

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 5]

**PROCEEDING AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

42nd Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 22nd December, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. SaseNarain, J.P.

Members of the Government People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

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

(Absent)

Dr. the 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

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 (Absent)

The Hon. E.B. McDavid
Minister of Information and Culture (Absent)

The Hon. Miss. C. L. Baird
Minister of Education (Absent)

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, 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. Budoo, J.P.
Mr. L. I. Chan-A- Sue Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E. H. A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. Jordon
Mr. S.M. Saffee
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mr.M. Zaheeruddeen
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. Ramsahoyte, S.C.
Mr. D.C Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.

Mr. E.M. Stoby

Mr. R. Ally

Mr. E.L. Ambrose

Mrs. L.M. Branco

Mr. Balchand Persaud

Mr. Bhol Persaud

(Absent – on leave)

Mr. I. R. Remington, J.P.

Mr. L.A. Durant

Mr. V. Teekah

United Force

Mrs. E. DaSilva

(Absent - on leave)

Mr. M. F. Singh

Mr. J.A. Sutton

Independent

Mr. R. E. Cheeks

(Absent)

Officers

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

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly—Mr. M. S. Henry

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair.*]

Prayers

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1972**

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial 1972, totaling \$197,846,560.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Chairman: When the Adjournment was taken yesterday all members who had indicated their intention to speak had done so. Will the hon. Minister of Local Government reply?

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Mingo): Mr. Chairman, yesterday afternoon members of the Opposition made reference to certain areas in local government. The hon. Member Mr. Wilson spoke about depressed areas and grants and there was reference also to the extra-nuclear areas of sugar estates. There was reference, too, to valuation and some specific questions were asked by some hon. Members. I shall first of all deal with the question of depressed areas and our policy towards grants.

The hon. Member Mr. Wilson referred to our policy towards depressed areas. I interpret this to mean those areas in which there is poor drainage and irrigation, where there are not many social amenities. Perhaps he also means those areas in which the titled position of property is not quite clear.

There are many areas which have not been brought under local government mainly because of the fact that the titled position of property in them is not quite clear. We, in the

Ministry of Local Government, are attempting to put these in order where we can, and from time to time we have made applications to have these areas declared land registration areas, as we have done in the case of No. 51-Good Hope, Mt. Sinai, Glasgow, Parika-Salem, Rosignol-Zee Lust and in other cases.

In order to raise the standard of development in these areas we have also sought to give assistance to them. There is the case of direct assistance from the Ministry of Local Government to such local authorities as Nouvelle Flanders-La Jalousie, Williamsburg-Kilcoy-Chesney, John - Port Mourant, Bel Air-Woodlands, Gelderland-Blairmont, La Reconnaissance-Mon Repos, Enmore-Hope, La Bonne Intention-Better Hope, Leguan, Bush Lot -Adventure, Morawhanna -Mabaruma-Hosororo, Bartica, Good Hope-Pomona, La Grange, Blankenburg-Hague, West Mahaicony, East Coast Berbice, Fryish-Gibraltar, Tempe-Seafield, Woodley Park and Rising Sun-El dorado.

Assistance is given not only by the Ministry of Local Government but by other central Government agencies also. Areas have benefited from assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture from the P.L. 480 as in the case of No. 51-Good Hope, Crabwood Creek and Leguan. Assistance comes from the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. Such areas as Stewartville, Den Amstel, Windsor Forest, La Grange, Good Intent-Sisters, Leguan, Klien, Pouderoyen-Best, Sheet Anchor, Cumberland, Parika-Salem and East Mahaicony have all benefited from assistance given directly by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, and initiated by the Ministry of Local Government.

Grants are also given in the form of technical assistance. The Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply is constantly being requested by the Ministry of Local Government assistance in areas here and there.

The Community Development Division of the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Economic Development are also constantly giving assistance in the various areas.

Now there can be no parallel between the system of giving grants in European countries like Britain and in Guyana.

In those countries the local authority undertakes many of the social services - education, health, housing and the protective services like Police. In our situation in Guyana it is the central government which undertakes all these services. We cannot therefore compare our situation to the situation in those countries. Until there is greater decentralization, until local authorities are given more load to carry in the social services, it means that we would have to continue to give assistance in relation to the needs which will be identified first of all by the local authorities themselves, then the Ministry would give what assistance it can, and the Ministry would seek also to have other Government agencies to assist. Until we can have further decentralization and when more services are given to Local authorities then we must have a fresh look at our policy of giving grants to local authorities.

The question of extra nuclear areas was also raised, and in this respect I must point out that rates are paid on property. You may pay rates on land alone, or on buildings alone or you may pay rates on both land and buildings. Rates are paid by the owner of property. If the buildings, alone are rated it means that the owner of the building will be entitled by law to pay rates. If land alone is rated it means that the owner of the land will be entitled by law to pay rates.

This is a point which I must seek to clarify because there is so much confusion about the situation in respect of extra nuclear areas. What happens in the extra nuclear areas is that the land is owned by the sugar estate authorities, and as owners of the land the sugar estate authorities are expected to pay rates, and in many of these areas which have recently been brought under local government the local authorities have rated land only. The sugar estate workers are owners of the buildings and therefore they would have to pay rates on the buildings.

Now mention was made of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee. I would say this does not really come under the portfolio of the Ministry of Local Government, but under the Ministry of Labour. There have been discussions between the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Local Government and the Committee itself about the situation as far as extra nuclear areas and local government are concerned. There have been discussions and at the

moment I can say that consideration is being given for the Sugar Estate Housing Bill to be presented to Parliament shortly. There should be a phasing out of certain of the activities of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund and by 1973 certain services which are normally performed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee would pass on to local authorities. During this transitional period there will be further discussions and when a final decision has been reached, information will be made available to the Members of this House.

On the question of education, I would say that the Ministry of Local Government has held for this year alone twenty-five seminars and we are planning to hold more seminars next year. There is a difficulty which we must all appreciate, that is, the question of reaching out to the people. There are people who have several strong prejudices against local government. Perhaps this is where the Opposition can help. We are quite willing to give all the information we can about local government. At the moment I think this situation needs assistance from the Opposition.

I wish to deal now with the question of valuation. The Valuation Division of the Ministry of Local Government is undertaking the re-valuation of Georgetown. We do not have the human resources, the technical resources at hand to do valuation all over the country and so valuation in areas, other than Georgetown, will be undertaken under the system which had obtained before. In other words, in District Councils and Village Districts valuation will be under Chapter 150. I should, however, try to explain the procedure of valuation. Notice is given for appraisal. There are forms which are available to property owners. The appraisers go about their work, at the end of which they publish lists which give the valuation of the entire area. I want to point out, first of all, that unless the proprietor fills the form which is given that proprietor would not have a right of appeal later on. Another important point is that as soon as the appraiser begins his work the Ministry of Local Government has no further part to play in the process of valuation.

On the question of appeal, the local authority can do nothing to alter valuation lists presented by the appraisers or the valuers. The only authority to vary them would be the courts. If there had been no filling of the form in the first place then the proprietors would have forfeited their right of appeal later on. In many areas the proprietors have not sought to have their forms

filled because, as I said, of the prejudices against local government. Many persons have not have not been filling the forms and they have been depriving themselves this right to appeal later on. Again I appeal to the Opposition to show their interest in Local Government by passing on the necessary information and helping to put this in order.

With regard to appraisalment we at the Ministry are mindful of having fair appraisements; we realise that people from time to time complain about discrimination in appraisalment. It does appear that there might be what appears to be disparity on the lists and people become infuriated about these sorts of things. What we have done in the Ministry in our attempt to have a fair system established, was to see that we had appraisers who could do appraisalment until the valuation officers were in a position to undertake valuation throughout the entire country. We have had three courses during this year for the training of these appraisers. We are planning to have further courses during next year to ensure that at least these appraisers can have some insight into a scientific approach to their work.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I come to the specific questions asked by certain hon. Members. The hon. Members Mr. Hamid and Mr. Feilden Singh were enquiring about subhead 1, item 11. The situation this year is that we spent \$13, 737 on Valuation Officers and we plan to spend \$26,064 next year.

2.25 p.m.

There are vacancies. The establishment provides for 4 valuation officers. As we stand, we have only 2. One vacancy was filled in January this year, the other in July. We are hoping to recruit one early next year. There are other Guyanese in training and we are hoping to get one Guyanese to come home to do work in the Valuation Division of the Ministry. This explains the difference in the allocation.

The hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall did inquire about the case of pensioners and so did the hon. Member Mr. Persaud. I think the law is quite clear. Any person on the ground of poverty can apply to the local authority to have exemption from taxation. You advise those folks,

if they are poor people to apply to the local authority and I am certain that their cases will be considered.

The hon. Member Mr. Stoby made some remarks about local government in the North West District. He referred to some buildings that were appraised at \$25. Now \$25 is not a very large sum, I agree, and the percent rating in that district is 2 per cent which means that a property valued at \$25 will pay only 50 cents per year which, after all, is not so horrible. There is a practice in this country of labour rate, where persons who cannot afford to pay rates, put in the labour and the value of the labour is discounted as their rate for the year. If people in this area find it difficult to secure work, they can apply to the Village Council to use the labour rate system. He also said the District Commissioner has had the rates revised. This is not true. After a visit by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, who is also Chairman of the Local Government Board, because of representations made by the proprietors, the rate was reduced from 2 1/2 per cent to 2 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried to answer the various points on that page of the Estimates which were raised by members of the Opposition.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I admire and indeed commend the obvious earnestness of the hon. Minister in answering the questions, and I think other members of the Government Front Bench may well learn from the attitude and the manner in which the hon. Minister has answered the questions. He can give them a few lessons in answering questions and how to behave in Parliament. But there are those who will not learn. *[Interruption]*

I am still very much concerned about this whole question of valuation. The hon. Minister has said they do not have the technical resources and according to him only in Georgetown is the valuation being undertaken by his Department. In the country districts the valuation is being done under the old local government system. And what confusion that system is causing! In Leguan, I am told, the valuation was done by two property owners in the district. They are specifically precluded under the Ordinance from doing this and the whole operation had to be done over.

There is a crying need for valuation to be done on a more scientific basis. The Ministry has to really do something about hastening the work of the valuation department of the Ministry. I am not certain there is enough back-up staff to do the work at the moment. There is a likelihood of two more valuation officers being recruited to make up the complement at the end of the year.

Will the hon. Minister say if he is satisfied that the two who are operating now have enough back-up staff? Has he really got 18 field assistants? Looking at the Estimates, I think he has less than 18.

There is need for this valuation to be done on a scientific basis. I am told that in the Belfield area, the Prime Minister's country residence was given a ridiculously low valuation by the people who thought they would be lenient with the hon. Prime Minister but, in fact, it was to the hon. Prime Minister's gross embarrassment and he had to kick up a racket so that they had to raise it to something like \$ 20,000. If properly qualified Government valuation officers had done this, there would have been no question of that sort of thing happening.

I understand that the standard of the valuation office is quite high. What we want is the hon. Minister to let us have the assurance that more would be done to see that this valuation office functions throughout the country, as early as possible, to let us have realistic valuations on particularly more scientific basis, and also that there would be enough back-up staff for these valuation officer to do their jobs properly. Will the hon. Minister let us know a little more about this?

Mr. Wilson: When I came in, I heard the hon. Minister on this question of grants and I heard him say that the sort of responsibilities that local authorities have in the United Kingdom and other places are not the kind that the local authorities in this country are saddled with. I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is the intention or whether it is only a camouflage on the part of the Government. ---

The Chairman: The hon. Minister did not say that. You came in when he was in the midst of a statement. He said that there is no parallel between local authorities in England and

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Local authorities in Guyana. There, the local authorities undertake social services such as education, health, housing and so on, while in Guyana the central government has to do these things.

2.35 p.m.

Mr. Wilson: In the Municipal and District Councils Act, 1969, are listed quite a number of powers and functions which the local authorities have.

For instance, by section 301 (5) there is power:

"to establish, equip, maintain and control either by itself or jointly with any other authority or association, social and community development centres... "

I want to know whether it is really the intention of the Government that local authorities should assume these functions, or is this provision put there to camouflage and to fool the people?

Under subsection (6) there is power

"to establish, erect, maintain and carry on or assist institutions, day nurseries or clinics for the care and welfare of infants...."

The Georgetown Town Council is carrying on a clinic. If local authorities are to carry out these functions are they not to receive grants? Is it not the intention of the Government to take the initiative and to stimulate local authorities to assume these functions? Or is the Government going to sit on one side and not see to it that the local authorities assume functions that are detailed here.

I can name some more powers. Let me read:

"(ii) to establish and maintain fire brigades and ambulances."

Are they not going to receive grants for this?

"(13) subject to the provisions of the Education Ordinance and the Public Health Ordinance to establish, erect, equip, maintain and manage schools and educational

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institutions, libraries, museums, art galleries and botanical and zoological gardens and to make grants of money towards their establishment and maintenance"

Then -

"(31)(f) to establish, maintain and control, either by itself or jointly with any other authority or association, hospitals, dispensaries and health centres" -

many local authorities have established health centres -

"and to make grants of money towards the establishment and maintenance of hospitals, dispensaries and health centres and to any voluntary association or institution for promotion of public health and welfare."

Section (32) deals with housing and paragraph (b) states:

"to erect and maintain dwelling-houses with their appurtenant outbuilding on such plots or subdivisions of land"

I have read out a large number of duties and functions which the very law passed by this Government sets out. I should like to know whether these are stated here for the record and whether it is not the intention of the Government to provide grants to assist the local authorities, to stimulate them and to exercise these functions.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall

Mr. Lall: The hon. Minister indicated that valuation was being done in country areas. We would like to know what criteria are used in valuing. The Minister must know the answer because I drew to the attention of this House a matter where a business place at Plaisance, a factory, was valued at \$7,000 and a three-bedroom house at Industry was valued at \$12,000.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, you are repeating the same thing you said yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Lall:I was bringing this to the attention of the hon. Minister.

