 and 139.

Mr. Ram Karran: I do not know if another Minister has charge of that.

The Chairman: I have already elicited that information.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 138.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 138 and 139.

8.25 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish briefly to draw the attention of hon. Members to the fact that in most of the neo-colonial authorities, where rates are to be levied, no valuation, according to my information, has been carried out. One wonders whether the rates are to be decided upon by the local authorities and/or the Government on an ad hoc basis.

The impression one gets, even in the Greater Georgetown area, is that people are bereft of services which had been maintained by previous owners of the place or by the people themselves. These services have gone to ruin.

I also crave your indulgence, sir, to use this item to enquire from the Minister how soon we will be given services in keeping with our status not only in Greater Georgetown but in other areas.

I wish to observe that the hon. Prime Minister, prior to the elections, had said that those local authorities which did not return P.N.C. majorities could expect no grant or aid from the Central Government. It is necessary to note that the People's Progressive Party and the United

Force were unable to offer candidates at those elections and the P.N.C. is virtually in control of all the local authorities.

Even in those areas where the P.P.P. and the United Force offered candidates, for instance, in Greater Georgetown and in Leguan, the rigging was so intense - -

The Chairman: Perhaps you forgot Sheet Anchor.

Mr. Ram Karran: Thank you very much, sir. I wanted to treat Sheet Anchor separately.

In a place like Leguan the P.P.P. got three candidates. In Greater Georgetown we had three candidates.

The Chairman: A reflection of unpopularity.

Mr. Ram Karran: In Sheet Anchor it was admitted by a senior official of the Police that rigging had been going on. I am sorry but I do not see my friend the hon. Minister of Trade in his seat. A Motion has been brought to this House but it has not seen the light of day. *[Interruption.]* The story is that when the Prime Minister went to see this old lady to sympathise with her, she said, "Oh, my Gad, P.M. Sukhu kill me son." That is current all over the Corentyne. *[Mr. Hoyte: "Nancy story!"]*

I hope that the hon. Minister who will answer for this Head will tell us how early we will be able to get again the amenities which, as I said before, the proprietors were maintaining until this catastrophe overtook us. How soon will local authorities receive loans, grants and aid from the Central Government.

The Chairman: Hon. Hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, you have dealt with both items, I take it.

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, sir.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: the sum of \$20,000 to be voted for item 138, Rates and Taxes, Local Authorities, seems to be a rather large sum of money. I should like the hon. Minister to give us an explanation with regard to these new local government authorities to which the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction has to pay this additional money by way of rates and taxes.
[Interruption.]

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, please permit the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh to continue.

Mr. Chandisingh: With regard to item 139, Water Supply, Government Housing Estates, it seems to me that there is something misleading here. We are told that an additional sum of \$14,000 is needed.

“To meet expenditure on the payment of water rates for increased number of houses.”

I should like to know where are these houses. I cannot imagine that such a large sum of money would be needed additionally for meeting the water supply when we know that in the past several years there have been very few houses actually built by the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction.

I know that the hon. Minister has told us from time to time that lands have been made available for people to build houses, but I cannot see how \$14,000, when compared proportionally with the original provision of \$149,000, can account for this supposedly large number of houses for which the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction is now responsible where the paying of water rates is concerned. There seems to be something wrong here. I should like the hon. Minister to give us an explanation. Where are these houses? How many more houses are involved?

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction.

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Mr. Ramsaroop): Mr. Chairman, the dilemma of both hon. Members is understandable. With respect to items 138 and 139, the magic words are “Wortmanville Flats.”

Before the Revolving Fund was established by legislation some time last year, dues attributable to these flats were paid by statutory fund controlled by the Central Housing and Planning Authority. However, a short while ago, under the legislation I referred to, all funds which were accruable to the authority are now vested in the Ministry via the Housing Fund. Therefore, we find ourselves in a position where money is now being sought to liquidate expenses that would normally have been paid by the Central Housing and Planning Authority. The water rates and, as the legend states, other rates related to the flats were paid by the Central Housing and Planning Authority, but now the Housing Fund has to bear that and therefore the expenditure is sought to defray those expenses and costs.

There are also other areas which are covered for rates, not water rates but general rates. — Areas like Plaisance and Beterverwagting, which are within district councils, and even areas like Linden and Wismar, properties wherein are now rated, are susceptible to charges which have to be borne by the Housing Fund as it now stands.

8.35 p.m.

The other question that was proposed and raised by the hon. Member Mr. Boysie Ram Karran falls more within the competence of my colleague the hon. Minister of Local Government. But I may essay the remarks, sir, that in so far as the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction is concerned there is now afoot and abroad very active efforts to phase out the maintenance responsibilities of this Ministry in favour of the Municipality of Greater Georgetown. Indeed, a Committee is now sitting comprising of representatives from both City Council and the Ministry with a view to formulating recommendations as to how quickly and how quickly and how effectively this transition can take place.

With respect to services to other areas, with respect to grants and subventions, subsidies, contributions that may be given by the central Government and local government, it is not within

the stretch of my competence to make a statement on that. Maybe when the hon. Minister of Local Government takes his feet he may desire to give some explanation or clarification on these issues.

The Chairman: Page 25. Items 140 and 141.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Item 140.

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

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Labour and Social Security is seeking an additional \$1,000 for this head “Guyana Industrial Training Centre.” We are not against giving money for this, but we feel that Guyanese can be trained to fill this vacuum, this problem, which is occurring day after day because of the policies of this Government - - - un-employment. This is something the Government should seriously look into.

In Georgetown, there were about three hundred workers who were dismissed from Sandbach Parker. There were rumours, and this might be soon too, that six hundred workers may be dismissed from the C.D.C., Guyana Timbers Limited. We have been hearing also that one hundred and fifty workers from Guyrock would be losing their jobs.

Feasibility studies in industry have shown that Guyana has enough timber resources on hand. We have also learnt that there is a vast amount of unemployment in our country. We have very good industrialists and good people who can handle the saw mill and other industries in our country. Is there doubt that these products when manufactured whether they could be sold or not; there is a ready market? I would urge that the Minister thinks seriously. If he wants more money, to solve unemployment this House is here to see that he gets more money, but train people so that we are in the position of being more in business where we can take over these concerns.

The Minister of Labour especially should study the mounting unemployment we have in our country. This is a golden opportunity since he has only to consult the Cabinet; whilst there is no problem in getting timber, whilst there is no problem in manufacturing timber and whilst no

problem in marketing timber. Why does the Government not decide to take over C.D.C. as it did with the bauxite industry. This is something worthwhile to help workers.

It is to be noted too, sir, that because of the high cost of living certain business places are closing down. There were advertisements calling for people to take over a provision store at Winiperu.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally we are dealing with industry. What has that to do with it?

Mr. Yacoob Ally: This is something which will seriously affect the industrial workers of our country.

The Chairman: Are we not voting provision for it?

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Yes, sir, I am coming to the point.

I feel the Government should think seriously about all these places closing down and creating unemployment. It should try and train our young people so that we would be in a position to be able to take over these places. We can honestly reduce this unemployment we have in our country. But what do we find? The Government is soft-peddling.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally please confine yourself to the discussion on the item.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: I am replying to the Minister.

The Chairman: But you cannot reply to the Minister.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: I urge the Minister to see that if we train people - - *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the House please permit the hon. Member to continue.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I apologise, sir.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: I urge the Minister to train people for some beneficial purpose so that the high cost of living be reduced.

The Chairman: You have made that point already.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: It should train people in industry. *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: Please do not interrupt the hon. Gentleman because it seems as if you are throwing him off.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Thank you sir, I urge the Minister- -

The Chairman: You have been trying to do so for a long time now.

Mr. Yacoob Ally: Sir, you have come to my rescue because they are just making a mock out of unemployment. *[Laughter]* Unemployment means nothing for the Government in order that our Guyanese citizens can find employment for themselves, so that we can have progress in our country.

The Chairman: *The hon. Member Mr. Hamid.*

Mr. Hamid: Mr. Chairman, on this particular head I am of the opinion that this refers specifically to that of scale supervisors on the various estates. While we must congratulate the Minister for this bold effort to have persons elected to serve as scale supervisors, we may wish to remind him as Minister of Labour that it is most important to note that to put three scale supervisors to serve on the scale at eight hours per day is, in fact, a very hard task. Labour laws in this country do not rally reflect a person working eight continuous hours without a break. Therefore to have three persons on the scale per day, meaning working at eight hours per day, is in fact something which the Minister should have remedied as early as possible.

The other point was that we were assured that persons will also be elected to serve as assistants to the scale supervisors. This is very important also. We feel that it is an urgent matter because a scale supervisor may become ill and may need someone to assist in carrying on

this very important task. The scale supervisors have been making steady reports to the Minister showing that since they came on the scales the weighing of the canes have improved.

8.45 p.m.

This may be because of some misunderstanding in the past where those elected to serve were not doing the job in the interest of those concerned. The hon. Minister should be in a position to tell us how early we will have elections to elect those who assist the scale supervisors on their jobs. In view of the fact that the salary paid to the supervisors is small, and the hon. Minister is of the same view, I hope he will look into it early to see that the amount is increased as early as possible.

The other question which the hon. Minister should look into is the one concerning the supervisors who look after the peasant farmers. On some estates we find there are no peasant farmers but still a representative of the peasant farmers is elected to serve as scale supervisors. I hope the hon. Minister will take cognisance of this whole matter and be able to give us a comprehensive answer.

The Chairman: I wish all hon. Members would speak on their items as you have spoken. I think you have kept to your point and you have made your point very clear.

Mr. Hamid: In view of the fact that we are giving a serious look at these matters, I guess they were paying serious attention when I was making my contribution.

The Minister of Labour and Social Security(*Mr. Carrington*): In reply to the hon. Member Mr. Maccie Hamid on the question of scale supervisors, I would say that in commenting on every head, it is just a question of making up time, because the hon. Member knows as a fact that there is no complaint either from the workers or from the supervisors as regards this new assignment. The majority of workers in the sugar industry know as a fact that if there was one good thing the Government did for them, it was to appoint these scale supervisors. They have reported to me on various estate that since the introduction of these scale supervisors, they are much more satisfied with the weights.

As regards their hours of work, they are working on an eight-hour shift and they are as free as practicable and within their rights to have their normal meal breaks. There is no one who can stop them doing this. On the question of their salaries, there is no complaint because most of these workers, elected by their number, are cane cutters. They are receiving an average of \$192 per month. They require no G.C.E. or anything of the kind. They are government employees and enjoy all the conditions of government employees, and they are satisfied. They were told by me and officers of the Ministry that if they have any complaint, they can report at any time. Up to date, I have had no complaints from these scale supervisors.