The Chairman:Did you not draw it to his attention yesterday afternoon?

Mr. Lall:I did this to let him know that there is discrimination in the method of valuing property. This House wants to know what is the method used. Is the valuation made by square feet or what? We do not want to have discrimination. It is our duty to see that everybody is treated fairly. We are asking that a method should be used to ensure this. Let the hon. Minister say what is the method used.

Mr. Mingo: In reply to the hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall, may I read from Chapter 150, section 98 (2):

"The appraisers shall appraise the lots and buildings, the lofs, or the buildings, as the case may be, which they are appointed to appraise, and in making the appraisal they shall have special reference to their condition and locality."

This is all the law says about appraisal. You ask me the method: I do not know; I am not a technical valuer.

The hon. Member mentioned the case of the proprietors at Plaisance and Industry. Those persons came in to see me this morning and we had a long discussion about their problem. Efforts are being made to see what can be done to solve the problem.

The hon. Member also spoke about several new responsibilities which District Councils and Municipalities should have. We recognize these responsibilities and are willing to see that local authorities are made to have them.

Decentralisation is something you cannot rush. Discussions are going on now between the Ministry of Local Government and many other Ministries as well as local authorities. If hon. Members read the newspaper they would have seen that there are many areas in the field of education which have been identified for local authorities to enter.

With regard to health and housing, only last Saturday there was a meeting at which the part that local authorities can play in housing was discussed. The difficulty is that we cannot give grants before the stage is set for doing this. We work out the mechanics and when that is completed we give grants. Certainly grants will be given when the time comes also, in the area of kindergarten education, the Ministry of Education is now undertaking the training teachers and providing a teacher for a year, which means that actual money is not given but assistance by way of training and personnel is given.

The hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, referred to the question of valuation. I should tell him that at the moment the field staff is not full but every effort is being made to have vacancies filled as early as possible.

The fact that trained appraisers or ordinary carpenters do valuation work does not prevent people from making appeals. At Linden, in 1969, for instance, trained appraisers from the valuation division of the Ministry of Local Government carried out appraisal in the district and there were as many as 123 appeals. On the question of valuation, people are going to be dissatisfied whoever does the work.

2.45 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 68.

Mr. R. Ally: Subheads 16 and 17

Mr. Hamid: Subheads 13 and 16.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 16.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Subheads 13, 14 and 17.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 15 and 16.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Hamid.

Mr. Hamid: Mr.Chairman, subhead 13, Grants to Village Authorities towards Administrative Expenses. As I was looking through the Estimates from the year 1968, long before many other new local authorities were established and on to now 1972, there seems to be the same amount of money that is earmarked for administrative expenses. I feel this sum is rather small and it should be increased. I should like the hon. Minister to state now many persons were trained in this particular field and also to what extent assistance has been given to the many new local authorities. At the same time, I wish the hon. Minister to state why it there is not an increase in this particular subhead is.

Subhead 15, Contributions Towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets in Georgetown. I may wish to take subheads 15 and 16 together so as to expedite what I have to say. One can remember quite clearly what happened at the Local Government Elections under the Marshall Plan introduced by the P.N.C. Government where the slogan was "If you do not vote for the P.N.C. no loans or grants would be given" and, "If you want proper roads then you must vote P.N.C." This has created a feeling among the people. The P.P.P. kept out because of the large scale rigging. The P.N.C. took the full lead in having their supporters placed into office by means other than rigging and unto now we can see no improvement in roads, maintenance work is at a Standstill. Now that estimates are being discussed, here and there you can see a few patches so as to impress Members of Parliament as they pass the roads to show that the Government had been giving grants to the local authorities, the City or the Town Councils. This is not very good enough.

I can recall that many councillors in the City, Towns and in the local authorities had to resign because pressure was brought against them. Many of them are resigning because they are not getting the assistance and co-operation from the Government. I do hope that the Minister would be able to answer why it is that these limited amounts are earmarked for the development of roads in the City, the township and in local authorities. Much more should be done when one considers the amount of money that is estimated under these particular subheads. This is not good enough if this Government wants to project something to show that local authorities is a must in this country.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 13, Grants to Village Authorities towards Administrative Expenses. I should like the hon. Minister to say on what basis these grants are made and since the figure is a nice regular one perhaps the Minister would tell us to which villages it is proposed to apportion this sum of money.

Mr. Chairman, subhead 14, Grants to Morawhanna Village District. Is this the correct appellation for this new local authority? I have a note to which I alluded when I made my contribution to the Budget Debate. This one is signed "P.R., Collection of rates, Mabaruma/Hosororo Village District." It may well be that this needs to be corrected. It does.

I should like the hon. Minister to say whether it is not true that this new local authority has in it at least two Amerindian settlements with Amerindian Captains appointed by the government. This area is supposed to be a local government area. If you go to Amerindian settlements, all these villages are supposed to operate as little local government areas. How do you reconcile the two? How do you reconcile the fact that you have Amerindian Captains operating under one set of rules and regulations and you have a local authority of which they are part. I cannot reconcile this. Will the hon. Minister say?

I think also that perhaps we can have an answer to what I have alluded in my contribution to the Budget Debate where I pointed out that at least in a certain Amerindian Settlement name Mabaruma Hill where there are only Amerindians settled in small little huts, most of the time thatched huts, mud plastered huts, and in this area where there is nothing but a small group eking out a livelihood going and hunting and getting something from that then subsistence farms. These Amerindians in the settlement have been assessed. I have here a notice served on one of the Amerindians in Bumberry Hill. As I said before these people have no money, they have nothing. They have to go and beg for food, they have to try to make a livelihood the best way they can, yet they are being taxed. For what? What benefits are they going to get from this?

2.55 p.m.

This is indeed a very serious state of affairs, where the indigenous inhabitants of the country have been promised their lands and instead of their lands they are facing taxation.

I would also mention to the Minister we all know of the plan to integrate the Amerindian community into the general scheme of Guyanese affairs, and yet, during the Local Government elections, when a party organiser went up to that area he was escorted out by the police. This area is supposed to be part of the local authority district of Mabaruma-Hosororo-Morawhanna. How is the Government going to integrate the Amerindians when it is preventing people from going to them? It is necessary to give these Amerindians some consideration in these areas. Are there any means whereby Amerindians in areas like Bumbry Hill will be able to get rid of this rate levied on them? This is a thatched hut! Will there be some provision whereby these people can do without having to pay this money? It may not be a significant sum of money to the members of the Government Front Bench but to these people it means something. Surely, there should not be this utter disregard for their station in life. Let the Hon. Minister tell us how he reconciles that with the presence of Amerindian captains in that area.

Mr. Roshan Ally: I see subhead 16, Contributions towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets in New Amsterdam. According to this estimate, this is an annual contribution of \$30,000 to the New Amsterdam Town Council. The roads and streets of New Amsterdam are in a miserable condition and it seems nothing has been done to them for some years now.

I wonder whether the minister is in a position to tell us whether this grant to the Town Council will be utilized for the purpose for which it is given. It is a shame that the Mayor of that Council could be talking of tolls on the Corentyne road when he does not have anything like a road or a street in New Amsterdam. I wish the minister will look at the matter and see that the money is used for the purpose for which it is given and not for something else.

Subhead 17, Allowances to Members of Local Government Board, \$4,500. It seems the members are travelling from one place to another, going to local authorities and causing disruptions in these local authorities. The P.N.C. council is there covering the area No. 51 to Good Hope. This local authority needed a junior overseer. They advertised a vacancy and they received twenty-three applications, but when they sat in the meeting and they checked on the qualifications, fifteen of the twenty-three did not comply with the notice and because of this they

threw out the fifteen. From the remaining seven, they made their selection, a son of a strong P.N.C. activist from No.45.

After they had made the selection, they submitted the name to the Local Government Board. The Local Government Board in turn sent one Mr. McGowan, who made a special request that the local authority should hold a special meeting to meet him. He gave another name, who should be the junior overseer. The Chairman told Mr. McGowan that that person's application was one of the fifteen they had thrown into the wastepaper basket because it did not comply with the notice. Mr. McGowan said that that had nothing to do with what they did with the man's application. He was the man they would have to put and that was all.

It happened that Mr. McGowan was there, they discussed the matter and to please the Local Government Board, they put both names and decided to take a vote, but the person who was first selected had a majority. Mr. McGowan said this was wrong, no secret ballot anymore, they would have to do it by how of hands.

I feel the members of the public are made to subscribe to people who do things contrary to their wish. They disrupt the administration within their own villages. Not only at No. 51-Good Hope this has been done but at Lots 52 - 74, where that local authority needed two junior overseers and when they advertised the vacancies, they had twenty-five applications. Of the twenty-five, they had ten people who had three and more G.C.E. subjects and another ten with one or two. The remaining five had nothing at all but the two whom they selected were from among the five who had no subjects.

The same local authority needed a typist and they advertised the vacancy. They received eighteen applications and from those eighteen, one, who was teaching at a secondary school, had the Advanced Certificate in typing.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally, did the Local Government Board prevent this appointment?

Mr. R. Ally: These members of the Local Government Board are doing this; they are forcing the members of the local authority to do exactly what they want them to do.

3.05 p.m.

When they made a selection for this position, a typist who had no qualification at all was appointed. She could not prove that she had any experience in this field. The girl who had done advanced typing also had a certificate for 120 words a minute in shorthand. The present Local Government Board is encouraging this sort of thing.

I would not blame the Local Government Board as such because it appears to me that the Central Government is doing the work of the local authority. This is what is being practised at Black Bush Polder. This is practised in the Police Force and in the teaching profession. That is why the saying "One people, one nation, one destiny" is a farce. What they believe in is "one race, one party, one destiny."

Mr. Lall *rose---*

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, you did not ask to speak on subhead 15. Hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 15, Contributions towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets in Georgetown. Once again the question of the contribution by the central government to the cost of providing and maintaining roads in the city of Georgetown and town of New Amsterdam has to be raised.

It is a little bit difficult to follow the Government's thinking on this matter. Perhaps the hon. Minister would be good enough to let us know whether, as a result of the annual recurrence of this matter, the Government has thought it necessary to keep statistics in order to ascertain clearly what is the cost of maintenance of roads in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. This would serve a two fold purpose. First it would assist in assessing the claims of the city council to a greater subvention and secondly, the Minister, perhaps, would then be satisfied that the money is being properly spent.

We notice that Georgetown is still being given \$137,500 and that this has been so for the last few years. The position is the same where New Amsterdam is concerned as we see from subhead 16, Contributions towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets in New Amsterdam, that the sum of \$30,000 has been provided since 1969.

If we turn to the details of estimates of Revenue we find that in 1972 the projected revenue from motor vehicles is \$2,200,000; from other vehicles, \$9,000; from trading, \$450,000; and from miscellaneous, \$70,000. It is clear that at some time or another, every single motor vehicle that comes into this country will pass through Georgetown. Even if a vehicle is allocated to a country district, the majority of vehicles use Georgetown. Yet it is thought fit that not even 10 per cent of the revenue from motor vehicle licences should be used for the Georgetown traffic.

Perhaps the Minister would care to tell us whether statistics are annual kept so that the department could know what in fact the annual cost is of maintaining roads in Georgetown, both capital expenditure and cost of maintenance, and so that we would be able to get more than a "guesstimate" when considering whether these sums are adequate or not. I am sure that if such figures were available it would be seen, particularly in the case of Georgetown, that \$137,500 is grossly inadequate as a subvention for roads.

We all know the condition of the roads in New Amsterdam and one wonders whether the amount used as the subvention for New Amsterdam is, in fact, spent on the roads. If you travel on the roads in New Amsterdam it would appear that the amount spent on them would hardly fill a thimble, speaking metaphorically of course.

If this exercise is done it would not only help the Ministry to know if the grant is adequate, but it would also help it to know if the money is being spent for the purpose for which it is provided.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Hamid enquired about the allocation which is provided here as grants to local authorities for administrative expenses. He said that the position has been static for the last two years.

I should say that there are now fewer local authorities which are benefiting from this provision. Under the Municipal and District Councils Act, District Councils are now in a position where they can collect rates on Government property. This grant is made to village districts in lieu of rates on Government property. Now Districts Councils are not benefiting by this and as a result, fewer local authorities benefit from this provision. During this year 18 local authorities have benefited by this grant.

On the question of subventions for New Amsterdam and Georgetown: about two years ago, a survey was done by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply with regard to the roads in Georgetown and New Amsterdam and in relation to the subvention which the central government gives these local authorities. It was discovered that there was something wrong in the way the money has been spent. It was felt that the money given could be stretched much further if less was spent on labour costs. It was discovered that labour did take quite a lot of what is allocated in those areas.

Because of this, it was considered that the local authorities should do something to rectify this situation and so no increased allocations were made to them.

So far as the traffic congestion on the roads in Georgetown is concerned the hon. Member Mr. Sutton referred to this - I should say that Government intends to spend millions of dollars in building new approach roads to Georgetown. I am certain that when these are completed they will relieve the situation in Georgetown, considerably.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh referred to the situation at Mabaruma-Morawhanna-Hosororo.

3.15 p.m.

It is true that there are two Amerindian settlements within the local authority area; this is a part of a plan. The two captains would have their special responsibilities working within their specific areas. The local authority would have the overall authority over the entire district. It is

an experiment and I think it is not doing badly and we will look closely at it to see how well it continues to work.