I would wish to say, and I am sure the hon. Member would agree with me, that the appointment of these scale supervisors is partly responsible for the peace we now enjoy in the sugar industry. I hope that the member will allow the workers to work – the hon. Member who goes to the various estates and make trouble from time to time – I am saying this as a fact, that on this occasion he will permit the workers to make the production target which we hope to make, 368,000 tons.

In relation to the hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally, I am a bit confused. It would appear that the hon. Member does not understand the purpose - -

The Chairman: You should not come to conclusions.

Mr. Carrington: The hon. Member says we should train the workers for industrial development. The Guyana Industrial Training Centre provides training for young men from the age of 18 years. The Centre trains them in such skills as plumbing, carpentry, masonry, welding, electricity, heavy equipment repairing, and brick laying and making. On the 17th December, approximately 120 of these young men will be graduated and I am inviting Mr. Yacoob Ally to come and see for himself some of the work they are doing there.

As regards retrenchment, it is the Government's intention to use the very G.I.T.C. and the Technical Institute to train and retrain persons, who may be retrenched, in other skills. We have discovered there are too many white-collar workers. We hope to do a little more training in skills and the G.I.T.C. is ready to do this. As a matter of fact, in consultation with the Clerical

and Commercial Workers' Union and the Guyana Labour Union, we have offered to train the workers there in any of the skills which we provide at the institution.

The Chairman: Perhaps we can revert to page 22.

8.55 p.m.

The Chairman: We turn back to page 22. Will the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran please speak on item 128, ex-gratia payment to the Dependents of the late Paulene Greaves.

Mr. Ram Karran: In connection with item 128, I would say: "Too little and too late."

It is a little more than four or five years since this unfortunate woman met her end at the Public Hospital. It has taken the Government a long time to recognise that something ought to have been done for her dependents.

I am astonished and perturbed. This woman left seven children, the oldest of whom is 11 or thereabouts. One would have thought that a Government which seeks to make the small man into a real man would have been a little more bountiful in the sense that if it is awarding \$3,000 for seven children, this works out to less than \$500 for each child. [*Mr. Hoyte: "Do you award on basis of dependents?"*]

I would have thought that, having regard to all the factors in the case, having regard to the long delay in making this ex-gratia payment, the Government would have taken other factors into consideration and would have made a more reasonable award to the dependents of Paulene Greaves.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, before you proceed, I wish to mention that you were unfortunately not here, but the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh spoke on item 124 as well as on item 127 and the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran spoke on item 128.

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Green): With respect to the ex-gratia payment to the dependents of the late Mrs. Paulene Greaves, the whole incident was unfortunate. The sum here was on advice from the officers of the Ministry and other departments of the Service. It is always difficult to decide how much to give in these circumstances, but I may note that perhaps if we had upped this amount we would have had criticism of another type from some members of the Opposition.

On item 124, Personal Emoluments, Ministry of Health, the Ministry started during this year a more aggressive programme with respect to nutrition. We went into the rural areas in an attempt to educate people with respect to what foods to use. We have had new posts created for nutritionists. The post of typist-clerk shown here is merely an adjustment to provide services for the staff referred to a moment ago.

With respect to item 27, Pharmacy and Poisons Board, expenses of, there are two new posts here for Inspectors. As you know, sir, there are new regulations with respect to the Pharmacy and Poisons Board and this sum covers all the expenses pertaining to that Board, including travelling. The additional posts and the additional responsibility and work caused this need for a supplementary.

The Chairman: Page 23.

Mr. Ally: Item 131.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 131.

The Chairman: *Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally.*

Mr. R. Ally: Item 131, Mosquito Control Service. There is one question I should like to ask the hon. Minister. Is the hon. Minister aware that for some years now there has been no mosquito control service in the Upper Corentyne? I would like him to say how soon this service will be reintroduced in that area.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wonder if the hon. Minister will indicate whether he is aware of the fact that the mosquito nuisance seems to have overtaken Georgetown itself, namely north-eastern Georgetown and parts of Queenstown and Bel Air. I wonder whether the hon. Minister can indicate what action Government is taking to rid this area of mosquitoes.

Mr. Green: First of all, this programme is not geared to rid the citizen of the mosquito nuisance as such. As far as the Ministry of Health is concerned, our primary objective is to control malaria and yellow fever which are dangerous to health.

I think the Ministry has an achievement which we can be justifiably proud of. This is the only country in South America that, at the moment, has under total control malaria and yellow fever.

In order to maintain this position, we have to be vigilant and make checks on people going out and coming into the country. The hinterland is important to us. We have had to check people coming into the country to maintain this control. The increase of \$55,000 is as a result of this stepped up activity to ensure that we maintain this good record that we have.

The Chairman: Page 24.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 134.

Mr. R. Ally: Items 134 and 135.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 134, Personal Emoluments, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries: It is to be noted that the token provision of \$1 is to be voted for several things, but I should like to direct the attention of the hon. Minister to (B) in the legend where it says that this is to provide for:

“the regarding on the unfixed establishment, with effect from 1st January, 1971, inclusive, of four hundred and eight-three posts of Staff Nurse from the B 11 salary scale to the B 4a salary scale.”

I have not consulted the salary scales in question.

The Chairman: Do you wish me to provide a copy of the Estimates so that you may consult?

Mr. Chandisingh: I am asking the hon. Minister to inform me. I would presume this involves increases in salaries. In view of the fact that only \$1 is to be provided here, would it indicate that there are several vacancies in this category of staff nurse? If there are, it would indicate that we are still not in a position to hold such personnel who are trained and who are absolutely needed if our hospital services, in particular, are to be maintained at a reasonably high level.

My question, therefore, is whether the token amount provided would indicate that there is a large number of vacancies in that category?

9.05 p.m.

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Chairman, is the hon. Minister aware that there is no midwife in the Amerindian area, Orella? Is he also aware that the Amerindians there are asking that an Amerindian be trained to be a midwife so that she would live there? They are claiming that the midwives the Government sends up there would not live there because they do not like the environment of the place. Because of this they spend just a month or two and then leave. The Amerindians are asking that the Government train their own people so that they can live there and not have the cause to leave the area.

Another thing which I should like to ask the hon. Minister is this: Is he aware that there is no dispenser in that area? The Amerindians are claiming that they have the necessary qualifications; they only would need training from Government. They are asking that one of

their own be trained so that he can be a dispenser there and run a drug store which will be very beneficial to them. They need the service at the moment.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the Skeldon Hospital is without an ambulance service. The Lions Club at Corriverton through the public so to speak donated the ambulance to the Hospital. The ambulance was given to a drunken man, an inexperienced man to drive. The man drove the ambulance once without lubricating oil and as a result the piston and the crank shaft was damaged. I was made to understand that the ambulance was then sent to Auto Supplies in Georgetown for six months then before it could be of service to the people in the Upper Corentyne. Not too long ago, sometime in August, another drunken man was given this ambulance to drive. I believe this man was taken out from some rum shop or somewhere. He had about five people in this ambulance, he was highly intoxicated that he could not have seen a truck parked on the parapet. He drove the ambulance straight under the truck and a woman lost her life, three people were badly injured too. The ambulance is now damaged beyond repairs.

A delegation from the Lions Club came down to Georgetown and met the Minister of Health and asked that the Government replaces this ambulance because it was the public's property. The Ministry of Health promised the Lions Club that the ambulance would be replaced by 1972. The public wants to know what part of 1972. Would it be January, February, March or when? This Government is unable to supply just oil and gasoline for this ambulance and a proper chauffeur. Every patient who wanted to use this ambulance had to pay \$15. They were profiteering on the people's own property, some very poor people had to shed tears because they can ill-afford to pay this amount of money. The Hospital Administration claimed that they were charging for oil and gasoline. That vehicle could not have burnt more than \$6 gasoline from Skeldon to New Amsterdam and back. I wish to hon. Minister will tell us what is the position with respect to this ambulance and how soon this ambulance would be replaced. Also whether a certified driver will be taken on to drive this ambulance.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the question under item 134 (b) is merely to tidy up something which has already been approved by this hon. House, that is, to upgrade the salaries of the Staff Nurses.

The Ministry has already started on the programme of training girls in midwifery to serve particularly in the hinterland and in the other rural areas. But we have a problem here that perhaps every Member of this House should do well to assist. We have in the past trained a number of persons to return to their areas, but there seems to be some strange attraction to the City and many of them opt to remain in the City and neglect areas from which they come. As a result, the Ministry will now ask them to sign contracts to return to their particular areas.

On question of the incident referred to by the hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally, it is inaccurate in many respects and he reminded me of a very poor story teller. But there was an accident and the matter is now - - - the attention of the Police.

The Chairman: Page 25. Items 130 and 137: Page 26 commencing with item 145: I think the hon. Member Mr. Wilson had indicated that he was interested in some item here.

Mr. Wilson: Item 148.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Item 147.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Persaud.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, it is important in a country which is an agricultural country with an agricultural economy basically, for us to really get statistics on the various agricultural holdings and generally what is taking place in the field of agriculture.

I should like the Minister to tell us exactly what is being done in order to provide us with these vital statistics so that proper planning can be done for agricultural development.

Mr. Wilson: I should like to ask a question on item 148, Contribution to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Will the hon. Minister explain what are the population activities which this fund serves? I would like to observe in passing, that this country has been contributing to various funds of the United Nations and to the I.L.O., yet, early this year, when the United Nations called on governments to encourage the organization of an international walk to launch the second development decade, we applied to the police for permission to have this walk and we were refused. It is disgraceful for the Government to act like that.

The Chairman: We are dealing with a Contribution to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. I do not see how this has anything to do with the activities of the second development decade. It is not a United Nations contribution.

Mr. Wilson: I was trying to find out if we are going to contribute and yet not take part in the activities with which the funds deal. We contribute to other funds of the United Nations but did not take part in the walk.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud raised a question on subhead 17, Agricultural Statistics. During the course of this year, the Statistical Bureau did a survey of the agricultural holdings in this country, in order to determine the number of farms, the sizes, locations, the kind of crops that were being cultivated, the number of people involved in relation to particular types of crops, and things like that. I have no doubt in due course the findings will be published in the usual publications issued by the Statistical Bureau. I agree with him that this type of information is vital for economic development, and this is the particular reason why this census was mounted this year.

As I understood the hon. Member Mr. Wilson, he wanted to know what subhead 18 was all about, United Nations Fund for Population Activities. This agency deals with demographic studies, in particular, tries to relate population to economic development. It helps developing

countries in the problem of manpower in relation to economic development. For example, a country may be over populated in an economic sense, that is, although it may have a large land mass, the population may be concentrated in a particular area where economic activities are carried on, and although in a popular sense one would not say that country was over populated, yet in an economic sense it would be so.