The hon. Member raised the question of the rates which the Amerindians have to pay. He said that appraisalment was \$25 to \$50. Actually the rate is 2 per cent. They have to pay one dollar per year as rates.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you speak a little louder so that the Hansard reporters could hear you.

Mr. Mingo: I think I referred to this already. The hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally referred to the Local Government Board. I should say that the policy of the Government is to abolish the Local Government Board. The Board, I am told, gives no particular authority to visit any local authority if what the hon. Member says is true. In the case of the Upper Corentyne local authority this is a District Council and the local authority makes decision as to who are its officers, except in the case of the Chief Executive Officer whose appointment has to be approved by the Minister. All other officers are appointed by the local authority itself. I do not see how the Board could have interfered there. I think these would more or less answer some of the points raised by hon. Members.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Just a small point, Mr. Chairman. To my mind there seems to be an obvious conflict in Amerindian captains operating in a local government area. I am a bit bewildered as to how this could possibly work. Under the existing Ordinance there are two separate sets of rules with respect to Amerindian captains and local authorities. How can we really reconcile the two? There must be a conflict here between the jurisdiction of the captain of his village and the overall jurisdiction of the local authority. How can it possibly work? In this a conscious decision on the part of Government where it is making a deliberate try in this direction or is it that somebody made a slip and Amerindian Captains were appointed when they should not have been appointed? Is this a deliberate policy of the Government whereby you would have Amerindian Captains in Amerindian Villages in local Government areas? Perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us.

22.12.71

National Assembly

3.15- 3.25 p.m.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, so far as reports coming to us are concerned we have not heard of any conflict and we will wait to see what will be the result of the situation.

Mr. Hoyte: Division?

Assembly divided: Ayes 25, Declined to vote 2 as follows:

Ayes

Mrs .Willems
Mr.Zaheeruddeen
Mr. Van Sluytman
Mr .Saffee
Mr. Jordan
Mr. Fowler
Mr.Corrica
Mr. Correia
Mr. Chan-A-Sue
Mr.Budhoo
Mr. Bissember
Mr. Bancroft
Miss Ackman
Mr.Aaron
Mr.Wrights
Mr. Thomas
Mr.Salim
Mr. Joaquin
Mr. Mingo
Mr .D.A. Singh
Mr .Ramsaroop
Mr .Carrington
Mr. Hoyte

Declined to Vote

Mr. Sutton
Mr. M.F. Singh

22.12.71

National Assembly

3.15- 3.25 p.m.

Mr.Kasim

Head 25, Ministry of Local Government, \$838,682, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman:Page 69

DIVISION XIII - MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$59, 000 for DivisionXIII, Ministry of Local Government, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Hamid: Subheads 1 and 5.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 5.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I wish to make just a sort of comment on subheads 1, 2 and 3, even though there is no provision, on subhead 5 also.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr.Chairman, may I speak on subheads 5 and 7?

The Chairman: I will not allow you to speak on -----

Mr. Hamid: Sir, under CapitalExpenditure it is rather strange to see so many items that local authorities under the Marshall Plan have been established and one would expect now that the elections were concluded and with so much talking about local authorities and no development--

The Chairman: Are you speaking on Loans to Local Authorities?

3.25 p.m.

The Chairman: This deals with loans to local authorities.

Mr. Hamid: Yes, sir that the Government would be in a better position this year to pump more money into local authorities by way of loans and this would boost what is going on presently in local authorities. The promise they made at the last elections that they will be able to make loans to local authorities, I would ask the hon. Minister to state how many loans, with the quantity of money, have been given to local authorities. They had promised also that a water tap will be placed in every home. I want to know why this has not been fulfilled by the Government.

The Chairman: Is that a loan?

Mr. Hamid: By making loans to local authorities, they would be assisted in having these things implemented. By not sticking to their promises, they have failed. In fact, what I would like the hon. Minister to tell us is why these promises were not fulfilled. Drains are silted up. Snakes frequent the homes of people in the area. I saw a man kill 53 snakes in Newtown. They were there because of silted trenches and weeds. At times, passing through the villages, it is difficult to know which a road is and which a trench is. Weeds are high on the parapets and when people reverse their cars they find themselves in the trench. Had this Government fulfilled its promises to make loans to local authorities, these things would have been properly done.

Let us take it that the hon. Minister of Local Government is aware of these things, and I can see the trouble he has placed himself in especially in this Ministry. He has given very good explanations so far but when one considers his remarks as to activities in local authorities, because the Government cannot find money to give them, we find that he is urging them to have cemeteries, to establish taxi services, car parks, and crematoria. This was published in the *Guyana Graphic* of Monday, October 25, 1971 on page 3. Minister himself is worried. He is not only thinking of those who are alive but of those who are going to die. He is going to establish the marts, funeral parlour, and places to cremate bodies.

If the Government would have free and fair elections, the right people would be placed in local authorities, rates would be collected, and in fact loans would not be something of a need because local authorities would be able to have the necessary funds collected by way of rates and

taxes. I am ashamed of this particular subhead, loans to local authorities, and the sum of \$50,000 earmarked. Now we need more money to assist local authorities to bring them up to what one would expect them to be.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: The Government is seeking \$50,000 for loans to local authorities. It is my understanding that the village council of Cumberland -Sheet Anchor has submitted its estimate to the Ministry of Local Government and in that estimate the local authority is requesting from the Government a sum of \$75,000 as loans. I am also informed that that estimate was approved by the Ministry of Local Government. I am wondering why is it the Ministry has approved of loans totalling \$75,000 for that local authority and only \$50,000 is being requested? I understand many other local authorities are making requests for loans and the Ministry has agreed to give them loans, but I am only seeing a smaller sum being sought.

In the Government's seven -year plan \$7,696,000 was supposed to have been spent during the seven-year period. During the years, the Ministry of Local Government has spent only \$624,131 in capital development, a short fall of \$7,071,869 or 92 per cent of the total allocation for expenditure in capital development, and I wonder if the hon. Minister would be kind enough to tell us why this shortfall is so steep.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, I will permit you to speak only on subhead 5.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 5, Loans to Local Authorities, perhaps the hon. Minister will tell us. I know what happens in the Cabinet when there is the usual fight when there is allocation to the various Ministries. I doubt whether the hon. Minister considers \$50,000 adequate under this subhead. Does the hon. Minister really consider this sum adequate in view of the fact that there are new local authorities which have taken in surrounding areas which are way below, standard of the previous local authorities and which have to be brought up to standard? How are they going to bring them up to the standard that previously existed if the Government is not willing to give loans, grants, etc., to them?

At a previous stage I did ask to which village authorities' grants were being made towards administrative expenses, because a regular figure of \$7,120 was being voted. The Minister did not give the names of the villages. I wonder if he can give the names of the local authorities that are likely to benefit from the provision of \$50,000 for Loans to Local Authorities. Has a decision been made yet?

Turning to the fundamental question, what can this sum really do? It is a very insignificant sum in terms of capital work. A small piece of equipment can cost as much as \$50,000. Construction work in one area alone can cost \$50,000. We want to get rid of the idea that the Government can create new local authorities merely by drawing boundaries. The creation of a local authority must not be by the mere drawing of a boundary or the extending of a boundary if it is to be beneficial to the people. If the central authority cannot make loans to new enlarged area how will the position be different from what obtained before? Government's assistance is needed if the new local authorities are to mean anything but the mere drawing of boundaries.

Let the Minister tell us what it is proposed to do with this sum of \$50,000. How does he consider that it will make any difference other than the mere drawing of boundaries in respect of the newly created local authorities?

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, under subhead 5 of Division XIII, Ministry of Local Government, I note the provision of \$50,000 in the Estimates for 1972 for Loans to Local Authorities.

Looking at the progression of the allocation under this subhead, it appears to me that there has been a movement from actual expenditure in 1969 of \$500 through 1970 when the actual expenditure was \$2,400, through 1971 when the Revised Estimate passed here was for \$47,600. Now we move to 1972 when the provision is \$50,000.

It would appear to me that this question of loans to local authorities is something to which the Ministry concerned has obviously been giving some thought. Therefore, I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is true that local authorities have expressed to his pleasure at

the way in which his Ministry has been helping them in respect of the disbursements under this particular subhead.

While we are on this question, I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is Government's policy that local authorities should become self-sufficient, so to speak, financially and attain a degree of financial viability without the intervention of the central government.

Further, it would appear to me - and I would crave an answer from the hon. Minister - that the time will come when this item will disappear from this particular division of the Ministry.

When the hon. Minister is replying, I wonder whether he would explain the procedures which are adopted to disburse the loans under this subhead and the actual mechanics involved. And would he do us the courtesy in this honourable House to explain the rapid progression in the allocation from \$500 in 1969 to \$50,000 in 1972!

I wonder whether the hon. Minister can assure this honourable House that he and his officers have followed these loans, so to speak, to ensure that they have been properly applied and would he tell us whether he and his officers are in fact satisfied about the application of these loans.

It does appear to me that it is possible that there might be some misapprehension as to the particular purpose for the allocation under subhead 5, Loans to Local Authorities. Perhaps the hon. Minister would be good enough to explain in precise and clear terms what is the purpose of this particular allocation. Perhaps, too, if he is in a position to do so, he may well inform this honourable House how many local authorities are expected to benefit from disbursements under this subhead.

With respect to subhead 7, Purchase of Equipment, I notice an amount of \$9,000 under specific finance and the legend tells us that this is for the purchase of a land rover. I would be grateful to the hon. Minister if he would enlighten this honourable House as to the particular department, Ministry or agency, as the case may be, to which this land rover would be allocated

and whether, in his opinion, this land rover will enhance the value of work which is being done by his Ministry.

While we are on this subject, may I perhaps also ask the hon. Minister whether he is satisfied that provision has been made in the Current Estimates assuming that the rover is to be used by his Ministry, or some agency within the ambit of his Ministry's jurisdiction - for a driver and maintenance and things like that.

Perhaps, too, the hon. Minister might care to indicate whether this amount shown under this subhead is, in his opinion, sufficient allocation for the purchase of a land rover.

3.45 p.m.

The Chairman: Perhaps the hon. Minister you may ask what type of land rover.

Mr. Hoyte: What I had in mind was not really the type of land rover, but to ask the hon. Minister whether there was any particular reason for the choice of this type of vehicle, that is, a land rover as against a van or an ordinary motorcar. Those are a few matters which have been concerning me as I looked at this Division, and I would be grateful if the hon. Minister would do us the honour and the courtesy of some answers.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, I would deal first with the questions posed by the hon. Minister of Finance. From time to time, I have visited local authorities and they have been expressing pleasure at the fact that they were receiving assistance from the Ministry. Our loan policy is based on the legal requirements. You know that there are two legal instruments under which local authorities work. There is Chapter 150 and there is also the Municipal and Districts Councils Act No. 24 of 1969. In both of these bits of legislation local authorities are allowed to seek loans. Local Authorities apply to the Central Government for loans and there is also provision that they can go on the open loan market. In the case of village councils, the Local Government Board must approve of their applications. In the case of Municipalities and District Councils, it is the Minister of Local Government who must give his approval. In the case of New Amsterdam and Georgetown the Ministry of Local Government does not have to approve of their

Estimates. In the case of the smaller municipalities - Corriverton, Rose Hall and Linden - the Minister must approve their annual Estimates. Approval of these Estimates have to be presented by the 15th November of the year. This year we have attempted new arrangements in the presentation of estimates in that we have asked them to separate their current estimates from their capital estimates.

When the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud spoke of a situation at Sheet Anchor/ Cumberland he was referring to the provision for loans up to \$75,000. During 1971 many applications for loans on the open market were made to the Ministry and several local authorities have been given approval to make their application and some of them have actually received loans from the open market.

Loans and assistance generally from central Government to local authorities would have to be based on broad national objectives. We have to look at the question of development as a whole, we must be mindful of our national thrust. For instance, at the moment our main objectives are feeding ourselves, clothing ourselves and housing ourselves by 1976. I think local authorities understand that projects aimed at fulfilling these objectives must of necessity take precedence over other projects and plans. They quite understand the position of the central Government and they seem to be quite satisfied with the amount allocated as loans to these local authorities.

The procedure for disbursement of the loans follows the regular procedure of Government Departments. And I can assure the hon. Member that the Ministry would do everything possible to ensure that these loans are properly spent. These loans are short-term loans and they are intended to assist local authorities to establish themselves for purchasing things like stationery, books and generally, to assist in the establishment of local authorities throughout the country.

There was a question on how many local authorities would benefit. This is a question which perhaps I cannot answer accurately now.

One would imagine that the new local authorities which have just come under local authorities would received some priority. Of course there are strong local authorities and there are weak local authorities. These loans are really intended to assist the weaker ones.

3.55 p.m.

It means, therefore, that those local authorities that do not do As well as the others would benefit from the assistance which we seek to give.

On subhead 7, the hon. Member did enquire about the head which reads, "Purchase of Equipment", the legend reads: To provide for the purchase of one land rover." This land rover is to be used by the valuation division of the Ministry. The object is, we should try to push the work of the valuation division in order to complete the work in Georgetown as early as possible. The labourers, the chain men, workers of that type, have to go from place to place to do property surveys, and they need rapid transportation. We discovered that using their bicycles has not assisted the situation so this land rover is to be purchased for this purpose. The Ministry of Local Government does not have any motor vehicles as part of its equipment and if we get this; it will be the first motor vehicle in the possession of the Ministry.

The question of staff to handle the vehicle. If we look at page 67, we will see at subhead 1 item (21) there is provision for a driver mechanic. This driver mechanic, we expect, would be employed to handle this vehicle. The type of land rover - I think the better type would be a long-based vehicle, but it does seem that \$9, 000 would be inadequate to purchase such a vehicle. It means, therefore, that we shall have to make do with what ever we are given.

On the question of loans, I said earlier, and I repeat, that assistance from Government must depend on Government's broad national objectives.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, it is one minute to 4. Will you please finish. The Standing Orders provide that we should suspend our sitting at 4 o'clock. In these circumstances I shall ask the Assembly to resume.

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.32 p.m.

On resumption --

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I wish again to remind you that according to the Committee of Supply's allocation of time we are two days and two hours behind time. If we are to continue at this rate, it means that several Heads will not be debated, for, as provided by the Standing Orders, on the seventh day all the Heads will be put without being debated.

On the suspension of the sitting the hon. Minister of Local Government was replying. May I ask him to be brief in replying?

Mr. Mingo: I just wish to close off my reply by stating that apart from the provision in the Estimates, local authorities would be encouraged to seek assistance on the open loan market. Members did ask for specific allocations to local authorities. I cannot at this stage say how much each local authority will receive.

Division XIII, Ministry of Local Government- \$59,000-agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 26 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,002,755 for Head 26, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: The time allocated for this Head is 135 minutes. It would seem we have to cut down on this allocation if we are to catch up with the other Heads. According to the allocation of time, we have 30 minutes for page 70. I wish to cut the time to be spent on this

Head in order to catch up on the other Heads and I would remind hon. Members that on Head 26 I will allow only 30 minutes at the maximum.

Will hon. Members please indicate the subheads on which they wish to speak? Page 71

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 6 and 8.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 6.

Mr. Stoby: Subhead 6.

The Chairman: There are three speakers in addition to the Minister, if he is to reply. The maximum time allocated is 30 minutes. Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, you are the first, bearing in mind there are three other speakers to come after you.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 6, the Government is reducing the amount of the subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. If the Government had a record of satisfying the needs of the farmers and providing the necessary incentives, then Members on this side of the House would have supported the reduction in the amount of the subsidy.

4.40 p.m.

Unfortunately, and regrettably, Government does not have this record and the farmers are claiming that prices offered to them for their produce are ridiculously low. Their enthusiasm to produce more so that we can achieve the objective propounded by the Prime Minister of feeding ourselves is killed by the prices offered.

I wish to cite from the Guyana Graphic of 16 December, 1971:

"There will be plenty of cabbages for Christmas and at reasonable prices too!"

There is the picture of a woman. It continues:

"This farmer's wife, smiling happily from her cabbage-laden van travelled to Georgetown all the way from Black Bush Polder to market her cabbages.

Like other farmers from Black Bush, she went first to the Guyana Marketing Corporation to sell her produce. But she was surprised to find that the G.M.C. wanted to buy farmers' cabbages at a mere 17 cents a pound and retail at 40 - 46 cents a pound.

She naturally would not sell her cabbages to the G.M.C. at a mere 17 cents a pound, and will retail them at 40 to 46 cents a pound."

Without going into the entire report, this farmer was compelled to take her cabbages to the open market. This is to cite only one case.

I switch over very quickly to the North West District. I have received complaints from farmers that the Guyana Marketing Corporation has a system of grading their produce either A grade or B grade. When the produce is in scarcity, the G.M.C. buys the B grade and will even look for C grades, but, when the crop is plentiful the corporation rejects indiscriminately farmers' produce. The result is that those farmers are compelled to dump their produce after hard work, without finding markets.

I would wish to appeal to the Minister of Agriculture to examine what is taking place in the G.M.C. Year after year we are hearing a lot of words, but the time has come for us to get some positive action from the Government in the field of agriculture.

In view of the entire situation and the complaints from various parts of the country, with respect to prices for farmers' produce and, secondly, in view of the fact that the Guyana Marketing Corporation is without adequate facilities for storing farmers' produce and thus cater for the time when a particular produce is plentiful, the G.M.C. needs greater assistance to provide storage facilities so that, when produce is plentiful, it can be stored and kept in order that we would not reach a stage of scarcity where prices go up.

I say that there is need for the G.M.C. to be properly equipped and there is need for greater efficiency at the G.M.C. as well as expansion to make it workable. I am not, on this occasion, dealing with losses and other complaints, because of the limitation of time.

I turn to one more point from the North West District, the question of oranges. I am informed that the Guyana Marketing Corporation has been buying oranges from the farmers by the pound and the farmers, in those cases, get less than a penny for one orange.

Normally the G.M.C. buys oranges between \$3 and \$5 per hundred. The farmers are put to a disadvantage because of the prices offered. They pay nearly \$109 a year for ten acres of land and there is other expenditure.

In view of all of this the Government cannot justify the decrease in the subsidy to the G.M.C. because the Government has not reached that stage where it is satisfying the needs of the farmers. The decrease has put farmers at a disadvantage.

On the question of subsidies on oil, I wish to say that the time has come for the hon. Minister to give the assurance to this House that during the course of 1972 there will be an increase in the price for copra. I have all the figures here to show the large amount of money spent during the course of last year and this year for the importation of edible oil. The reason for importation is that the Government has failed to encourage farmers in the coconut industry by offering reasonable prices for copra and by organising the industry in a better way.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, you have made it abundantly clear that time is at a premium. The result is that I shall ask the Minister to clarify certain points which will certainly help us to think more constructively and I support the efforts of the Government in the Guyana Marketing Corporation.

In the first place, would the Government consider the advisability of publishing a statement similar to the statement published on the land development schemes in Appendix B, which will give this House as well as the public, a general idea of how the Guyana Marketing Corporation is operating and the justification for the subsidies asked for from time to time.

This House will no doubt remember that when the increase in subsidy was questioned last year, the then Minister asked whether I was not aware that a greater degree of business was

being done and more farmers' produce was being taken in. Therefore, he said, it should be abundantly clear that a greater subsidy was necessary.

We notice that the subsidy is being decreased. Are we to understand that the policy of the G.M.C. is being reversed and that no attempt will be made to take in all the produce grown by the farmers, particularly in view of the fact that the Government is doing all it can to increase and to cause citizens to increase, agricultural production?

There is one important point, and that is that it would appear that a great proportion of this subsidy is required because of loss through spoilage. There is no scientific study and no proper facilities exist for the storage of perishable items.

May I ask the Minister if an attempt cannot be made to have a sales projection every week of the various articles that are brought down? The staff at the G.M.C. should know from experience, after the perishable items are graded, that, say, this lot of plantains will last only one week owing to its condition; that this lot of oranges will last only a week and a half and so on.

If it is projected that a certain shipment will only last, let us say, for two weeks and, if after one week, only 50 per cent of the produce has been sold, then they could take the opportunity to lower the price of the article. Water Street merchants who deal in perishables know that if they lower prices, knowing that the produce will deteriorate, there will be a fillip to sales. People will rush to buy the goods before they go bad. If you wait until the goods deteriorate and then drop the prices, some people will not want them because they will not be worth the price asked.

Perhaps the Minister will tell us if the reduction of the subsidy is due to the fact that storage facilities will be better in 1972 and therefore the big loss that is now suffered from spoilage will not occur or whether the volume of purchases will be less. If he gives this information we will get an idea of how the Government has arrived at the conclusion that the subsidy should be reduced.

Finally, whether they would consider publishing, as is done in the Land Development Scheme every year, a statement on the Guyana Marketing Corporation so that we will be able to appreciate how it is going if the lorries are justified and in what sections improvement can be made.

Mr. Stoby: Mr. Chairman, there is a very serious problem in the Moruca region. There is a society called the Moruca Producers Society which does purchasing of coffee berries. Under this head "subsidy" there is a very large sum of half a million dollars. The question is not that I am, asking for a subsidy for G.M.C. for that Society what I am trying to explain to the hon. Minister is if he could look urgently into the question of having some advance made in the vicinity of \$6,000 to \$10,000 because at present there is a deadlock. Formerly, persons from the Pomeroon region used to go across and take over the coffee berries from these people but up to Sunday when I visited the Society there were two huge heaps of coffee berries and the money has run out, the weather is very bad for them to process the coffee berries and the holidays are fast approaching and they would not get anything to purchase, at least ration, for their holiday. I should like the hon. Minister to listen to my request and to try his utmost to do something I consider it a matter of urgent public importance.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Chairman, it is very interesting to see how my hon. Friends study the Estimates. I thought at first glance anybody who had any interest in those Estimates would have noticed something that is very significant. In times past when we talked about Subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation it included total subsidy - provision, as well as oil, and anybody looking through this even in a cursory manner would have noticed that there is a new subhead which was created by supplementary estimates during this year. There is a separation of the subsidy on oil. I am certain that the hon. Members had seen that they would not have been shouting so loudly about the reduction or the subsidy. Therefore, as far as the information shows is no indication that the subsidy has been reduced. But in the long term this is what should be done. We do not want to run the G.M.C. always on a subsidy and already action has been taken to the point which we are certain there will be reduction of this subsidy. As my friend intimated a while ago the facilities

are not what they should be and if we take action in this sector of the G.M.C. by providing better facilities then there will not be spoilage and deterioration and there would be no need for a large subsidy. Action has been taken on this and we use now the National Park to assist in giving us space for storage. Also we have been using the Industrial Site where we have several buildings that used to be unoccupied to give the Guyana Marketing Corporation greater storage space. My hon. Friend Mr. Sutton mentioned that we must not wait until goods begin to spoil to change prices and so on. We have handled that in a different way. I believe if we can get goods to the consumer in a fresh state then there would be no need for deterioration and changing of prices. This is what we have already instituted with our open air markets and my last information about the G.M.C. is that there is a scarcity now as far as ground provisions are concerned in supplying our customers who are buying the goods far more than they used to be because we carry the market to the public. That will answer all that hon. Members opposite have said, but I want to say a bit more. The purchasing of goods has not been reduced at the G.M.C. As a matter of fact, there has been a great increase in the purchase because the farmers are satisfied with the guaranteed prices they are getting. For instance, in 1968 take plantains just at random, we purchased 1.6 million pounds of plantains. In 1969 we purchased 3.7 million pounds, then we go to 1970 which is last year, we purchased 5.5 million pounds of plantains and there is every indication that this year 1971 we will go above that. If you go through the list you will find eddoes, sweet potatoes all giving you the same indication. Farmers, I am certain, will get a price that is reasonable for what they produce.

I deal now with the question of coffee. This is an unfortunate situation. Because the problem there is the drying of the coffee, it is not that the G.M.C. is unwilling to purchase it. There was a plan with the co-operatives there to install better drying facilities because for too long we wait on the sunshine to give us heat for drying; this cannot work anymore. It is hoped that as soon as they are ready, with their co-operation and self-help we will be able to have the drying facilities installed in those places so that drying can be done as promptly as possible.

On the question of grading the Government has no apology for that. If we are to buy goods that can be sold to the consumer then grading is important and must be done. We cannot go and sell thrash and hope that we would get people to buy it. It is unfair to the consumer. We want to be as fair as possible to the farmers, at the same time we must be equally fair to consumers; therefore grading will be always once G.M.C. has to buy any product.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification I cited a particular case of cabbage. The G. M.C. is offering farmers 17¢ per pound for cabbage and cabbage is being sold at 44¢ and it is true that these particular farmers were offered this price.

The Chairman: Certainly hon. Member Mr. Persaud that needs a Question. How is the Minister to know that?

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I can give him an answer. The market price - Bourda, Stabroek, or any place else - is more than what the G.M.C. sells for. The hucksters will pay more for buying certain goods because when the goods are scarce the hucksters will pay a price, when the goods are plentiful the hucksters pay almost nothing. But at the G.M.C. there is guaranteed level so that whether goods are plentiful the farmers are guaranteed this floor level.

Head 26, Ministry of Agriculture, \$1,002,755, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5 p.m.

HEAD 27-MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,321, 822 for Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture, Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will hon. Members please indicate.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I should like to speak generally on page 72, Planning and Programming, Research and Laboratories, and Veterinary and Animal Husbandry. As you will observe, this page provides for one the vital sectors of the Ministry of Agriculture. It is from these departments that we will be able to approach agriculture scientifically and we will be able to provide the farmers with all the advice and skills, so as to increase production and make more varieties available. When one examines these departments, one finds that very many capable and qualified Guyanese have been resigning and running from these important departments. I am forced to ask the hon. Minister this afternoon if he can tell the House the reason why we have been losing these capable men. Of course, I will advance some of the information I have. During the course of 1971 Dr. Shaeed Khan resigned.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud, there are four pages. I will allow you a maximum of only 30 minutes.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: With all due respect to you; sir, I would wish to submit that the Standing Orders provide for us to debate for seven days and I am going to be as reasonable as I can be.

The Chairman: The Committee of Supply has recommended and the Assembly has accepted, and I am not going to allow the Assembly to run as Members might wish. I will conduct it as I see fit from now on.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: As a Member of that Committee, the agreement was, and I recall it very clearly, that if Members have important items, they will be allowed to go on so that the time can be made up on other Heads.

The Chairman: I have already ruled.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wonder if I can make the last suggestion. Since we are meeting up to 4 o'clock on Friday, will the House continue until 10 o'clock that night, because of the fact that we should meet each night until 10? We are being restricted. Mr. Chairman, I was making the point that several Guyanese who can serve the Ministry of

Agriculture are leaving and I was proceeding to name them, Dr. Shaeed Khan, Pathologist, Mr. Poonwassie, Pathologist, Dr. Dalip Singh, Pathologist. I am informed that another qualified Guyanese is likely to resign very shortly from this department, and again, we have lost the services of an economist, Ronald Holder.