This agency tries to identify that kind of problem, tries to help countries disperse their population in a rational way and pursue the kind of economic development, the kind of developmental strategy, which would enable the population to be shifted in the way which would best contribute to the development of the country. We have become members of this Fund, not because we necessarily want to use the services of the Fund immediately, but because there may be demographic problems in relation to which we may need advice and assistance in the future. Therefore, it was considered desirable that we should make a small contribution to become members of the Fund, in order to enable us to call upon the expertise of this agency, if and when required.

The Chairman: Page 27.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 154.

Mr. Wilson: Item 156.

The Chairman: Please proceed, hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 154, Compensation claims. I should like to propose the deletion of the sum under this item. I would urge on the Government that persons who have to claim upon Government are compelled to wait many years before their claims are considered and ultimately settled. The undue delay in paying claims is becoming endemic within the Government and I think it is necessary for the Government to appreciate the problems, particularly financial problems, of people who probably may lose something and have to wait

long periods before Government finally decides to settle their claims. This can result in tremendous hardships on those who have to claim.

If my information is correct, I believe under this item of \$20,000, some \$14,000 has to be paid to someone who had an accident with a Public Works vehicle or something of the sort. I am informed that this incident took place in 1967 and it took the Government four years to settle this claim. I am aware that if persons were to go to the Supreme Court, the period would be long too, but one would expect that where the Government recognises that it is caught and it has to pay, where it is a case of negligence clearly established in advance, and it is only a question of quantum, that the Government will not delay in considering and expediting the claims of private persons.

9.25 p.m.

I am sure that this complaint is general. It comes not only from members on this side of the House. If members of the Government wish, they may talk to members of the legal profession who will say the same thing. I hope that in future people will not have to wait such long periods before they can get their money.

Mr. Wilson: Item 156, Special Visits and Representation at External Conferences. I assume that this item includes such Conferences as the commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conferences. I should like to say that his Government does not play fair with the taxpayers of this country when it refuses to allow representation at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conferences. I think that by some form of subterfuge, representation at two or three Conferences - -

The Chairman: I am not going to permit you to talk about Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conferences. I will not permit it.

Mr. Wilson: I thought that the Commonwealth parliamentary Association Conferences were external conferences.

The Chairman: The item states “Special Visits and Representation at External Conferences.”

Mr. Wilson: Can you say, sir, whether when we go to Conferences in Malaysia or Bermuda those are external conferences? May I proceed, sir?

We are contributing to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and yet on two or three occasions, by some sort of subterfuge, either we were not represented at all or the Opposition was not included in the representation. I think the Government should do better than this and should stop playing this kind of game with the people’s money.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): In answer to the observations made by the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, I would say, first of all, that I cannot agree with him that claims against the public purse should be settled, willy-nilly, with undue haste and without very careful investigations. It may be that some claims take a long time to be settled, but I have no doubt, sir, that there is always good reason for this.

Many claims are very difficult to assess and usually they are made by people who are seeking ex-gratia payments, people who say, “We do not have a legal claim, but will you consider us for some kind of compensation?” One has to be very careful in trying to be fair and just both to the taxpayer and to the citizen who prefers his claim.

With respect to the contribution by the hon. Member Mr. Wilson, I would wish to assure him that this sub-head is not confined to matters like C.P.A. representation but covers a very wide range of matters of very great importance to the country.

For example, I extracted a list of some of the Conferences which were attended, chiefly by public officers. The Deputy Chief works and Hydraulics Officer, Mr. S. I. Ramsahoye, who incidentally happens to be the brother of Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye who adorns the Opposition benches, went to Scotland to look at hydro-power equipment and hydro-electric projects in relation to his work, because he is the officer who has been identified to do work on hydro-electricity development in this country.

Then there was the meeting of Chief Medical Officers in Bermuda which was attended by the Chief Medical Officer. There was the meeting of nursing representatives of the Commonwealth Caribbean in St. Vincent. There was a seminar on demographic aspects of manpower in Moscow. [Mr. Wilson: "Who went?"] A public officer from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Mr. Henry, went. There was a seminar in Trinidad.

There was the attachment of the Government Archivist to the Archivist in Barbados and Jamaica. There were conferences like the Annual Oil and Fats Conference. Our Analyst went to Geneva to attend a Conference on food and Drug Quality Control. It was very important in the light of what we are doing in health. There was a seminar for the teachers of the mentally retarded in Jamaica and matters like that.

It is therefore obvious that this particular subhead is one which is very important and from which funds are drawn for visits and representations abroad at very important conferences.

The Chairman: Page 28.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Item 162.

Mr. Teekah: Item 162.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Item 162.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 160 and item 162, if necessary.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 162.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Items 161 and 162.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, you may speak on item 160 and you may proceed to item 162 if you so wish.

Mr. Ram Karran: Item 160, Transport and Travelling. I notice that the legend states:

“Voted provision inadequate on account of increased audit inspections. The sum of \$8,000 has already been advanced from the contingencies Fund.”

This subhead is under the Ministry of Finance – Inland Revenue. I wonder if the hon. Minister can explain where these audit inspections are made and why are additional funds needed for travelling.

9.35 p.m.

I notice we – if we may move on to item 162 – a great deal of controversy has been developing with respect to the Government’s decision to install toll gates on the Corentyne. I presume that this \$5,000 is to take care of that. Because under subhead 12, “Expenses operation on road toll systems” as far as we are aware there are two road toll systems on one road. I presume that this refers to the Corentyne. May I observe in passing that if it applies to the Corentyne - - *[Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Hoyte]* My friend tells me that is not so, but it is difficult to accept what the hon. Member said.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ramkarran may I interrupt. I will not permit you to discuss the matter dealing with the Corentyne road.

Mr. Ram Karran: Thank you, sir. As I said there is in this country and in most countries where public works particularly local authorities and public amenities are paid for not

by the living generation but by generations which will enjoy the facilities. But it seems to me, in this case, as in many other cases we have discussed in this House that even though the Government has in some instances obtained moratoriums for loans, for construction of things, payment of which has been deferred for thirty, forty years that the Government insists on a wrong policy in my view, of exacting payments from generations now alive. They are using the facilities but they will not exhaust it. It will continue to be the property of future generations and, therefore, future generations should also join in paying for these facilities. But it appears to me that this Government wishes to exact from the present population cost of amenities which will be available for many generations to come.

In the case of the Corentyne road toll it will be observed that all the organizations are not at all friendly with the Peoples Progressive Party, most of them, one can say, are closer to the Peoples National Congress and with the exception of two who have a different view, the rest of them are all solidly behind the people on the Corentyne against the installation of these toll gates. I wish to say that it is my view and it is the view of a large section of the Guyanese people that if a road is rehabilitated – and that is what happened on the Corentyne road - - *[Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Green]* If there is no other road then the people in the area, and indeed, the Guyanese taxpayer is entitled to use that road without the payment of additional burdens of taxation.

The Americans came here with their new found ideas about separating the road vote from all other votes. They say that the taxes for petroleum products used on roads, stone for example, should be put in a separate budget because, as we know, the history of the United States has been one of the development of roads as separate projects. We have had a different situation in this country. We have had such a tradition because it has been our background. We have adopted the British system where revenue goes into a general road vote and what is required for roads is extracted from it. I do not know if the Government has changed its view and has now accepted the American way of life in toto and that is why it has descended to the level of putting on pressures on the people who have to use the road.

Another point is this: the system of tolls is not unusual in the United States but no tolls are exacted from a simple road that runs like that. If there is a short cut, if there is a bridge which can cause faster travel, if there is any such facility, and in fact many private concerns in the United States who have the land nearby put on a toll bridge here and a toll bridge there and are able to exact some money, and the toll bridge or whatever eventually finds its way into the possession of local authorities or the Central Government. But there may be no justification for this road which particularly runs in a District that is not supporting the Peoples National Congress. **[Mr. Green:** who said so'']? It is not. One would have seen this as an attempt to pressurise the people on the Corentyne with some justification - - *[Interruption]* when the hon. Member gets up to answer his questions, he stammers, falters and stumbles, and there it is from his seat, he is like a parrot. He cannot defend his own Ministry in this House but here he is the most loquacious of all the Members. *[Interruption]*

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran please continue. Will the hon. Members on the Government Front Bench please do not interrupt.

Mr. Ram Karran: I was saying if the Government wanted to be consistent then one would have expected that it would have certain built-in tolls on the East Coast road. But after the East Coast road was rehabilitated – and let me make this point that the roads on the East Coast up to Mahaica had been built not with additional funds, not development funds, not from Capital but from the Recurrent Vote. The hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply or any of this Engineers has never said that that section of the East Coast road is not properly built. It was built with the Recurrent Vote and it was only when our friends across the Table took office by fraud that they had to borrow – *[Mr. Hoyte: No, No.]* – by extending the road from Mahaica right on to Rosignal. But why did they not install tolls there? One would have thought that if they had gone to the stage of say, building another road on the railway embankment and made that into a fast road then there would have been justification for the collection of tolls on the railway embankment. But there can be absolutely no justification for

tolls to be introduced on the East Coast Road, just as as there is absolutely no justification for tolls on the Corentyne road.

As I said the reason they have put toll gates on the Corentyne is because the people on the Corentyne do not support this Government and they will never supported it. And as my friends across the Table feel, as they have often said, the Prime Minister used to say that the “coolie” man is planting rice and he got bi house. *[Interruption]* Yes, the Prime Minister said so, do not try to stand there and defend him. He said so ten thousand times. *[Interruption]* As I was saying the people on the Corentyne will never support this Government and that is why it has installed these tolls. What is the justification? People living in an area, they have to go, let us say, to New Amsterdam to teach. Or let us say that people living in New Amsterdam because of lack of amenities in the area they have to go on the Corentyne to teach, those people will have to pay or contribute to the tolls two times a day; if they come for lunch they will have to pay four times a day. Such a situation is totally unacceptable. I can only attribute it to the Government’s long drawn-out decision to persecute those people who are not supporting it. The rice industry is a clear example. But I do not wish to deal with the rice industry.

9.45 p.m.

The milk industry is a clear example and I do not wish to deal with the milk industry, but this is the third effort on the part of the Government to squeeze people who are not its supporters.

May I refer in passing to the groups who have come out in strong opposition to the Government, and may I observe that there are only two groups who have taken a wishy-washy stand. One is the supposed local authorities organisation, G.A.L.A., which the Government stole from Mr. Llewellyn John after he fell from grace. What is the Government taxing the

taxpayers for every year? In a few weeks' time we are going to meet here and taxes will go up again.

Let the Minister tell us about this area pln. Lookout, an area which was sold for \$50,000? What are the people paying taxes for if the Government is going to put up a tollgate at every corner? G.A.L.A. says a little tax must be put. Maha Sabha says: shelve it, bring it back later on when they have forgotten. But the rest of the people are all strongly in support of the people of the area that toll gates should not be erected. I wish to urge upon the Government, if it has any sense of decency, to stop the erection of the toll gates and let Guyana be free.