One of these complaints is that there is discrimination in promotion. One officer is compelled in the Ministry of Agriculture to carry the burden of more than one position. Sometimes, one finds one officer carrying three offices. Some officers are found to be capable and qualified in their particular area, nevertheless, that officer is entitled to opt for promotion, but one discovers that despite his qualifications are on par with anybody else, he is more experienced than the person by whom he is by-passed. These are some of the factors that are contributing to Guyana losing men whom we need. I did not refer to the many statements that are available to me with respect to brain drain.

Other complaints range from the lack of facilities in the various departments, the lack of equipment. For instance, we still have in many of these positions, expatriates serving. Entomologist, two expatriates fill these posts. Soil Chemist, two expatriates fill these posts, and I can go on and on to point to the number of expatriates who are still holding positions in the Ministry of Agriculture. What is being done by the Ministry of Agriculture to have more men trained for scientific research, investigation and so on, so we can reach a state of self sufficiency in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Speaking of equipment, I am told that many officers are without equipment that is so vital to carry out the research and investigation. Something like a greenhouse, that is so vital in agriculture research, is not available to many of the technical qualified officers. I wish to call upon the Minister of Agriculture, in discussing this Head, to provide more money for the purchase of equipment to have a proper research and investigation section in the Ministry of Agriculture. Members of the Opposition will not oppose money for more equipment. One finds certain officers have enough equipment for their fields and another officer does not have opportunity to use that equipment; many of the departments do not have any vital equipment. One

assumes that the hon. Minister will be advised by the technically qualified men, who are here this afternoon, about these areas of weaknesses within the Ministry of Agriculture.

In conclusion, I wonder if the hon. Minister could tell us this afternoon if there are vacancies existing in these various departments, Planning and Programming, Research and Laboratories, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, it is obvious in a developing country you cannot get near to having all the things you need because of our financial resources, and we provide the facilities according to our financial resources. We are not there to say that the Ministry of Agriculture has all the facilities that a Ministry of Agriculture should have. We are a developing country, but so far as the argument goes about the movement of persons, this is what happens all over. Guyana is no exception, that trained personnel have mobility. They move from Canada to the United States and from the United Kingdom to Canada and this mobility cannot be arrested easily. When it comes to the reasons for the movement, about promotion and so on, that is a matter for the Public Service Commission and I am not going to get involved with the Public Service Commission's business.

We keep on training men in various sectors of this country and it is sometimes unfortunate that after training, some men will stay away; some will return and would not serve. Even though we do the training, training in itself is not a guarantee that this mobility would not go on and there would not be a scarcity. There is no certainty of highly qualified and well-trained people returning after training.

5.10 p.m.

I say again that the Ministry of Agriculture is no exception. We have not said that we will never employ any expatriate. It depends on the situation. If there is a vacancy and we have not got for any Guyanese to fill that vacancy it is common sense to employ somebody who will do the work for us if we want to develop this country. It would be real foolhardy for us to hold on to a vacant post waiting for a Guyanese to fill it when we can buy the services of people from

overseas. We will continue to buy these services because countries all over the world buy services. This is how we have to proceed if we want to develop.

The Chairman: Page 73.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Item 43.

Mr. Sutton: Item 40.

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

Mr. Roshan Ally: Item 43, Chief Land Development Officer. Settlers at Black Bush Polder are facing hardship so far as rents are concerned. The administrator has asked that when farmers take their rice to the mill at Black Bush Polder, the rent due should be included in the statement of expenses. This has been done for some time now.

When the rice is shipped to the Rice Marketing Board, the Board deducts the amount due but there are so many changes in the post of Manager and among the officers at the mill that when the farmers go to the Administrator's office at Black Bush Polder to find out the position as regards rent, especially when they receive notices, they find that rent is still charged against them.

The farmers then try to prove to the Administrator that the sum due was deducted from the amount to be paid for their produce, but the Administrator tells them that he has not received the money. As this has been going on for some years now, some of the farmers have lost their papers.

I have one paper right here with me. This is a statement of expenses which a farmer paid to the Rice Marketing Board on 23rd August 1971. The Administrator's office knows nothing about it to this day although it was this office that asked the mill to deduct rent from the payment for the produce. The cheque is here to prove that the money has been deducted but up to now the Administrator, who asked that this system should be used, knows nothing about the deduction because he has not yet received the money.

I wish the hon. Minister to look into this and to see that, as soon as the rent is deducted by the Rice Marketing Board, the receipt will be sent to the farmers.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 1 (40), Bee Officer. I wonder whether the time has not been reached where we should place sufficient emphasis on the importance of bee culture. The thrust in agriculture, in coconuts and citrus, makes it very important and bee-keeping is an industry in itself. I was particularly struck when I saw the importance put in one area in America on bees which do so much for the pollination of various crops. I mention this because I was in Essequibo a few weeks ago and I noticed that there was only one major apiary from which bees can be bought, that is, at the Botanic Gardens in Georgetown. Perhaps the hon. Minister will correct me if I am wrong.

The time seems to have come when people should commence the keeping of bees. Supplies should be available from sources in important sectors of the country. As the Minister will know, the transporting of bees for several miles from one section of the country to another could be a very dangerous exercise. I wonder whether the Minister will give consideration to establishing apiaries in Berbice, that is, East and West Berbice, in the East Demerara district and in Essequibo and other places so that would-be bee-keepers could obtain their supplies with the minimum of trouble, expense and danger.

Dr. Reid: The complaints made by my hon. Friend Mr. Roshan Ally are details that could happen in any large organisation. Once we know of them, we will pursue them to finality.

We have already made a decision to establish more apiaries around the country with a firm decision, also, to proceed on large-scale production in the Waini in the development of the North West region, because it is our hope that before long we should be self-sufficient. We realize that we spend a few thousand dollars importing honey. Action has already been taken in that direction.

The Chairman: Page 74.

Mr. Ram Karran: May I ask questions on subheads 22 and 24.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 6.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 24.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead. 6, Laboratories and Equipment Maintenance. In spite of the fact that the hon. Minister of Agriculture has conceded that there is need for more expenditure in this particular Ministry, I note that the vote provided for this item is just \$22,000. Last year the Ministry expended \$19,200 on this. It seems that there is definitely a need for new equipment and the maintenance of equipment. One would have expected that in order to have an agricultural breakthrough next year, the Government would have equipped its investigations and research department.

Mr. Ram Karran: I merely wish to observe that the Government's policy of producing more, as enunciated by a previous speaker, is not reflected in these particular subheads, subhead 22, Agricultural Education in Primary Schools, which has suffered a reduction of \$5,000, and subhead 24, Progressive Farmers' Scheme, which remains as it was in 1971.

Perhaps the Government did not have enough time to formulate its policy to deal with this. Perhaps the hon. Minister will give us the reason. If you want to establish agriculture and you want people to learn, you have to start in the schools. I have perused these Estimates and I have not seen it shown in any section. I think the hon. Minister might wish to increase these provisions.

Mr. Sutton: In connection with subhead 24, Progressive Farmers' Scheme, for which there is a vote of \$6,500, I wonder if the hon. Minister will be good enough to tell us, in view of the multiplicity of schemes and plans in the agricultural sector, how this scheme operates and how it fits into the & general agricultural framework.

5.20 p.m.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, the first question raised was about education in primary schools. A lot of emphasis is being placed on the amount of money in the Estimates. It is good for us to recognise that development of anything does not depend on money alone. It depends more on

human resources being motivated to action. We in the Ministry of Agriculture have already started to do that. Wherever you go, school or elsewhere, even in church agriculture is in action and people are getting into action, doing things, and Agricultural Officers and Field Assistants are all involved. In the various districts we have what we call Agricultural Committees involving school teachers, local authorities, parsons, priests and all kinds of people so that there can be a new awakening on people to act and thus in several schools all over the country you find an upsurge in school gardens. But we are doing more than that. At some school larger areas are being cultivated known now as school farms.

We are not worried just about the sum of money. There is much more work to be done than just pinning your faith on an allocation in the Estimates. It is an involvement of people. This is the big exercise that is going on.

As far as machinery and equipment are concerned - especially equipment - if you go to the capital side you will see that allocation has been made for machinery and equipment. We have to maintain what we have as best we can and we are not going to spend more than is necessary on maintaining equipment.

The same thing can be said about progressive farming. When we have things like national exhibitions and local exhibitions, when we have prizes, the young people are getting into the act and are taking part in this type of exercise. This is how we hope to push agriculture so that young farmers will get information that is necessary - leaflets, seminars, demonstrations on the ground to reach the farmers. It is not done by money only, it is involvement of people.

Mr. R. Ally: Subheads 30 and 32

Mr. Stoby: Subhead 36.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 29, 30, 32, 35, 42, 46, 49 and 50.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud.

Mr. ReepuDaman Persaud:Subhead 29, Vergenoegen Land Development Scheme. There is a lack of co-ordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Officer in charge of this area. There is a case where a farmer has actually ploughed and chipped the land which he is occupying at the moment and saved his money. A few days ago - I had to draw attention -when he went back he found a man by the name of Gordon planting the landwhich he ploughed. He investigated and he was informed that the Agricultural Officer there had given this man permission to go and occupy this land. This is very sad. At previous debates I cited similar cases in this particular field. The hon. Minister of Agriculture is unaware, but, there is need for him to call in this Officer to look into this matter.

Subhead.30, Black Bush Polder Land Development Scheme. We have got a situation where farmers are complaining that certain people are favoured, and certain people are pressured. There was threat during the course of the year that their houses will be broken down. Farmers panicked and they found the first telephone booth to call Georgetown to say that there was a threat coming from the official Agricultural office in Black Bush Polder that these houses will be broken the next day. It is time that the Government advises, Let us assume that the Government is not involved in this form of psychological terrorism and that the Government instructs the Officers concerned that these farmers in the Black Bush Polder may owe rent, there may be certain other weaknesses but there is need for us to encourage them. Because undoubtedly over the last five years we have discovered that farmers themselves are coming to live in Georgetown. The children of farmers do not want to go to the soil; we will reach a stage in this country when we will hardly find people who are prepared to go to the soil. If those people who are doing it at the moment are not encouraged one fails to see how the Government can achieve its objective of feeding the people by 1976. It will remain a slogan and a dream by that year.

Subhead 32, Mara Land Development Scheme. Undoubtedly the Government has neglected this scheme. My information is that the majority of the farmers have left Mara Settlement - probably there are about twelve people living there. Many of the houses built by Government are unoccupied. These houses I am told are being damaged and we see \$92,000

being asked for. I am not opposed to the amount. What I really want to do is to ask the Minister of Agriculture what is being done positively to resuscitate the Scheme and give renewed confidence to the farmers who are allotted to these lands originally, to go back and cultivate the land so that they can earn their living. There were periods in Mara where farmers were unable to find food to eat, they were unable to get their crop, there was no encouragement for incentive, not even visits from Agricultural Officers in that particular settlement.

Subhead 35, Cane Grove-La Borne Mere maintenance of Agricultural Holdings and Drainage and Irrigation Works. This is a sore question. Very regularly these areas suffer severely from flooding. Farmers suffer to the extent where they are unable to really recuperate from the tremendous hardships resulting from flooding. After floods many of them do not receive financial aid from the Government so that they can rehabilitate themselves. They are not provided with the seedlings. Money they owe to the Government in the form of rental and fertilisers are demanded from them during the very year of the flood. Farmers receive summons despite the fact that during the very year there was severe flooding of the area.

5.30 pm

The time has come not for the Government to make provision for \$132,000 year after year, but for the Government to tackle in a positive way the question of drainage and irrigation on the East Coast, with particular emphasis on the area from Cane Grove to the West Coast Berbice. I want to suggest very strongly the implementation of the Mahaica- Mahaicony- Abary Scheme which was recommended so many years ago by a Guyanese. It was a well thought-out scheme, properly investigated, all the best technical advice was given for this particular scheme. The time has come for the Government to tell the nation when this M.M.A Scheme will be implemented so that permanent relief could be brought to the people of this area.

May I link subheads 35, Cane Grove - La Bonne Mere Maintenance of a Agricultural Holdings and drainage and Irrigation Works, and 49, Cane Grove Emergency Food Relief Committee. As you will see, sir, a nominal or a disgraceful provision of \$500 in the form of relief to the people of Cane Grove. During, the course of the flooding, a committee was set

up and probably on three occasions officers from the Government went and made gifts of certain food parcels. Since then, those farmers have not been visited again by the officers of the Government to render any help. What is the Government doing by providing \$500 in a situation where about twenty times that amount is required to help the farmers to raise to a better position? The Government is not demonstrating by deed a serious and earnest intention to help farmers. The Government's deeds show the opposite to its utterances.

Subhead 43, Subsidy to Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. This school should be encouraged. The concept of having an agricultural school and the need for it cannot be denied by anybody, but the time has come for this school to expand, and I would wish to suggest that the Government should give urgent consideration to the expansion of the scope of teaching and tuition in the agriculture school. Now there is a two-year course. Now when these students received their diplomas and leave the school after two year, they are not as experienced as the farmer whom they have to go and advise. Every technically- qualified officer present here today will concede this question.

I want to suggest that the period be extended to three years minimum, that the Government gives consideration to the suggestion of those students that they be allowed to specialize so that they will be in a better position to advise the farmers. They can be sent to those areas where farmers are involved in the cattle industry, those who specialised in veterinary work, where they specialised in crop operations, those specialising in plants. There is no depth in the course offered by the Guyana School of Agriculture. If the Guyana

School of Agriculture expands and provides a more comprehensive course so that the students can be better equipped, I am of the view that the Government would be able to provide for teachers, during their period in the teachers training college, to attend the Guyana School of Agriculture. One of my colleagues referred to agriculture in primary schools. We should make a certain provision for primary school agriculture. I think the teachers training college can link with the Ministry of Agriculture, the curriculum for teachers training could be expanded to provide for the agricultural training of the teachers so that when the teachers go back to the various schools they would be equipped with the necessary knowledge to

advise the students on the on the importance of the technique and skill in agriculture, or else we are going to face a situation where everyone will be leaving school wanting to write in books or wanting to type on typewriters –white collar jobs

This necessity for agricultural involvement must come from the primary schools. We can only get the involvement if the teachers themselves can develop an appreciation for Agriculture. It will be necessary for the Guyana School of Agriculture to be geared so as to provide for these teachers, so that they can be trained at a higher level. Those students attending the Carnegie School of Home Economics can also go the Guyana School of Agriculture to talk about plants and animals. They would be better equipped.

The Minister talks about kitchen gardening, and ponds for hasser fishing. Mr. Chairman one cannot talk. One has to let the people know how to do it and when they become involved in the field of inquiry, use that opportunity to inculcate importance for them to have a knowledge of agriculture. Sanitary inspectors are charged with the responsibility of passing meat for consumption by Guyanese. Those can be trained in veterinary work to identify disease beforehand, and they would be better qualified to pass meat for sale to the public. These are areas where the Ministry can expand and I wish very strongly to suggest these areas of expansion in the Guyana School of Agriculture.

The students who are trained in agriculture in that two-year course, they are taught something about machinery, but all they know when they leave the school is probably, this is a plough, that is a tractor, the big one is a combine. The technical institute also offers training in mechanical work and so I feel there can be extension and these students can be properly trained during that period, if the curriculum is extended so they can attend the technical institute in engineering work. I want them to get a little bit more than a passing knowledge, so that they can be of more help to the agricultural community of the country, I hope the Minister will give some thought to these suggestions that I have made this evening.

I link subheads 46, Subvention to Cane Farming Development Corporation, and 50, National Cane Farming Committee. I do not see the necessity for a Cane Farming Corporation

and a National Cane Farming Committee. The Minister cannot justify two separate bodies to deal with cane farmers. Why is there need for a committee? If there is need for a body to represent the cane farmers, the cane farmers must form an association and the Government must recognise that association. The cane farmers themselves must make representations for increases, for better conditions and so on. The cane farmers do not want public servants to be involved in negotiations with the Sugar Producers' Association

5.40 p.m.

This should be the job of trade unionists or of the cane farmers themselves who are directly affected. I am not opposed to any individual who is sitting on any of these bodies but what we need is for a cane farmer to be a director of the S.P.A., not a public servant. If there is room for a public servant, let the Government make representations for that public servant, but do not let the public servant get on the S.P.A. by using the media of one of these two bodies set up by the Minister of Agriculture.

There are many problems facing the cane farmers and I know I cannot mention them all. The Minister of Agriculture is aware of the drainage problem. The Government has been giving loans; I do not want to deny this, and I do not want the Minister to relate who got and who did not get because there are still complaints that better can be done in this respect.

I shall make this last point on this particular page and then I shall sit down. The Cane Farmers Corporation is the lending agency for the Government. If the Government does not waste time with Committees and establishes a National Agricultural Bank very quickly, then the task of lending money will be taken up by the agricultural bank and there will be no need for the Cane Farmers Corporation because the lending of money is the only task performed by that body.

So far as the National Cane Farmers Committee is concerned, the problems affecting cane farmers can be raised by the Cane Farmers Association. If the Ministry wishes to set up a

Committee, then of course, a committee can be set up which will include the genuine cane farmers. Cane farmers who have been calling at the doors of the Ministry of Agriculture for a long time for representation can be included in that body.

Mr. Roshan Ally *rose*

The Chairman: Before you start hon. Member Mr. Roshai Ally. You have heard the points that the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud made. Please do not repeat those points.

Mr. Roshan Ally: There is a ruling by the administrative body at Black Bush Folder to use combines to harvest only Star-Bonnet rice. It appears to me that some of the people who use the combines are very inexperienced.

What is a combine? A combine is not like a tractor that can move from field to field as you wish. The drivers start using the combine at Field 1, let us say, and there is no Star-Bonnet rice in Fields 2, 3 and 4, so they move on to Field 10. Because of this, the machines cannot do very much. Combines owned by private persons can go in and can make progress but the G.R.C. machines will always bear a loss and the cost comes back to the poor farmers and the taxpayers as a whole.

The Chairman: I want to remind you that 15 minutes were set aside for the head. The Minister has to reply and the hon. Member Mr. Stoby wishes to speak.

Mr. Roshan Ally: In some sections there is a cattle nuisance and instead of removing the cattle, management is removing the settlers and taking them to other fields. Settlers are asked to take up 7 1/2 acres of land; they must pay rent on 7 1/2 acres of land and not on the area occupied. Some of them owe the Land Development Department \$200 or \$300 and they are taken to plots for which they must pay \$1,200 or \$1,300.

I wish that the hon. Minister would look into this and see that settlers are just charged the rate that is due.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally, do you really want an answer to these questions?

Mr. Roshan Ally: Yes, sir. The management at Black Bush Polder is removing farmers from a new area called Zambia and is finding other plots for them. In 1968 these farmers were unable to cultivate a crop.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally, apparently you do not understand what I am telling you. When the 15 minutes are up I shall put the whole head. There are only 5 minutes to go.

Mr. Roshan Ally: I should like to ask the hon. Minister to have the decision reconsidered and the rent for 1968 written off, because these farmers were unable to cultivate a crop.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister not to have labourers from outside recruited to go into Black Bush Folder and to do such work as cleaning the dams and trenches. The farmers are asking that this sort of work be given to them and the wages deducted from the rent. This sort of work should be given to their children instead of recruiting people from outside.

The Chairman: All the valuable contribution made by your colleague, the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, will go unanswered.

Mr. Stoby: If that is the position, I should like to withdraw.

Dr. Reid *rose*

The Chairman: I will grant you an extension of five minutes so that you can reply to the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Dr. Reid: With reference to Black Bush Polder land development scheme and the threat to dislodge farmers; this has been an old story, where farmers who were installed at Black Bush gave an undertaking that they would pay certain amounts of money year by year. Of course, as

far as some farmers are concerned, nothing has been paid for many years. Some of them have no intention of paying anything.

A careful investigation is made in the polder to note the farmers who are in a position to pay and those who are not in a position to pay. A close watch is taken of the type of crop harvested and a note made of those who have not harvested any crop at all. The officer-in-charge is to take action as he sees fit. I will not at any time give any commitment that these officers will not be allowed to pursue the legal authority that has to be pursued with farmers who are determined not to do anything as far as paying of rent is concerned.

Many farmers have received generous concessions. As we visit the polder, if any cases occur that need attention, we will have another look at the exercise.

As far as flood relief is concerned, everybody in this country knows that flood relief was organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. All the farmers in flooded areas were assisted especially in Cane Grove, Mahaica, Mahaicony. There were other places like Pomeroon and the Essequibo Coast where flooding took place too, but greater attention was paid to Cane Grove and the Mahaica area. The farmers received food, clothing, medical assistance and such things. They are, at the moment, getting planting materials. I do not know how my friend is saying that they are not getting planting material when teams go through the place giving planting material to the farmers.

My hon. Friend has been roving all around the Guyana School of Agriculture. If he checks more closely he will find out that some of the things about which he is talking are actually happening at the Guyana School of Agriculture. For instance, the agricultural engineer from the Technical Institute is on the staff of the Guyana School of Agriculture. Teachers go to the school of agriculture for courses.

I have to repeat that the allocation of funds here is one part of it. This is the current part of the Estimates. I hope my friends will also look at the capital part because on the capital side we think more of expansion. This is just backing it up because we have the staff here to do the work.

More buildings have gone up over the years for the Guyana School of Agriculture. The number has increased considerably.

As far as the expansion of courses is concerned I think he also made mention of this it is important to know how much practical work these young students can do. Instead of keeping them in school for another year I thought it would be better for them to get an attachment so that they could get practical experience in what they have to do. This is what has happened to some of them.

5.50p.m.

Somebody said they just know that machine is a combine and that machine is a tractor; they do far more than that at the Guyana School of Agriculture.

Now there is one point about cane farmers. The cane farmers organisations have come into being for a purpose. These organisations have been fulfilling that purpose. It is seen not only in talking because some of my hon. friends says we want to see something happening. But what has happened over the years since these organisations have been functioning is that they have been assisting cane farmers and there has been an increase all over the country where you have cane farmers working. This is due, without any apology, to the Cane Farmers Committee and the Cane Farming Corporation. This Government is not going to listen to the point that has been made. The people are doing better and better and we are not going to create any confusion with them. In some places organisations of the type he has been talking about have caused great confusion because when we think their main objective is to help farmers their main objective is to help themselves or their political bosses. This Ministry is not going to be part of that type of arrangement because the farmers need help and we go out to the farmers to give them this type of help.

I cannot see us harvesting only Starbonnet in Black Bush Polder. If the Rice Corporation was not reaping anything for farmers in Black Bush Polder there would be a sad state in that Polder because the small farmers depend on the Guyana Rice Corporation to give them the

service that they need. We have always heard about Zambia, I cannot go to repeat what we hear year after year .

**HEAD 28 --MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
LANDS**

The Chairman: Before Members indicate I wish to say that the time allocated is fifteen minutes. Will hon.Members please indicate on which items they wish to speak? Page 77.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 13.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 13

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, there can be no doubt that thousands of persons in this country are anxious to get available land to cultivate and help to feed the people of this country. Equally, there is no doubt that these people are not being given the land by the Ministry of Agriculture. I have a large number of names. I have here before me but time does not permit me to cite them. I recall some time ago I cited the case of the Leonora Co-operative which failed after two years to get the Ministry of Agriculture to act. I would cite just one of the many. This is in Siriki, Pomeroun, they call it the Siriki Highlands, a co-operative which is comprised of farmers who applied for 200 acres of land for general farming since 1966. The Ministry of Agriculture has turned down the application by these farmers at Siriki, Pomeroun.

There is an area called Somerset and Berks. This is known to the Ministry of Agriculture. Here the farmers are alleging in their own writing that their group applied and the application was turned down, and some P.N.C. Members were allocated the land at Somerset and Berks instead. It is easy for the hon. Minister of Agriculture to get up and say "This is not so; this is red herring". Are these people mad? This is a mistake this Government is making with respect to agriculture and the earlier the Government acknowledges this mistake the better it will be for the agricultural sector. Why these people are not being given the lands?

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5. 50– 6. p.m.

Would the hon. Minister tell us who is now the Chairman of the Investigating Committee for Lands? Is the Chairman still Mr. Eusi Kwayana? I suggest before I take my seat that the time has come for the Government to set up a new Land Distribution Committee. The Government is always accusing the Opposition that we are not co-operating. I am suggesting to the Minister of Agriculture to set up a new committee for the distribution of land and include members of this Opposition on that Committee so that we can examine the applications, so that we can go ourselves and talk with the farmers. If he comes then and complains the Government would have a case but until the Government does that the Government stands indicted for discrimination of land distribution in the country.

6 p.m.

Mr. Sutton: In connection with subhead 13, Investigation of Applications for Lands, perhaps the hon. Minister will tell us how priorities are established when there are several applications for the same area. It is alleged that certain people who originally had applied did not get the benefit of their application and they were never told why they did not qualify and several months after, other persons apply successfully for similar lands in front of the lands in question. Could the Minister say what is the criteria used in processing applications and awarding these lands?

Dr. Reid: We get some interesting comments, and then we get directions from some of our friends. The person about whom the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud has been speaking, I understand, is interested in land in the conservancy, which is a reserve, and I do not think the Minister of Agriculture will be doing the right thing to allocate that tract of land.

Over the year, thousands of acres of land have been allocated to people in all parts of this country and in all political organisations. He refers specifically to Somerset and Berk. I do not know that we allocated some 98,000 acres for this year and we have awarded some 1,200 leases to farmers. I can guarantee this House that if we listed the names of the persons who have got plots in that 98,000 acres, then the truth will be on the surface. There is nothing to hide about

this. I know of the children of the settlers at Black Bush Polder, even recently, having been given the opportunity to acquire land so I do not know why he thinks we concentrate on giving lands only to the members of the P.N.C.

What he is now asking about, sitting on the Committee, the State lands officer will continue to do this work. Our experience with our friends on the opposite side of the House, sitting on Committees and telling you how they are going to co-operate when they get on the Committees, is not the type of experience that would urge us to continue this practice. I want to assure them that if we on this side are really interested in these farmers, we will not take what they say in this House for the record or for the public as what they really mean and what they really do. So often when they get on these organisations, instead of concentrating on helping the farmers they cause all kinds of confusion and chaos. We are getting that experience right now in a few places, which I hope time will soon change. I am not going to accept any direction about who must be on the Committee, so long as we are satisfied that the farmers from all walks of life and from political organisations are allocated the lands available

Head 28, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands- \$812,687- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Question proposed that the sum of \$488,963 for Head 29, Ministry of Agriculture, Interior Development, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Under this Head, 20 minutes are allocated. Will hon. Members please indicate?

Mr. Stoby: Subhead 11

Mr. R. Ally: Subhead 10

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Stoby.