Suspension of Standing Order No. 9 (1)

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction(*Leader of the House*) (*Mr. Ramsaroop*):
In view of the nearness of the time when we break, I move the suspension of Standing Order 9 (1) to allow us to continue in order to conclude this Financial Paper.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 9 (1) suspended.

Resumption of Proceedings on Financial Paper

No. 6 of 1971

Mr. Ally: Both the people on the Upper Corentyne and I believe that the slogan of the present Government, that it wants to make the small man a real man, is not correct. The real motto is to make the small man a dead man. Not too long ago, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, the then Minister of Finance, in introducing the Bill to amend the Ordinance dealing with licences on vehicles, sought to justify his argument for an increase in the cost of the licence by saying that there are now good roads. Since that increase, the owners of vehicles have increased their fares and their freightage. I should like to quote some of the increases in the cost of licences.

The cost of a licence for a truck increased from \$300 to \$600 and \$700. This is the ordinary truck which people use for transporting things for the shops and so forth. Fitness for a truck in 1964 cost \$5. Today it is \$15 and the licence for driving a truck rose from \$1 to \$5. A hire car licence was increased from \$47.42 to \$75. Fitness for a hire car rose from \$2 to \$4, and the driver's licence went from \$1 to \$5. The licence for a private car was increased from \$1 to \$10; fitness for a private car increased from \$1 to \$10, and the driver's licence from \$1 to \$5.

The licence for a tractor went from \$4 to \$20; the driver's licence from \$1 to \$5, and fitness from \$1 to \$5. With regard to motor cycles, driver's licence from \$1 to \$5, and fitness from \$2 to \$5; provisional driver's licence, from 50 cents to \$5 for three months.

This is what this Government is doing with the poor people. The public will have to use these vehicles and they will have to pay. On every gallon of gasoline a vehicle consumes, the Government receives 42 cents. What is the Government doing with this money? We were told in this House that the increase in the cost of the licence should be related to the fact that there are good roads and there would be fewer repairs to be done on vehicles.

There is a toll gate at No. 62. The people from Tarlogie will have to go to Springlands if they want to see the G.M.O. People have to go on business; people also have to meet their relatives and so on, but this is where people are compelled to travel because of sickness. Now, they can ill afford to pay the car fare and the doctor's fee. When there is a toll to pay, they will

have to lie in their homes and face death. They cannot afford to go to see the G.M.O. At the moment, if someone is in the hospital and a relative wishes to visit the sick person in the hospital, he will have to think 101 times before doing that. From Wellington Park to Adventure, these people have to pass a tollgate at Hoystye in order to see a G.M.O. at Port Mourant.

I do not know if this Government is thinking of what it is doing. At Kildonan-Nurney, there are very poor people, especially P.N.C. supporters. When they want to go to see the G.M.O. at Port Mourant, at night especially, they appeal to P.P.P. supporters, who own hire cars, to reduce the fare which they normally pay, and these hire car drivers, in sympathy with them because they all live in the same village, will help them. If the fare is \$5, they will take \$3.50.

9.55 p.m.

The toll gate is now up. When the Government starts charging a toll, will these people go to the owners of hire cars and ask them to make a reduction? If so they will say, "We will do it, but you will have to pay the toll." And when they reach the toll gate, will they ask the man at the gate, "Please for a pass?"

The Government is telling these poor people "You cannot afford to go to the G.M.O. you cannot afford to go to the hospital. Therefore, lie down in your homes and face death." This is what the Government is telling the public.

Let us check and see what else will happen. Rice farmers from Rose Hall, Corentyne, will have to take their rice to the bonds of the Rice Marketing Board at Springlands. They will have to pass two toll gates on the road and they will have to pay. What will happen? The price of rice will automatically go up. The rice farmers will have to pay, not only when they are transporting rice but also when transporting paddy. So they will have to pay twice.

The people within the Nos. 57 – 61 area bury their dead at the No. 66 burial ground. When there is a dead to be buried the people within the area who own trucks, cars and so on, come out on the road and transport relatives to the burial ground. This will come to an end because every vehicle will have to pay a toll at no. 62.

What this Government is telling the people of that area is that the persons who can afford to pay can bury their dead there but other people should bury their dead somewhere else or throw them in the ocean. There will be no more funeral processions.

That is not all. Usually when someone is sick within this area, especially in the Upper Corentyne district, the G.M.O. at Skeldon takes no risk and sends the patient very quickly to the New Amsterdam hospital. We have not got the service of an ambulance which means that the person will have to get a car and will have to pay at the toll gates. At the moment, many people cannot afford this. Can they afford it when they are poor? It will be rather hard on them.

It seems to me that this is a heartless Government. I thought that the Prime Minister had some sort of softness in his heart, but there is none at all as far as I can see.

Most of these people will no longer be able to take their sick relatives to the New Amsterdam hospital and when the people at Crabwood Creek have sick relatives in the New Amsterdam hospital they will have to think a hundred and one times whether to visit the patient or not.

I doubt whether the Prime Minister knows that this will affect not only the Corentyne district but Georgetown as well. All the vehicles that transport provisions to the city of Georgetown will be affected. Automatically the prices of all the provisions and fruits that come down to Georgetown will go up because the people will have to pay tolls. Building materials, coming from Crabwood Creek to build houses in the city, will also cost more.

I had a talk today with one of the men who bring material down to town. He told me that automatically the price will go up because if the truck drivers have to pay the toll they will pass it on to the people who buy building materials.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally, do you propose to be much longer?

Mr. R. Ally: No, sir. The people at New Amsterdam will be affected and the people in Georgetown, as I have said, because fruits and vegetables are transported from different areas to those points.

Automatically the people who buy and sell rice will have to cease this because they will be unable to do it. At the moment they are claiming that all the profit they get from selling a bag of rice is the empty bag and if they have to pass toll gates and to pay a toll they will have to cease selling rice. We would be putting hundreds of people out of jobs. We would be creating more unemployment in this country.

I wonder whether this Government realizes how that Corentyne road was built. That was a dam, sir. It was built by our grandparents and great-grandparents. They built the dam on their own land. After a time, the British government assisted them with burnt earth. They used donkey carts to do the work. Have you ever heard people in the country areas saying that the donkey is the king of the road? That is because they used donkey carts to spread burnt earth on the dam and they used bulls to pull the rollers.

This is how the road was built. In the 1950s the then colonial government surfaced the road with bitumen, as has been done now, but the colonial government did not think of putting up gates. It did not think of charging tolls. It was more sympathetic than you the people in the P.N.C. Government.

Before the Government finished the road, it took away land belonging to the people in the area and removed their fences. It took additional land from the people without even consulting

29.11.71

National Assembly

9.55 – 10.05 p.m.

them. Today this very Government has told the people that they will have to pay for it. [Mr. Green: "They were paid."] Nobody was paid for the land. They were paid for the fruit trees.

The Chairman: Are you winding up?

Mr. R. Ally: I want this Government to be aware of what happened yesterday on the Upper Corentyne. The Guyana Graphic said that 260 motor cars were in that motorcade. That is false. The motorcade had no less than 800 motor cars. I was there and I can tell you. There were also about 16 trucks and about 50 motor cycles in that motorcade.

I hope that when the Government receives the resolution that was passed yesterday it will reconsider its decision. Instead of charging a toll, it will be forced to close down the toll gates. If the people in the Corentyne stand together the Government will have to close down the gates. Members of the Government should check and see how many organisations got together. When they ask the people to stand behind them, they will do it.

I only hope that the Government will do something about the toll gates and that it will at last show sympathy for the people of the Corentyne.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 10.05 p.m.

10.20 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, the introduction of three toll stations on the Corentyne is the latest of a series of penalties being inflicted by this Government on the poor people of our country. The Government by no stretch of logic or argument could justify the introduction of these three toll stations. The introduction of these toll stations is a means of raising more tax and bringing more money to the Government's coffers.

But as I speak now I recall the words of Mr. Fred Wills, well-known supporter of the Government when one night he, Mr. George DePeana and Dr. Wilfred David were on the radio programme "Action Line". They were discussing the possibility of an employment tax. Mr. Wills said he was opposed to an employment tax because Guyana is probably one of the most taxed countries in the Western Hemisphere. And this is true. Guyana is heavily taxed, and introducing the toll system is certainly going to tax the Guyanese people much more.

Why does the Government want to have toll stations? Is it because as is said that the road has been recently resurfaced? The Corentyne road is not the only road that has been resurfaced in this country. If that is true it means that toll gates would be introduced all over the country where the roads have been resurfaced. But the principle of toll is by far a different thing. In other parts of the world and in developed countries like Guyana, the toll system is introduced on alternate roads, on roads where better travelling facilities are provided for the passengers and vehicles, not on the only road. You have two toll gates on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway. That does not mean it justifies having on the Corentyne and other areas. Is it that the people at Linden are quarrelling about the toll stations and so the Government wants to how, "Well you are well-known supporters of our party and therefore we are not discriminating. If you have to pay, well-known supporters of the P.P.P. in those predominantly P.P.P. areas will have to pay too." Is it that the Government is trying to justify the toll stations on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway that is why it has introduced these three toll stations? If that is so, it means that all over the country this will be introduced.

Clearly, where will the Guyanese people, the poor people, be able to find this money? Where would they be able to raise all this money? Is it that the Government is seeking out every

possible area to squeeze people more? The cost of living has been increasing every year. Wages are not increasing. The unemployment situation is deteriorating every year. Why this unnecessary hardship on the poor people?

This Government is introducing a toll system of the Corentyne. That means that it will be introducing toll stations on the East Demerara, on the West Demerara, on the Essequibo Coast. But that is not the principle of a toll system, because these are the only roads that people are using; they are everyday roads. I am sure that even diehard members of the People's National Congress do not agree with that measure. It is a highly unpopular measure. If the Government were to have a referendum on something like that - - *[Interruption by an hon. Member.]* I am not talking about a rigged referendum, I mean something honest, reflecting the feeling of the people; then the Government will see how extremely unpopular it is.

If the Government wants more votes, if it wants to raise more tax, if it wants to generate more wealth, you cannot generate from people who do not have wealth. The Government should go in for industrialization. This country is highly under-industrialised. The Government should not only look into things like the Chronicle project which does not bring any revenue to the Government. It ought to realise that there are other ways by which it would be able to raise money and not by squeezing people who can hardly afford it. The Government must realise that things like infrastructural development would not raise money immediately. I am sure the Government understands.

10.30 p.m.

The returns from infrastructure development take at least 25 years to 100 years and the Government really must not expect to get back the returns in 5 or 10 years' time.