Mr. Stoby: This sum is indeed a very large sum, subhead 11, Amerindian Captains; \$89,400 for the payment of stipends to Amerindian Captains. Many complaints have been made from time to time, even coming from the Amerindian councilors. People feel Amerindian councilors should also receive stipends because there is jealousy. Because of the policy of the Government, most of these Captains who have been elected have been forced to have these positions as captains. What is happening is disunity in the Amerindian Community and I think the money should have been spent in a better way to improve their standard of living, improving agricultural projects, whether by self help or whatever, we strongly object to the Government providing such large sum of money just for these captains.

We believe that the motive in appointing captains is for them to work for the P.N.C. One saw it clearly in the month of October when new captains were elected. Not by fair means, many legislators, especially from the P.N.C. took part and the results are bringing disunity. Government should review this matter and if it is interested in the development of Amerindians, it would spend the same money that allocated here for Amerindians captains, under a broader head whereby the people from the area and the various areas would benefit.

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Chairman, the Amerindian hostel at Charity is too small to accommodate Amerindians coming out to Charity. At times, three of them have to sleep in one hammock. They appealed to me to meet the hon. Minister concerned to enlarge the hostel. It is sometimes inconvenient, so would the Government provide a kitchen to operate separately from the caretaker's?

Dr. Reid: There was a time when there was no hostel at Charity. Due to this Government, there has been built a hostel. If the time should come that we need to expand that hostel, we will certainly do that, but as of now, that hostel is serving a very useful purpose and we are keeping very close to this situation especially at Charity.

My other friend has advocated to my great surprise that we should not pay any sum at all to any Amerindian captain. I wonder if he is very firm on that, because as he has claimed, there has been complaint that the councilors do not receive any money at all. All

over the country no councillors are I hope the Amerindian councillors will soon accept the fact that captains do a special assignment. Some of them are rural constables, they have certain duties to perform, they have reports to give in. This is not a new thing. The only thing that has happened is that they have now been given a little better remuneration. I would hate to think that the Government would withdraw that. There are many things this Government should do for the Amerindians but I do not think that Government should withdraw this small stipend from the captains for duties which they used to perform for very small stipends in time past.

The Chairman: Page 78, 79.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 14 and 16

The Chairman: Hon. Member, you have 2 minutes and 3 minutes for the hon. Minister to reply

6.10 p.m.

Mr. Sutton: In view of the limitation of time, I shall reduce the questions I had to ask to two or three.

The Chairman: I know hon. Member, that you are capable of doing that.

Mr. Sutton: In the case of subhead 14, Upper Mazaruni Amerindian District, Agricultural Development of, for which the sum of \$1,100 is to be provided, will the hon. Minister tell us what is the average population of this District so that we can get some idea of whether the sum to be spent is in fact realistic for the improvement of the area, bearing in mind the vast sums being spent in places like Matthews Ridge and in other places where there has recently been development: The Amerindians in the interior have been crying out for help for years and it is felt that the Government, which has now decided to give them help, should give meaningful help so that they would be able to help themselves in the not distant future.

That brings me to subhead 16, Amerindian Welfare - Scholarship Funds and Books. Here again, in order to determine whether this is a meaningful system, in the light of the number of tribes of Amerindians, will the Minister tell us how many scholarships are being awarded and

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6 – 6.10 p.m.

whether consideration is based on area of country or on the need from tribe to tribe. An attempt should be made to develop them all on an equal basis more or less so that they would soon be in a position to get into the Guyanese stream and not be treated for much longer as children.

In this way, it is hoped, the scholarships for the various areas will be meaningful and that, not many years from now, they will be able to provide their own teachers, their own doctors and their own agriculturists.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I am glad that my friend noted the amount of \$1,100. It gives me an opportunity to tell the House what happens in these areas.

There has been set up a revolving fund for the work that is being done in Amerindian areas, especially in agriculture where they get the inputs; they get machinery, they get assistance in ploughing and assistance in the transportation of their crops. That sum of money is no indication of what is spent. It is a revolving fund that goes in and out of the agriculture production.

We have other allocations in the estimates for other development work. If hon. Members would look at the Capital side they would see a quarter of a million dollars for Amerindian development.

The hon. Member wanted to know how many Amerindians are in this area. There are about 3,000. In the North West District, including Matthews Ridge, Port Kaituma and Arakaka, there are hundreds of Amerindians involved in those schemes.

The Chairman: Do you wish to answer the question on scholarships?

Dr. Reid: There are 14 scholarships.

Head 29, Ministry of Agriculture, Interior Development- \$488,963, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

DIVISION XIV - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,637,000 for Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Roshan Ally: Subhead 14.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 5, 16, 17, 18 and 23.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 14, 22 and 23.

Mr. Stoby: Subheads 17 and 23.

The Chairman: We have 20 minutes allocated for this Division and there are four members to speak including the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I have a short question on subhead 5, Information and Communication. It is necessary to keep the farmers informed and to have regular visits, but I note that there is no provision in the Capital Estimates for this particular subhead.

The Chairman: I will not permit any discussion on subhead 5. There is no provision for that subhead.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I merely raise the question because there is a provision on the Capital side.

Subhead 16, Diversification and Development of Agriculture: I know that the hon. Minister of Agriculture will make a lot of noise about this but the Minister has not done very well in diversification. To take one item, a fruit, how many new fruit plants has the Ministry given out during the course of this year. What is the result so far as the growing of fruit trees is concerned? Many fruits are not available in the country because the Government is not planting them any more, for example, monkey apple. [*Interruption*]

The Chairman: Hon. Members, please permit the hon. Member to continue.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 17, Land Development Projects, \$25,000. How many projects can be developed in the field of agriculture with a small provision of \$25,000? If we are really going to have a development of land projects and agricultural schemes, substantial sums will have to be provided. I am looking at the capital expenditure and there can be no doubt

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6 – 6.10 p.m.

that this is the area where we must see provision for real development of agricultural projects. Surely \$25,000 cannot be enough.

6.20 p.m.

Subhead 23, Development of Matthew's Ridge/Arakaka/Kaituma. The Government is guilty of wasting money here. Could the hon. Minister tell us if any survey was carried out first to find out the fertility of the land and what type of crops can really be grown at Matthew's Ridge? Has the Government really investigated to find out the capacity of the land for the particular experiment that is being carried out there at the moment? Contrary to what is believed as a result of Government's propaganda machinery in this direction what is happening there is that the Government is merely carrying out an experiment. My information is that for every acre of blackeye, soya bean peanut- any of these produce- 500 lbs. of fertilizer have to be applied before some success can be achieved.

Matthew's Ridge is virgin land. We know mines were carried out before and in order for us to embark on tremendous expenditure we must be satisfied about the fertility of the land. I am of the view that the Government has not done this. For instance, for every acre of corn 600 lbs. of fertilizer have to be applied; and I can go on and on. What these figures prove is that the land being fertile land if you have to use such large amounts of fertilisers one can imagine how expensive whatever is produced will be when it finally reaches Georgetown taking into account transportation, and the large sums of money the Government is paying for labour. I want the hon. Minister to tell us -- I have nothing against the gentleman- what is the position of Mr. Henry Cameron at Matthew's Ridge. Is he employed by Government? What is his designation?

Here in Matthew's Ridge the Government, I understand, has 600 acres of land under experiment as distinct from cultivation. My information is that by February Government intends to extend it to 1,200 acres. I am reliably informed that it is the intention of the Government to maintain the same labour force with an extension of 600 acres. The Government is indulging in mechanized farming; this is a wrong policy. With this growing unemployment rate if the Government's policy is that people should go to the land the heavy mechanisation should be discouraged. Where machinery is necessary, yes.

Mr. Chairman, Twenty-five co-operatives started at Matthew's Ridge and only two co-operatives are functioning at the moment. The position is that some of those persons who are in the two co-operatives that are functioning are absorbed in the State-owned farm and I understand that the Government pays \$4.56 per day to those people. Last year the provision was \$500,000; this year the Government is asking for \$3,050,000 for Matthew's Ridge. This project is bound to fail. We can see the extent of fertilisers in order for the Government to see success. It is no use the Minister bringing to this Parliament two ears of corn and a few soya bean. What this country needs is nearly fourteen million of corn so as to satisfy local consumption or more than that. In conclusion I want to say that Matthews's Ridge is another area of failure and millions of dollars of taxpayers money are being poured down the drain. Time has come for the Government to put the picture squarely before this House so that the people can know that it acts on many occasions contrary to the advice of technical officers.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 14. Guyana School of Agriculture. The Government has plans for import substitution which is very laudable indeed and there are plans, I understand, to prohibit the importation of certain canned food - peas, beans, etc. We wonder whether it is not desirable or whether they have not thought of instituting at the Guyana School of Agriculture courses on canning. Because if the agricultural sector is to provide what it should provide it means that the canning of peas, carrots and various things most desirable and necessary if the agricultural sector is to provide the substitution which is expected. Bearing in mind to the people of the Interior though we are told that the present plans are that they will produce agricultural needs for themselves, I am sure the Minister will agree that the need for canned agricultural products is very great indeed and we hope that steps are being taken now to produce the know-how.

Subhead 22, Soesdyke/ Linden Land Development Project.

Could the minister tell us how this land development project will be exercised? Whether loans will be given to people in the area or whether the Government would establish pilot farms in the area so as to make sure that crops are properly looked after.

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6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

So far as subhead 23 is concerned I should like to say in view of the terrific amount of money being spent in that area perhaps the Government should introduce something in the form of a White Paper for the country to know what exactly is going on there and the of all that more is justified.

Mr. Stoby: Subhead 17, Land Development Project. I looked through the Estimates and I have not seen any provision for the Kumaka Land Development Scheme.

6.30 p.m.

Regarding subhead 23, Development of Matthews' Ridge Arakaka/Kaituma, If many people who come from Matthews' Ridge from time to time express their concern over the situation that is existing there. Recently I was on board the plane and I heard even the supporters of the P.N.C. express worry over Government's action in sending up the Youth Corp. They will punish more, since they have been accustomed to doing some trade at Tumatumari.

The Chairman: Please wind up on that. When the hon. Member was given time on the other Heads, it was wasted.

Mr. Stoby: Sir, it is difficult for me, all day in a strait jacket. One question I should like to ask. I understand the hon. Minister was talking about bee-keeping in the Waini. The Government is interested in settling them on the Waini sea coast. The people want to know whether it is the Government's policy to settle people on the fertile area. I think more feasibility studies should be prepared.

The Chairman: Page 81

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subheads 27 and 29.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 26, 27, and 39.

The Chairman: I will put the Question. I cannot allow any other Member.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: In 1970, we spent \$11/2 - million; last year \$488,000; \$1 million the Government is asking for Kibilibiri Project for 1972. Could the Minister tell us how much of this sum will be utilised to pay the debts and bills left to the Guyanese people, who are running the place, by Stanley Green? What is happening here, and the House agrees with me, is that the Government is coming for money for Kibilibiri and money is being used to pay bills and debts created by an American.

The Chairman: I will permit you to speak. I will make two corrections on this legend. The legend at 27 should read:

“To provide for the continuation of the project.” You know what the money is for, and the legend at subhead 40 should read: “To provide for the continuation of old schemes and the development of new schemes in the interior.” Please proceed.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud : I am challenging the legend provided by the Government and I say, this is very reliable information and the Minister know this, that the greater portion of the money is going to be used to pay debts created by Stanley Green. I shall not say more on Kibilibiri except that the Government is pouring money down the drain and not utilising the money in other areas where we can get development on the coastlands.

Subhead 29, to provide for assistance to agricultural development activities. Foreign loan anticipated. It is a loan but nevertheless we are unaware of the type of activities the Ministry of Agriculture will be engaged in utilising this money.

Mr. Sutton: In connection with subhead 26, Guyana Marketing Corporation, "To provide for a loan to the Corporation for capital works and equipment", one would believe that a significant proportion of this equipment will be used in order to check or prevent the spoilage which is now being experienced in the Corporation, and I would like to ask the Minister, in view of the fact that we have not much experience as to the type of storage that is best suited to our local vegetables and other perishable articles, if the agricultural department is going in for any experimentation. I presume part of this equipment will include cold storage equipment, because it does not necessarily say, as the hon. Minister I am sure will be the first to admit, that storage in

itself will protect your produce, you must know what temperature a particular type of produce, requires and ensure that your plant is so design that that different compartments could give the different temperatures that your produce requires.

In subhead 27, Kibilibiri Land Development Project, most of what I have had to say has been covered by the previous speaker but we hope that the heavy amount of money that is being expended on the Kibilibiri project will be justified. Once again I suggest that the Government should consider it worthwhile, in the light of the importance, they say, of this project, to publish a White Paper so that we can have details how they hope to make this a proposition which is in fact in the country's interest.

At subhead 39, Amerindian Development, it is noted once again that \$250, 000 is allocated for Amerindian Development. In the light of the remarks and projections made in the Report of the Amerindian Commission, and in the light of what the Government is providing from time to time, would the Government not consider it sufficiently important that it should let this House and the public know in detail how it expects to utilise this money for the benefit of the Amerindian community?

6.40 p.m.

The Chairman: There were some questions on page 80.

Dr. Reid: With regard to fruit plants, distribution has been going on for a few years and this year over one million fruit trees have been distributed.

What is of interest to us is to know that these trees will not bear in one year. It will take some years for them to produce. The results will not be seen in less than three or four years. In one area alone, as I have indicated to this House already, some 45,000 citrus plants have been planted.

The land development referred to is specifically for Charity. I thought hon. Members would have seen that in the legend. This is to do with certain works at Charity.

At Matthews Ridge we have done a soil test. The North West region, especially in this area, has some of our best soils. The growth and development of crops in the area give practical demonstration of what can be done. That soil is good for crops like citrus, peanuts, soya beans, corn and oil palms. I indicated on the last occasion that it is good for members of this House to see the wonderful development that is taking place in pastoral land in this new area.