This money spent on infrastructure, the Government must be aware, will be recouped over a long period. If the Government wants quick returns, it should turn to agriculture or industry. It should not expect that: because we put down a new road here, we must get back the money tomorrow. It is poor economic planning, therefore, it is very wrong on the Government's part to expect that everywhere there is a road, there is a toll station. It will only impede progress on the road. When one is driving a car and reaches a road block, one feels disgusted. Everyone knows how disgusting a road block is. These will be three permanent road blocks. How can the Government justify the fact that a man living half a mile from the toll stations, as soon as he comes out of his home, he has to pay, whether he goes half a mile or a mile.

They are putting down one at Hogstye. That is just outside Black Bush Polder. There is not one Government secondary school in Black Bush Polder, therefore every student passing the station will be affected. It is a penalty highly unjustifiable; it is extremely bad. I cannot understand how any Government which wants to keep its fingers on the pulse of the nation and to make sure it has a small degree of popularity would do such a thing. Is it just to show that: because we put toll stations on the Soesdyke-Linden highway, we are going to put there too, so there will be no grumbling.

The Government must look at other ways to see that funds are generated without pain to the people. Much more money could be generated in this country without people suffering so badly. Generating wealth does not mean that people must suffer. Once the development programme is so well planned, a government can raise a lot of money in its coffers without the people suffering. It does not have to squeeze every cent out of the people in order to put it into the Government's coffers. This does not mean that the Government must raise this money by any other form of revenue. The money could be generated by a better development programme in this country.

I wish to ask the Government to withdraw the three toll stations which are now being set up in the Corentyne. It will be in the Government's interest and in the interest of the poor people. On their behalf, I plead with the Government to withdraw the toll stations.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 162, Expenses, Operation of Road Toll Systems. I sat and listened to the contributions of the previous speakers and I am particularly alarmed at the callous and arrogant attitude of the members of the Government, who seem to think that members of the Opposition can say what they like but "we will do what we want to do and that is the end of the matter." We are supposed to be a democratic institution. The Opposition makes constructive criticisms and all we hear on the other side is a lot of hilarity, the kind of attitude which seems to suggest, "Well you can talk as long as you like, it does not make a single bit of difference".

The whole rationale for establishing toll stations on the Corentyne is wrong. It is the established principle that you put a toll station where it is either an entirely new road or there is some alternative route or means of transportation, not as in this case where the Corentyne Road has been there for some time with no other means of transportation. All the Government did was to rehabilitate and that rehabilitation was started when I was Minister of Works and Hydraulics.

I remember particularly well, because the people on the Corentyne had to wait a long time for it, even though the money was available, while the Government made its decision as to whether or not it should continue discriminating against the people on the Corentyne. The Linden highway was built spanning two areas where there was never before anything. Before, all the people had was transportation by river.

An alternative route was there. This is what the residents in the area were using. It was a relatively long and difficult journey. The Government built a highway. There is relatively little population along that highway, so there is justification for putting a toll on the Linden Highway. There is the alternative route; persons can still travel by river. But what does the people of the Corentyne have? What is the justification for putting a toll gate there? What alternative route do they have? What alternative method of transportation do they have? None whatsoever! And people are living all along the Corentyne road.

The East Coast road was rehabilitated. Where are the toll stations on the East Coast road? There are none. Parts of the Essequibo roads were rehabilitated. Where are the toll stations there? There are none. Is the Government now telling us that on the principle used in the case of the Corentyne road, when the West Coast road is completed it is going to set up a toll station there? That when the stretch of road between Camp Street and Vlissengen road is finished, it is going to set up a toll station there? Are we going to have toll stations all over the country?

I the Government wants us to think that this is not rank discrimination against the people on the Corentyne, let it tell us that in respect of every other road that is being built, or rehabilitated, it will use the principle of setting up a toll station.

This is a serious state of affairs. Government is going to create hardship on the people of the Corentyne district. The cost of living is rising already. If tolls are charged on the road, this will add to the rising cost of living; transportation costs will go up. As one hon. Member said, if the man who is living on one side of the toll station goes across to visit his neighbour on the other side of the station in his car, he will have to pay a toll. What other route can he use?

I should like the members of the Government, for a change, to take this matter seriously. They should stop laughing and making it appear that this is a matter that does not particularly concern anybody. Let them consider the serious implications on those poor people on the

Corentyne coast and let them give this House the assurance that this toll system will not, in fact, be set up along the Corentyne road.

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

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, this question of the proposed collection of tolls by the Government on the Corentyne road is one of the most unpopular measures that this Government has ever attempted to introduce in this country in so far as the people are affected.

As a matter of fact, one is forced to note that, from the very beginning, the Government has sought to go about this business in a very furtive manner. Several attempts were made to elicit from the Government what exactly were its intentions. Even though, for some time now, everyone was talking about the visible preparations which were taking place at the three sites on the Corentyne road, there was no definite statement.

There was even a radio programme “Man in the Street”, in which people were asked what they thought about the collection of tolls – and, incidentally, as you know, sir, everyone who spoke on that programme was against the toll system. The point is that even though there was so much talk already about the collection of tolls, yet, as recently as two weeks or so ago, the Government spokesmen seemed to have been wishing to avoid giving any definite reply to queries as to the specific intentions of the Government.

In other words, the Government has been seeking to set up these toll stations and to present the people with a fait accompli. There is no consultation with the people, no effort to ascertain the views of people. This is in keeping with the Government’s policy on other matters.

We think that the collection of tolls on this road is entirely unjustified. I do not see how the Government can justify its position in imposing tolls on the people of the Corentyne.

I mentioned earlier, that this was, in our opinion, one of the most unpopular things that the Government has done and one can see, from the protest which has taken place so far, that this

is the case. Only yesterday, Sunday, there was a big protest motorcade which has already been described by my hon. Friend, Mr. Roshan Ally.

It is quite clear that even supporters of the governing party, the P.N.C., are entirely against this measure. It is true that some of them, who hold official positions, are forced, by virtue of having to submit to party loyalty, to give vocal support in public to the collection of tolls, but the rank and file are against it – and even some of those who speak out in favour of the toll are inwardly opposed to it. One P.N.C. person even said that he knows the Government is trying to punish the P.P.P. supporters on the Corentyne but in doing so it is also going to punish the P.N.C. people who love there. The P.N.C. supporters, he said, are going to get caught up in this process, too.

I mention this to give some idea of the feeling that is being generated against this question of tolls on the Corentyne road. I mention this out of a feeling that if the Government and the hon. Prime Minister himself were to take note and were to be concerned over this question and concerned about the feelings of the people of the area, they would do well to have second thoughts on the matter.

But let me proceed. As other speakers have said – and I do not wish to reiterate all the points in detail – the Government cannot be justified in imposing a toll. In the first place, as has been mentioned, this Corentyne road is certainly not a new highway, as other speakers have noted. It is merely an old road which has, undoubtedly, been improved. The people think that it is the normal responsibility of a Government to maintain proper roads, particularly in an area which is heavily populated.

Mention has been made, also, of the fact that there is no alternative road, or means of transportation, between New Amsterdam and Crabwood Creek. The road, too, passes through and connects populated areas. As a matter of fact, there is hardly any open space between New Amsterdam and Crabwood Creek where people are not living.

If one were to multiply the different possibilities that are likely to cause inconvenience and not only cause inconvenience but which will put heavier burdens financially on the people, in the course of communicating on this roadway, it is clear that the toll system on this road is entirely unjustified.

10.50 p.m.

As my colleague the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran has mentioned, it seems as if the Government is adopting the American system of tolls. I understand that in the United States on many of the roadways there are toll stations. People who have travelled in the United States say that they have had to pay several times in going from one City to another. Whereas on the other hand, I am told that in Canada, as an example just across the way from the United States, you do not have this system of tolls. At least there is hardly the same number of toll stations as you would find so plentifully in the United States.

We would like to point out also that the Government is already collecting a lot of money by way of taxes in other forms – fees, licences. These have already been referred to and I just mentioned them by way of reiteration because I know it is likely that the Government spokesmen on this question would perhaps say that it is necessary for them to pay for the road. The point that we are making is that the Government already has been increasing its licence fees which we were told were intended to maintain proper roads. Therefore we cannot have an additional burden now being imposed on the people on the Corentyne.

How would it affect the people? Let me reiterate once again. The toll fees will affect everyone on the Corentyne, not only those who have to travel. Many people, daily workers, who have to go from one place to another, who live in one part of the country and have to travel to New Amsterdam. For example, Students, teachers, sick people who have to travel to the

hospitals, people travelling from place to place to visit friends and relatives, farmers who transport their produce, including rice, will have to pay higher cost for transportation and this will definitely affect the entire standard of living. As a matter of fact, all the goods that are transported by trucks and vans, all goods in the shops will go up. Therefore, the entire cost of living of people generally will definitely rise.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that although the Government last year said it produced what it called a taxfree Budget yet we are seeing that taxes are indeed being imposed on people in other indirect forms. We feel that it is not too late for the Government to reverse its direction on this question of the toll.

At least, since the last few days, it seems that the work is going ahead on the three toll stations, not only during the normal working hours but also at nights. In other words, work is going on day and night. Even though the roadway has been cut and dug up we still feel that if the Government is really concerned with the people, their standard of living and their wishes on this matter, that the Government will still be able to reverse its position. This is where we would like to urge on the Government.

The Members on the Government side are dealing with this question from their seats as if this were some sort of challenge which they had to meet. We submit that this is at the moment a challenge. It is just a simple question ... urging the Government to come to its senses and to let commonsense be its guide. But if the Government decide to go-ahead and to construct these toll stations and to charge tolls, then these toll stations will stick out as three sore thumbs reminding people daily as they pass and they have to pay through their noses, of the oppressive policies of the People National Congress Government. And sooner or later the people will definitely put an end to this business and also to the Government that will have imposed such cruel and callous punishment on them. With all of this as I said before, we are urging the Government to reverse its decisions. It is not too late.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I will deal with item 161 first. I am told that there are large numbers of matters pending to be dealt with by the Board of Review and I would merely wish to ask the hon. Minister to do something to see that these large numbers of claims are dealt with speedily. As we are aware with the very many Amendments to the Income Tax Ordinance and particularly the one that requires the person who wishes to pay substantial sum if not entire sum of taxation before he can appeal, this really creates a very severe burden on the taxpayer. If it becomes necessary to have more than one Board of Review, I will urge this upon the Government. Because people's claims must be dealt with as speedily as possible in view of the fact that they are compelled to pay their taxes in advance before they can go to the Board.

I move on to item 162. It does appear that I am the last speaker from this side of the House. I wish to see if I can say anything to persuade the Government to look sympathetically to this question. Because the Government's argument, undoubtedly, will be that it was not motivated because of discrimination or any such considerations, the decisions to establish three toll gates on the Corentyne was based merely on the fact that Government had to spend money for the resurfacing or the building of the Corentyne road.

11 p.m.

History has it that the Corentyne has been declared more or less an area fully supporting the People's Progressive Party. Even the British Government recognized this fact some time ago when, in 1957, the entire Corentyne was made into one constituency. They said, this is Dr. Jagan's stronghold and if the Corentyne was divided into three or four seats, the People's Progressive Party would win all the seats, and since you, Jagan, are the strongest candidate for the Corentyne, the entire Corentyne will be one seat. Moving from this premise, one concludes that any action on the part of the Government, that can be interpreted as an act of repression, will indeed be described as discrimination against thousands of supporters of the People's

Progressive Party and this, to my mind, justifies arguments on the part of the Opposition that the erection of toll gates on the Corentyne is a discriminatory measure.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud, the hon. Member Mr. Teekah, the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, and the hon. Member Mr. Ally have made the point.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I adduced arguments to show why it is a discriminatory measure. I did not make the blanket charge. I showed you that there is evidence that the Corentyne is a stronghold of the People's Progressive Party. I make the second point. Unlike the Linden-Soesdyke highway, linking one town, which is miles away, with the capital, the Corentyne road passes three towns set up under the recent Marshall Plan, and so, the town of Corrivertown, the town of Rose Hall, and the town of New Amsterdam will be affected.

It is clear that people from No. 47 to No. 66 and thereabouts will have to travel to Skeldon if they want to do small shopping, if they are not keen on travelling to Georgetown. For various other reasons of importance, visiting the District Commissioner's Office, the Rice Marketing Board at Springlands, crossing to Nickerie, they will all have to go to Skeldon. We are still unaware where these toll gates will be installed, but it is true that at No. 62, a toll gate will be set up, specifically to bring hardships to persons living on the Upper Corentyne. If the other gate will be at Hogstye, persons coming to Rose Hall will be affected because there is another town.

The other significant point that has to be urged is that cinema facilities for the Upper Corentyne are at Skeldon. Guyana has very little opportunity for recreation. The majority of people of this country, when they are seeking avenues for recreation, the only place they can think about is the cinema and, therefore, people on the Upper Corentyne, if they wish to go to the cinema, will be compelled to go to Skeldon. So, if he is going to the cinema it will be necessary for the so-called small man, about whom the Government talks so much, to find money not only for the ticket and the hire of a car but he will have to find money to pay for toll station charges.

This is the same position with respect to persons coming down to Port Mourant and Rose Hall, and those beyond Albion when they have to go to the cinema in New Amsterdam or in Canje.

The toll station is a burning question. We are opposed to toll stations whether they are on the Corentyne, or on the Linden highway, but we say that the arguments against the establishment of toll stations on the Corentyne are stronger. I make the point because the Government has used one of its arms, G.A.L.A., to say: make the fee 50 cents. We are against a charge of even one cent. The principle is wrong on the Corentyne.

Turn to agriculture and I make this point. It was reported in one of the newspapers that the Government proposes to enact legislation to give certain powers and authority to G.A.L.A. to ensure that the Corentyne roads are properly used, particularly since the press reports state that heavy vehicles damage the roads. I warn the Government that we are opposed to any legislation whereby G.A.L.A. an arm of the People's National Congress, will preside over the laws of this country. Heavy vehicles must of necessity use the roads because, in order to get to the rice fields, in order to cross from one side to the other side, draglines, tractors, and so on will have to use the Corentyne road, and if it is true that the hon. Minister of works, Hydraulics and Supply is considering giving such authority to G.A.L.A. – because it is reported that he made this statement – I say that this is another vindictive, callous, discriminatory and ruthless move on the part of the Government to suppress people who, the Government believes, are enemies of the Government, supporters of the People's Progressive Party on the Corentyne.

Mr. Chairman, you can see, I am sure, how far reaching this move is and, therefore, I would wish to urge upon the Government to reconsider this whole question of the establishment of toll gates on the Corentyne. It cannot be justified by any argument. I was looking at the legend to see whether the provisions are applicable.

The Chairman: You will remember that I said, to discuss it and have the evidence.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: what I say is this, that if this provision was clear that it would be used for the establishment of the toll gates on the Corentyne, I would have moved the

deletion of the item, but since we have no clear indication that this provision is for the establishment of the gates, I cannot move the deletion because I see that it is for wages.

11.10 p.m.

Finally, let me say that the people on the Corentyne, in no uncertain terms, have shown by their demonstration on Sunday last that they are opposed to the toll. The hon. Prime Minister may not be inclined to listen to us, but, at least, if he wants to demonstrate the principles that should influence a good Prime Minister, he has the opportunity to do so tonight because the people of Corentyne have spoken. The people have come out and if the Government has any regard for the aspirations and the wishes of the people, it will tonight take the opportunity to say that it is withdrawing, if it has already made a decision for the establishment of toll gates on the Corentyne.

The Prime Minister: This matter of the proposed tolls on the New Amsterdam/Crabwood Creek road has generated a great deal of interest and has also been the occasion for undoubted mock heroics.

There has, for instance, been the suggestion, nay statement, that the tolls are discriminatory, intended to penalise a section of the country where it is alleged the major Opposition party enjoys large support. But, even as that statement was being made by one member of the Opposition, two colleagues of his, from the same party, were suggesting that there were going to be great sufferings occasioned on political supporters of the governing party.

Why should it be considered discrimination if tolls are levied on the Corentyne road and not discrimination when tolls are levied on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway? And be it recalled that in November, 1968, a few weeks before the toll was established on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway, the Leader of the Opposition, with Gilbertian pomp and circumstance, inveighed

against the levying of that toll. So I cannot for the life of me discover the act of discrimination in the one case and not in the other. Levying of the tolls is both discriminatory in both cases or nondiscriminatory in both cases. There can be no discrimination between the motivations in the two instances.

It seems that what in fact the Opposition is doing is to take a stand against the levying of tolls on any occasion or in any circumstance. Sotto voce says my good and young friend, Mr. Vincent Teekah, "That is so." Well, if that is so, is it not an excursion into the field of semantics to attempt to say that the rationale of tolls is the existence of an alternative route and that there was an alternative route in the case of Linden?

Mr. Teekah: I did not say that.

The Prime Minister: Methought that I heard the hon. Member Mr. Teekah say that whereas it might have been justifiable in the case of the Soesdyke/Linden Highway because there was an alternative route - -

Mr. Teekah: *Mr. Feilden Singh said that.*

The Prime Minister: I apologise for insulting my hon. Friend, Mr. Teekah. Therefore, this attitude on the part of the Opposition to the toll on the Corentyne road, to my mind, is part of a general attitude to the levying of tolls.

The Soesdyke/Linden Highway was built at a cost of \$17 million. We charged a toll there so as to find the money from the users of that highway to amortise the capital investment and to maintain the road. The Corentyne road, which had fallen into a state of disrepair within a few months of its having been rebuilt in 1952 under the supervision of one Mr. Sherrett, who subsequently left the country, has been redone and if one looks at the road, there is not only a much superior surface, but it is a superior road even to the one that was done in 1952. If one looks at the shoulders, for instance, one sees that they are wider, stronger and introduce a new

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safety element which was completely absent when the road was last resurfaced in 1952. The Corentyne road has been redone at a cost of over \$20 million.

I shall not answer the hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, according to the multitude of his prevarications and folly when he attempts to suggest that at any time there was ever an attempt by any Government led by me to postpone the building of that road. His memory is short, as is his political life.

If there were to be discrimination when there are so many other roads that could have been done, the act of discrimination could have been perpetrated at the very beginning by the government merely deciding to request a loan or agree to a loan for that sum or any other sum for other roads. It seems to me that it is a pity that the debate has descended to the level of charging discrimination in the face of irrefutable argument and incontrovertible facts.

Let us now seek examine the rationale, the *raison d'être*. Guyana is a poor country, but poor country or rich country one has to pay for what one gets. Reference has been made to North American countries where there are roads on which no tolls are charged and roads on which tolls are charged when there are alternative roads. Let me remind those who would seek to find a parallel between Guyana and North America that when North America was at our stage of development a road of the quality of the Corentyne road would not have been imagined.

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Let me also seek to point this out that when they were at our stage of development free education was unheard of, and ignorance and illiteracy were supposed to be the lot of the under dog; free medical attention a chimera; as for university education that was reserved for sons of the elite and a few who, by patronage or luck could break through. Therefore, to compare Guyana with

North America is to compare unequals as qualified lawyers would say the cases are not on all fours.

Since we have to pay for a road of that quality, the next question that arises is: Who should pay? I am interested particularly in the statement of the hon. Member Mr. Teekah to the effect that he is not saying that payment for this road should be by way of increased licences or by way of increased taxation on petrol. There he stands in contradistinction to this fellow party member Mr. Mahendranauth Poonai who suggested that an increase in licences and a tax on petrol would be a way up. But in the best of regulated families you find these differences and I will not make heavy weather of this difference.

The question is: Must the entire community and nation be asked to pay for the amortization of the investment? Or must the users primarily be called upon to pay? After careful consideration and a great deal of discussion both at Cabinet Sub-Committee and at Cabinet level it was decided that in the ... tradition of the Soesdyke/Linden Highway any special payment should be made by or be chargeable to the users of the road. If we had said that we would tax gasoline further, then we would have heard that everyone who uses a petrol-driven vehicle has to pay more including the poor passengers. Incidentally, indeed this is a relative world. For as the hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally observed there are poor people on the Corentyne who own trucks.

The proposal of the toll, Mr. Chairman, is not against the Corentyne people. It is not intended to be paid by the Corentyne people per se, but to be paid by the users of the road. Is it suggested for one moment that the Corentyne is a separate part of the world where no people from outside of Corentyne go? Therefore, the toll will have to be paid not only by Corentyne users of the road but also non-Corentyne users of the road.

Now a false assumption which is abroad is that whatever is the toll, it will represent a levy to be paid in full by every individual who passes the toll station. Of course, there are some who would travel in a motor vehicle alone. But if one is thinking of vehicles that ply for hire, it

really means, assuming that they obey the law, that normally the minimum number of persons against who the charge will be made, will be six. Undoubtedly, that will mean that something is being paid which was not paid before.

But let us remember the condition of the Corentyne road prior to this. Are we to understand that when hire-car drivers in the past fixed their fares they they did not take into account vehicular maintenance, replacement of parts, and repaid deterioration of their vehicles? If the plea is going to be made that the Government should do something to control charges made by hire car drivers, that would be reasonable. Because in this case with a highway of this quality all those costs, which must have been taken into account when charges were made by way of fares, must go down, and, in fact, dehors the toll the charges should be less. Even if one assumes that the toll is going to represent an additional charge by the hire-car drivers what reason is there to suggest that such charge should be more than the reduction which there ought to have been as a result of the superior road and lower maintenance and rehabilitation cost of vehicles.

Mr. Chairman, one has to ask oneself this: Are we bound to travel by single vehicles or motor cars? The Government has already introduced public transport of a high quality on the East coast Demerara and the East Bank Demerara. It is proposed that public transportation of the same quality will be introduced *pari passu* with the introduction of any toll. A bus normally carries thirty-six person apart from the driver and conductor. It therefore means that unless one wants to enjoy the luxury, or relative luxury shall I say, of travelling in a hire car rather than in a comfort public bus, thirty-six and two, thirty-eight person will absorb the given toll.

The actual size of the toll has not been decided on and I have more to say on this question. Let us assume for argument sake that the toll from Skeldon through to New Amsterdam is about the same as the toll in the case of Linden/Soesdyke Highway. It will mean that it is about a little more or a little less than 10 cents per person if you took in all the toll gates and assuming that the bus started from New Amsterdam and went past Skeldon or vice-versa.

The Government has particularly decided that the toll will not be introduced until the public transportation with fixed rates and reasonable rates has been introduced. *[Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.]*

Mr. Chairman, I am a little disgusted by this obvious mixture of two races who keeps on suggesting and making such rude and pejorative remarks referring to a substantial section of our population as “coolies”.

11.30 p.m.

I am a little disgusted. May be he is trying to prove his membership of one-half of his make-up and he is attempting to suggest that the view of this house, looking from the Speaker, that the Government in any way wants to discriminate against any race on the question of a toll. Are they “coolies”, to quote him, for I would never refer to an important and dignified group in that language, but I like to be accurate in quotation. At Linden, when the toll was introduced, what then was the reason? But this gutter argument, unworthy of this House, has not only been introduced by him when he was on his legs but as he awakens for a few moments from his slumber.

As the Government sees it, the question here is twofold. How is it to be paid for? How are we going to liquidate this \$20 million debt? The answer to that question, the Government has given. The second one is, what therefore should be the level of the toll or tolls? If the tolls were to turn out in total to be higher than the toll on the Linden-Soesdyke highway, that is, per unit mile, then perhaps in the absence of statistics to show that, per unit mile, the cost of the Corentyne road was higher than the cost of the Soesdyke-Linden road, discrimination could be suggested. But the statistics will have to show. I am not seized of those statistics at the moment. *[Interruption.]*

I am willing as Prime Minister and the person to do so, to declassify the Cabinet minutes with respect to the levying of these tolls, minutes which go back months ago, and to show that then the decision taken by the Cabinet was that in any case where we build a road up to this highway standard and quality, tolls should be levied. Then let it be said that when we raised the level of the approaches from Buxton through to the East Bank that it was discrimination. This House is entitled to a higher level of contribution on matters of this type, and to ease the consciences of those who ask about the East Coast road, having declassified the Cabinet minutes, they will see that we thought of it long before it was raised here or suggested by the brother of the Bishop.

Representations have been made to the Government, and let me say this. Government is unaffected by so-called demonstrations, when the Graphic states there were only 216 cars, and my hon. Friend Mr. Roshan Ally says there were 800 cars; well, the Graphic ought to have been there, I think one Mr. Barclay, a correspondent of the Graphic, is stationed in Berbice, and I understand that he is literate in so far as reading, writing, and counting are concerned. This Government is completely unimpressed by the show put on, by this Hitler-Stalin combination of Subnauth and Chandisingh. This is a Government. This Government never withdrew a Budget. This Government never had a Bookers' finance man write a Budget; this Government never borrowed money from Bookers. Mr. Chairman, you will understand the inference.

Representations have been made to the Government by two organizations, to wit, G.A.L.A. and the Maha Sbha, and Government is carefully studying those representations and making note of the alleged hardships which have been stated by these organizations. The question of what should be the size of the toll, or what should be the4 circumstances in which the toll should be levied, what arrangements should be make for public transport for school children travelling, all of these matters will be considered most carefully and urgently by Government before the final decision is taken. Finally, I should like to reiterate and repeat that the toll will not be introduced until a proper public transportation system to the satisfaction of Government and operated by the Guyana Transport Services has been introduced. *[Applause.]*

11.40 p.m.

The Chairman: *The hon. Minister of Finance.*

The Minister of Finance(*Mr. Hoyte*): Mr. Chairman, may I just add one point in support of what the hon. Prime Minister has said on subhead 12 (Expenses, Operation of Road Toll System). It is this: in most countries where a highway such as the Corentyne Highway has been built there is exacted from every property owner along the highway a tax. That is because those property owners, by reason of the construction of that highway, enjoy an unearned increment which enhances the value of the property adjacent to the highway.

In places such as the United Kingdom, that tax is called a “betterment levy” and is familiar to people who have knowledge of taxation and various methods employed in different countries. I think we must bear in mind that the value of every property along the Corentyne Highway has been enhanced considerably at public expense.

The hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, raised a query on subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, Ministry of Finance – Inland Revenue. I should explain for his benefit that the Inland Revenue Department has the power to audit the books of private companies and their stock. This sum reflects increased activity in that field.

In particular, since November, 1970, after the Government announced its intention to participate meaningfully in the bauxite industry, the officials of the Inland Revenue Department have been going up to Linden to audit both the books and the stock of the Demerara Bauxite Company and in the first half of this year that activity was intensified.

The hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, hoped, in relation to subhead 10, Expenses of Board of Review, that there would be increased activity in relation to objections which are pending at the Inland Revenue Department. I can assure him that there has been increased activity. Indeed, this very provision, which is being sought, reflects that fact. There

has been an increased number of sittings of the Board of Review and the Department has been working overtime to clear off the heavy backlog of objections.

It will be recalled that we recently passed the Tax (Amendment) Act, 1971, which requires professional people listed in that particular Act to obtain a practice certificate. Obviously they have to put themselves in order before a practice certificate is issued and sit follows, therefore, that the Inland Revenue Department will have to clear off objections which those persons might have raised before the end of this year. That work is being done and, as I said, the board of Review is sitting more regularly to deal particularly with those cases.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, at the risk of being heckled and called dull, I carve your indulgence to ask a few questions with regard to Government's policy on this question of a toll.

Has a loan been taken to build the East coast road? Will it be necessary to amortise that loan? Has satisfactory public transport been provided by Government through the Guyana Transport Services on the East Coast road? If the answers to these questions are in the affirmative can the Government explain why a toll is not levied on the East Coast road?

The Prime Minister: The East Coast road was done by a grant from the President's Privy Purse. It was not a loan. The standard of the East Coast road is not as high as the standard of the Linden Highway or the Corentyne Highway.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Mr. Chairman, I hope that you will permit me to ask the hon. Prime Minister a simple question. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the people of the Upper Corentyne depend upon the Lord's blessings and so they are saying "Lord Burnham, have mercy on us", because they know that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

The Prime Minister: I make no claim to nobility or divinity.

The Chairman: Page 29.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 166 and 167.

Mr. Wilson: Item 164.

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

Mr. Wilson: This item deals with Interim Relief, Ministry of Finance – Revision of Wages, Salaries and Related Payments. I should like to ask a simple question. How long will this job evaluation exercise take? Is the Government using it to keep increased salaries remote from the grasp of public servants until elections are announced and then we will hear that the job evaluation exercise has been completed? Is this a way to bribe the people?

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 166, Ministry of Mines and Forests – Forests, subhead 1, Personal Emoluments. We are not opposed to the post of Supernumerary Senior Forest Inspector but what we say is that there is need for greater thought in the Division of Forestry.

From Press reports the C.D.C. may be closed down. Hundreds of persons are going to be pout out of work and unle3ss the Government can think in advance it means that unemployment will rise extensively. It is necessary for the Government to start working harder to explore our forests with a view to making our various types of wood more useful in Guyana's context.

We have been importing cement in large quantities. If the Government wants to decrease the high importation from foreign countries, then it will have to provide the nation with alternatives.

In the case of forestry, we can indeed reach a stage of self-sufficiency for the building of houses, furniture and so on.

I should therefore like to urge the hon. Minister concerned to look into this matter in a more comprehensive way with a view to providing greater facilities to the people of this country. If this is done, then the Government can consider immediately the take-over of the Guyana Timbers Limited. Probably tonight the hon. Minister can tell us if the Government has given consideration already to the nationalisation or some arrangement for the take-over of Guyana Timbers Limited so that the people who are employed there can be assured just before Christmas, that something is being done for them. With our extensive forest facilities and the Guyana Timbers a great deal can be done for the workers and for the boosting of our economy.

Item 167: I urged before in this House that there are several areas that need serious consideration. I want tonight to urge the hon. Minister to set up the necessary machinery for our minerals – fixing of prices for our gold and diamonds. The pork-knockers have been complaining that they are being robbed by the people who have been purchasing gold and diamonds from them. As a matter of fact, only a limited number of shops have been set up in these areas and only few persons are allowed to purchase from them.

I am not opposed to the Government sending out from the country or allowing expatriates who have been involved in this trade. But while you chase the expatriates from the country you must not allow the local people to exploit those who have to suffer in the Interior to produce these rich commodities that we have in our country. Most of these people are associated or are connected within the ranks of the Peoples National Congress.

The time has come for the Government to consider purchasing equipment that are being used in the process of exploration and search for gold and diamonds etc., and lending them to pork-knockers, instead of exposing them to people who have, so that they have to pay higher rentals.

Further, the time has come for the Government to give serious consideration and thought for the housing of the people in those Interior areas.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud, under item 167, the legend states:

“To provide on the Fixed Establishment with effect from 1st August, 1971, inclusive, for the creation of one post of Chemist on the A4 salary scale.”

Whilst one is tolerant, let us confine ourselves to the provision.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: I agree if the item is viewed in that very strict sense you can probably say that I am going beyond the provision. I wish to crave your indulgence only for a few minutes.

The Chairman: I have allowed you a lot of lacity. I will not allow you.

Mr. R. D. Persaud: The point I am making is this: The Government is seeking this provision for a Chemist in order to expand and ensure that the country takes proper control of this vital sector of our economy and in so doing we must also tell the Government that we need not only a chemist but, we need other things so that we can be better off. It is from this trend of thought that I proceeded to make the suggestion I have made for the consideration of the Government and indeed help to boost this industry which according to the last report shows that the production of gold and diamond has dropped.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Finance on item 164.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, I have explained before in this House, and other Members of the Government have explained both in this House and elsewhere, that the job evaluation is not being done by the political Government. This is an exercise which is being done by the public servants themselves. I have also explained some months ago when we debating the Financial Paper in which we sought the sum of \$6 million to pay interim relief to public servants that the public servants themselves had told the government that they expected to complete this exercise

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some time in the course of this year. I hope that there will be no occasion for me to repeat this simple fact in this hon. House.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Mines and Forests.

The Minister of Mines and Forests (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, with regard to item 166 hon. Members are no doubt already aware that Government intends to set up a Forestry Corporation next year, and that we hope to have the assistance of a very highly qualified Guyanese in this undertaking. We are conscious of the need to maintain employment as far as possible and we are concerned about the proposed shut down of Guyana Timbers. We have under investigation at the moment the whole question of the timber industry and more particularly the operations of that concern.

I should like to make just one passing reference with respect to the closing down of Guyana Timber Ltd. and to remark that as far as my knowledge goes this company has not been making a profit for a number of years. I think they have made a profit only one year during the whole of their existence.

12 midnight

The closing of this particular undertaking is part of a pattern which has become somewhat worldwide. I mention this because some people seem to think that the only country in which businesses are closing in Guyana, but a perusal of the papers from abroad would show that this is taking place in England, in the United States, in Japan, in Canada, and in other countries.

With regard to using our timber for housing the people, I think hon. Members are aware of Government's policy of using clay bricks and we intend to use our timber for export, mainly, so that we can earn foreign exchange.

With regard to item 167, it does appear in fact that the hon. Member who raised the question answered the question himself because he seems to know what is going on in the Ministry, and I can assure him that his information is correct. Thank you.

The Chairman: Section “B” page 2. I wish to remind Hon. Members that we have already dealt with item 10. Page 3. I wish to remind hon. Members that we have already dealt with items 19 and 20.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Items 14 and 15.

Mr. Teekah: Item 16.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Item 14, Tapakuma Extension. I wish to ask the hon. Minister whether the payment now sought is for work done in the Stage II of the Tapakuma project. If this is not so, why has the Stage II of the project not been started? I understand that the Government intends to carry out the works in different stages. The area which I am referring to is the area which aims at developing 800 acres of land lying to the northwest of the Somerset and Berks main canal, which is the boundary between the present Tapakuma scheme and the Pomeroun River. This area will provide drainage and irrigation canals, a new sluice on the Pomeroun river, and several checks and regulations to provide irrigation water and proper drainage facilities.

I also wish the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply to say to whom the payments are to be made and for what services received.

Item 15, Essequibo Roads. I should like the hon. Minister to say from who the Government is purchasing the land and for what purpose.

Mr. Green: the money required for the Tapakuma Extension if for the payment of accounts for the Three Friends pumping station and the excavation of the façade canal for the Somerset and Berks area. To answer the other question raised about Stage II and why it has not been started, as Members of the House should know, this is now the subject of a study being

done. The money is owed to a co-operative on the Essequibo Coast, I do not remember the name of the group, and to contractor Torrington, for the Three Friends pumping station. These accounts were sent in late and that is why they have only now come up in 1971.

With respect to item 15, as the legend explains, it is to provide for the purchase of a parcel of land at Pln. Eliza. This has something to do with Pauling and Company and the road diversion. It is to be paid to a Miss Duncan. There was some time processing this as we had to find the relatives and heirs of the owner of this bit of land where the road was diverted through.

Mr. Teekah: At item 16, I observe that the sum of \$20,000 is being sought for the completion of the Kara-Kara school. I must observe that the Government seems to be operating at double and triple standards. It seems to me, where the school is, there is one standard for that school. Depends on the geography or something. I hate to think that it would be racial discrimination. Normally, I do not analyse problems on the basis of race, so I think it would be political discrimination. You see, when I look at this, I recall that last year there was also a request by supplementary estimate to vote money for the completion of some school at Ruimveldt. What is bothering me is that in some areas, the Government foots the whole bill for the building of that school. In other areas, the Government says, no, you cannot have funds, the Government will not build the school, that school must be built by community efforts.

In other areas, even though requests have been made for assistance from the Community Development Department of the Government, still no money is being given to those areas. For example, the Meten-Meer-Zorg School was burnt down a long time ago, but the Government has neglected the rebuilding of the school there. At Mibicuri, for over three years the headmaster has been asking the Government to repair the school. Last week the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply told many untruths about vandals destroying the school. The school is rotten. The beams are rotten, they are ten years old. With all this solicitude of the Government for the people, still requests from the Mibicuri school to have the school repaired were turned down. When the matter was brought here, all we heard was, self help.

What is good for the goose is also good for the gander, and I cannot understand how in some areas the Government foots the whole bill, in other areas, the Government says on, only community effort will be allowed.

12.10 p.m.

We will only help you when you build the school by self-help.”

I went to No. 68 th other day. The Parent/Teachers Association there has been asking the Community Development Division of the Prime Minister’s Office for a long time now for assistance to extend the No. 68 school. The Association has received no assistance from the Community Development Division of the Prime Minister’s Office. I spoke to the officers of the P.T.A and no assistance is forthcoming.

I went to Annandale. I spoke with the former Minister, Miss Field-Ridley. The P.T.A has been asking the Community Development Division for assistance. It has been trying for a long time. Members are willing to give voluntary labour; they are asking that Government supply the materials. There is no response at all.

I just cannot understand how the Government gives all the money in other areas. There are three standards. One standard is that the Government foots the whole bill. Another standard is that the Government foots part of the bill and the third standard is that the Government says, “No assistance at all.” [*The Prime Minister: what about Leonora? What about Grass Hook?*”]

A Government which seeks to win the confidence of its people will use only one standard. If it is that the Government has taken a tacit decision not to build schools purely with Government funds and labour, then let that go for the whole of Guyana and do not have a

situation where at Karakara and Ruimveldt the Government foots the whole bill and at Meten-Meer-Zorg and Black Bush Polder there is no help at all, at No. 68 and at Lusignan there is no help at all.

If the Prime Minister, as it seems to me, is unaware of these things I would be very glad to furnish him with the facts. [**The Prime Minister:** “Let them see me.”] Not for you to demand proxies from them!

I took this matter up with the former Minister of Education and I am willing to take it up again with the new Minister of Education if she is not aware of these things, so that we may be able to stop such blatant political discrimination on the part of the Government.

Miss Baird: I would like to say that the Government’s record in self-help is well known and the people of Linden have mounted a massive programme of self-help. They have supplied equipment and furniture not only to the Karakara school, but to other schools in the area.

The Chairman: We turn to Section “C”. This is for the information of the National Assembly.

Hon. Members, this completes consideration of all the items. I will now put the Motion:

“Be it resolved that the committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 6 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 30th November, 1971, totaling \$9,207,917.”

Agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposal of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 6 of 1971. I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Suspension of Standing Order

The Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move a suspension of Standing Order No. 23 (3) to permit me to move a Motion of condolence with respect to the death of Sir Grantley Adams.

Question put, and agreed to.

DEATH OF SIR GRANTLEY ADAMS

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Sir Grantley Hergbert Adams, C.M.G., Q.C., first Premier of Barbados and Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation, and directs that an expression of its condolences be conveyed to the sorrowing widow and relatives of Sir Grantley and to the Government and People of Barbados.” [The Prime Minister.]

The Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon, we learnt with regret that Sir Grantley Adams, former Premier of Barbados and former Prime Minister of the now defunct West Indies Federation, had passed at the relatively ripe age of his mid-70s.

That he had made a contribution to the political life and development of his own country, Barbados, cannot be denied; that he was part of what was in those days the revolutionary movement of the 30s, as a result of which certain reforms were carried out and eventually adult suffrage ushered in, cannot be denied.

Sometimes, as we have had to note – for instance, at the passing of the late Sir Eustace Woolford – the revolutionary, the radical of one age, is considered conservative in another age. And, indeed, it is a warning to many of us who at this moment believe that we are the torch-bearers of revolution.

But, when death lays its hands upon someone like the late Sir Grantley Adams, we are given an opportunity, as human beings and fellow West Indians, to reflect, to forget any differences which might have existed on the ideological plane and to assess the contribution of men like him. His was a dream, in the 30s, of a democratized West Indies; his was a dream, in the late 50s and early 60s, of a politically unified West Indies. His earlier dream came true; his later dream foundered on the rocks, some would say of disunity, some would say of imperialist machinations, some would say of parochialism and chauvinism; but it did, indeed, founder.

There are some of us who believe that some day this dream of a West Indian nation will come true. The form it may, or will, take may not be necessarily the one envisaged by him, but the concept remains constant.

12.20 p.m.

I feel that it is our duty as fellow West Indies to note the passing of a great man, a man who, according to his lights, has made his contribution to the political development and awakening of the region and of his own country.

I will also move that the condolences which this House will express by way of Resolution be communicated to the Government of the nation of Barbados and the widow and other relatives of the late Sir Grantley Adams, a great West Indian who shall be with us no more in the flesh.

Motion proposed.

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir, Sir Grantley Adams was one of the few remaining members of the old order – the Marryshows, the Critchlows, the Manleys and the Bustamantes. Sir Grantley, like so many of these of the old order who came into their own, as the hon. Prime Minister said, in the 1930's went dissatisfaction among the working classes in this region, fanned the flames that lit the whole of the Caribbean and made it virtually impossible for the white to continue in office. They therefore decided to share power with these men who virtually succeeded them in the latter days. It will be recalled that in 1940's in most of the bigger territories – Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad – they all succeeded in holding power in a sort of way.

Sir Grantley, sir, who unlike most of his contemporaries, was at one stage regarded as one of the most controversial of the lot when he attended one of the very earlier meetings of the United Nations as a member of the British Delegation. At that meeting he, in very strong terms, rejected the suggestion by the Russian delegation that independence could be had in the West Indies and the Caribbean if they, the West Indians, wanted it. This controversial statement was met with very great opposition by many people, particularly by the writer Roger May, who wrote a very stirring criticism against Sir Grantley. Nevertheless, he was able to come out as the first Prime Minister of Barbados and, indeed, the first Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation.

Sir Grantley, as a person, was a most charming individual and we on this side of the House wish to join with the Government in offering our sympathy to the Barbados Government, to Lady Adams, and to Sir Grantley's son who has been fortunate to succeed his father not only in his profession but also as leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this section of the Opposition I should like it to be put on record that we closely associate ourselves with the tributes paid to the well-known and revered Sir Grantley Adams. Speaking for myself, I have had the honour of knowing Sir Grantley Adams, not on the political forum, but as an individual who I met in Barbados on several occasions. He was a man you were bound to respect when you met him.

In joining with tributes moved by the hon. Prime Minister and supported by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran on behalf of the major section of the Opposition I would only say that when the history is written on the development of the Caribbean, if Guyana will have produced some person who will have contributed as much as to the evolution and progress of this area at a difficult time of history, we will have much to be proud of.

[The Assembly stood in silence for one minute.]

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, that this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed. **[Mr. Ramsarop.]**

Adjourned accordingly at 12.30 a.m.