Mr. Cameron is helping to supervise the project in that area and he will be there for a short while. We have been using the minimum amount of machinery in that area because most of the planting is done by hand and reaping is done by hand.

In other areas we use machinery. At Kibilibiri we use a more mechanised system. We use both systems so that we will be in a position to compare which one is more useful and what it means to the economy of the country, taking into consideration our unemployment situation.

We now have community farms and supervised co-operatives. This is necessary because, if people who are not accustomed to farming are to learn to farm, then they must be given closer attention. I said this in the general debate. This will continue.

Our corn needs in this country amount to some 16 million pounds. Last year I think we produced around four million pounds. This year there is an indication that we will produce five million pounds. If we do not begin at some point to produce some of the things that we need, I wonder when we will ever arrive at satisfying our needs. We are determined to be able to feed ourselves by 1976 and this exercise is going on very rapidly.

Someone mentioned processing. We have started on this work. We have to further it more and more. Not long ago some 40 pigs were slaughtered at the Guyana Marketing Corporation each day. Some 200 pigs are now slaughtered daily.

There was a time when we had to import ham and bacon. Now, because of processing we can all get our ham. I hope those who are pork eaters will get their hams from the Guyana Marketing Corporation. There are a lot of women in Institutes, in P.N.C. groups and in Women's Auxiliaries, who make ham. You can always get your full supply from them.

If you go to Charity at this moment you will see a small canning equipment being installed there so that the oranges and grapefruit that used to be shipped to Georgetown will be processed at Charity and canned at Charity. Work is going on right there on that.

I mentioned last time that cashew nuts that used to go across to Brazil can now be processed at Lethem because, in the last few weeks, a small piece of equipment has been put up there. We are doing this type of work all along.

At Soesdyke/Linden Government assists with some of the farm roads and with some of the clearings for the smaller people, but many of the individuals who go up to Soesdyke/Linden can do some of this work themselves. Once they can carry on the work, there is no need for Government to go in there to help them. Thousands of acres in that area are already cultivated, especially in pineapples and citrus.

The hon. Member has been talking about some of the old schemes like Kumaka. He will find allocation under hinterland development. The items are not individualised.

I mentioned bee keeping in the Waini district. That does not mean that there can be no farming there, because along the sea coast there will still be needed to keep the courida trees. We hope that nobody will remove those trees which prevent erosion. That is one type of vegetation that is so useful for producing some of our best honey in this country. The courida tree must remain so that we can get the production needed in that area.

The debts at Kibilibiri, about which my friend has been talking, will not be paid from this sum of \$1 million. This sum is for the further development of the scheme. The old debts will be paid from surpluses from crops that are grown in the area. He mentioned an amount of \$700,000. That is from Public Law 480, which we call P.L. 480. I think it has already been indicated what will be done with some of this money.

With respect to storage facilities for the Guyana Marketing Corporation, I have already stated that we have started to improve this. The G.M.C. has temporary accommodation in various places, but careful work has already been done on the type of building, the type of temperature

required. The engineers have looked into this so that when the building is completed there will be no question about how it will perform.

We know that fish will need a different temperature from beef; that fruits will need another temperature. Consideration has been taken of all this. At the moment if commodities like fruits and vegetables are allowed to be properly aerated and not crowded together and heaped up, this alone will save millions of pounds of fruits and vegetables from deterioration.

Amerindian Development is itemised right here. The legend states what we are going to do with that money. It states:

"To undertake agricultural road building and other works in Amerindian villages."

Persons who have been visiting those villages ought to be in a position to see that Amerindians are now carrying on a money economy. The peanuts that you buy come from some of those areas. The cabbages that hon. Members sometimes talk about come from some of those areas.

If I had time I would have indicated to the House the thousands of dollars that have gone into the Amerindian community to pay for the goods that they have produced over this year. They have been doing craft work also. There was a time when this was not organised, but even craft work is organised now. I see my friend, the hon. Member Mr. Eugene Stoby, smiling because I know how he benefits from all the development that is taking place in Amerindian villages. He actually wanted to be a captain.

Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture - \$7,637,000, agreed to and stand part of the Estimates

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 6.47 p.m.

On resumption --

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Hon. Members, when the adjournment was taken we had completed Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture. For the information of Hon. Members, I wish to announce that we will proceed with the Head Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply when the Head Agriculture has been completed.

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**DIVISION XV- MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES,
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$ 1,368,000 for Division XV, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources IBRD/IDA Projects Livestock Development stand part of the estimates.

Division XV- Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources, IBRD/IDA Projects, Livestock Development, \$ 1,368,000 agreed to and stands part of the estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the house, I thought that you indicated that you propose to go ahead with the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. I see the Minister is not here as yet. (the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

Mr. Ramsaroop: I thought that we are going to conclude Agriculture

The Chairman: We are finished with Agriculture.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I would suggest that you start. The Junior Minister will make notes and respond adequately to the questions.

The Chairman: Pages 100 to 106. Head 38. The time allocated for this Head will be thirty-five minutes. There are seven pages, five minutes per page.

**HEAD 38- MINISTRY OF WORKS, HYDRAULICS AND SUPPLY
ESTABLISHMENT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,403,571 for Head 38, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply Establishment stand part of the estimates.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to speak on subhead 1, item 1.

The Chairman:Hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Sir, from since 1968, no reports that is yearly reports- have been published by this Ministry to satisfy the nation that the money is being spent wisely, what projects have been carried out, the state of performance and what can be done to improve the operations of this Ministry. So far, large sum of money have been spent in capital expenditure alone. Over the seven-year period the sum of \$138,962,000 was spent. There has been no report from this Ministry as to how these monies were being spent from time to time, and even before 1968, there have been no reports. I wish if the Hon. Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary can be able to say when lasts reports were published dealing with different aspects of the Ministry's work. It creates a lot of doubts in the minds of the people about whether the Ministry is really functioning properly. We would like to know why these reports have not been published.

The Chairman: Perhaps we may be able to answer all the questions at the end of this Head. Page 101, Page 102. Page 103.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 1, item 102. Sir, no doubt the Chief Engineer of the Pure Water Supply Division is aware of the growing problems of pure water supply facilities provided for citizens of our country. In most of the villages residents have been clamouring from time to time for an improvement in pure water supply facilities. So far, in many of these areas very little or nothing has been done to help solve the problem of pure water supply.

I had a horrid experience in Wakenaam, where pure water supply facilities are so poor that well water does not reach the surface where the line is, and as a result persons have to use different means to get water for drinking purposes. Persons have to leave their homes, one mile away, wait there in large numbers to take their turn to get a few tins of water, it is discoloured and full of dirt; they have to settle it before use.

In Leguan, the same problem exists. On the Essequibo Coast, Dartmouth, Better Success, pure water supplies are very low. In many cases, they cannot get drinking water during the day and they have to leave during the night and stand there to get a few buckets. In the whole of De Hoop area, people have to go 2½ miles to the well to get water. While the Government is embracing a particular programme to provide better water facilities in Georgetown and its environs, the rural areas are neglected.

The Government can help the people by servicing these wells. There are cases where the stand pipe is broken. The Government is not even providing the taps. There are cases where the pipes have been broken and the Ministry have been unable to provide the necessary pipelines to have them repaired. The local authorities are charging people large sums of money, for connection fees and for taps, when they have finished paying all these expenses with the hope that they will be able to get water supplies in their yards or their homes, they are unable to get because the pressure is so low. There is definite neglect on the part of this Ministry in providing proper water facilities for the people. The Government should do something to ease the situation in various parts of the country. No doubt, if the Government was in a position to carry out systematic surveys in different areas to see how the people are affected, their planning division would be able to see to it that these problems are tackled. I wish to urge the Government to pay heed to the serious water problems especially in the rural areas and try to solve them as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chairman: Page 104

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 1, item (137), Co-ordinator of surveys. The Minister should be in a position to explain to this House why there is a serious shortage of surveyors in the country. While over eleven surveyors were trained at the Technical Institute, they had to leave the country. No doubt they are leaving because of Government's employment policy and because the remuneration given to these surveyors are not attractive. There have been cases where no proper training have been carried out by this Ministry and because of the lack of properly trained surveyors, the Ministry has had to send back a team of surveyors to do one particular job.

I refer to a case on the Essequibo where surveys were carried out by the Ministry on the Essequibo road. All the information was handed in but when the people in the technical department had a look, they were not satisfied with the work and they had to send another team of surveyors to get the necessary information. Because of the shortage, the Ministry has been sending technicians to do the work of qualified surveyors. That is why so much of the taxpayer's money is going down the drain. The Ministry has a heritage of waste and the Minister on previous occasions said he will try to ensure there is no waste in the Ministry. A lot of money has been spent not only on the Essequibo but on other parts of the country.

On the East Coast road, surveys have been carried out but the Ministry is sending back surveyors. In many land settlement schemes, persons have had to go back to do the job because qualified persons were not assigned in the first place. Unless the Government carries out a serious programme of surveyor training, more of the taxpayers' money will be spent uselessly.

The Chairman: Page 105.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subheads 4,7, and 13.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 7

Mr. Hamid: Subhead 7

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 2 deals with Transport and Travelling and the sum of \$460,000 is being asked for. This is an increase of \$129,500 over the Approved Estimates for 1971. The legend states "Previous provision inadequate". I wish to ask the Minister why there is need for this increase. In this Ministry the vote for transport and travelling has been increasing every year.

As you know, sir, most of the Ministry's works are carried out by contract. As a result, there is no need for much transportation for the officers. Private contractors get the jobs and provide their own transportation and travelling expenses and since most of the work is done by contracting there is very little need for such an increase in the vote for Transport and Travelling. I wonder if the hon. Minister can give an explanation.

Subhead 4, Telegrams. The sum of \$2,000 is being sought which is an increase of \$1,000 over the Approved Estimate for 1971. I am informed that all the branch offices of this Ministry are equipped with radio transmitting sets, and it is very easy for messages, instructions and so on to be communicated by this radio facility. The hon. Minister will probably argue later that a lot of time is saved by using radio transmitting sets but I wish to know why so much money is spent on telegrams. Last year the sum of \$1,000 was voted and \$1,847 was spent.

The provision for subhead 7, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles is \$95,000. During the debate on the 1970 Budget the Minister said that he would ensure that there was no misuse of vehicles in this particular Ministry. Time and again we have seen blatant misuse by the persons who are driving the vehicles of the Ministry. But it is not only drivers who are causing the vehicles to deteriorate. It is the servicing. I wonder if the Minister can assure this House that there is a proper system for servicing vehicles in this Ministry.

I deal next with subhead 13, Maintenance and Operation of Electrical Plants and Radio Equipment. For efficiency it is necessary to have radio equipment, but, as I mentioned earlier, while this facility is provided, additional money is required for telegrams. Why do the police complain that they have old transmitting sets and why is there need for so many transmitting

sets in the various stations? I am not referring to places in the interior but to stations on the coast where communications are easier. Why can there not be better co-ordination within the Ministries to ensure that adequate use is made of the equipment which taxpayers are paying for?

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, in view of the several allegations in connection with the unauthorised use of vehicles in this department, I wonder if the Minister would not think it advisable to institute the system that is current in private enterprise, where each vehicle carries a log and the log has to be used in conjunction with the speedometer. Any person who is authorised to inspect the log can, at any time, tell where the vehicle was at any given time, what it was doing there and how the mileage shown on the speedometer on the vehicle has been run up.

In this manner the Ministry would be able to establish that the vehicles are being put to the use for which they were intended.

Mr. Hamid.: When one considers that the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply is responsible for the Electrical Inspection Division it is difficult to note that a proper assessment is not made in the Estimates of the amount required for maintenance and operation of vehicles.

It is my experience that it is very difficult for inspectors to have the use of vehicles at times when inspection work is to be done in various areas of the country. I have said time and again that on many occasions private contractors have to supply vehicles for the inspection of their jobs. This is a very heavy expense that is placed on the contractors.

Although subhead 7 provides for maintenance and operation of vehicles, whenever inspectors have to carry out inspection work they have to enquire from the Electrical Inspection Division before they can get a vehicle. Sometimes it takes two days before they can have the use of a vehicle.

I hope that the Minister will look into this matter again because it is a statement that I have been making time and again. The officers in this section should have full use of vehicles to do electrical inspection throughout the length and breadth of the country in view of the fact that rural electrification is necessary. We see that \$40 million will be spent next year for rural

electrification. In this context, it is important that vehicles are made available to inspectors to have the work done by private contractors examined.

The Chairman: Page 106.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 22, Remuneration of Project Co-ordinators, calls for \$32,000. This is always a sore point where the Minister is concerned. He tries to defend these Project Co-ordinators as much as possible.

I wish to question whether there is need for project co-ordinators. Most of the infrastructural work done by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply is done on a contractual basis. Most jobs are given to contractors and there is very little maintenance work to be done on the roads, that is, on the roads that have already been surfaced with bitumen. There is no need of persons to co-ordinate with the contractors.

These persons are actually activists of a particular party and the Ministry is using public funds to pay persons to do political work.

8.45 p.m.

That is why I say there is no need to have project coordinators. Virtually, these persons are political activists, they are assigned to different regional areas of the PNC and they do political work most of the time. Their functions embrace collection of donations for the PNC.

The other point which I wish to make is on Public Printing. There is a re-designation of the subhead "Public Printing" regulated by contracts which company is getting contracts to do printing?

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Greene): Mr. Chairman, with respect to reports, the size of the Ministry makes it difficult to get all the statistics necessary for a comprehensive report. This is one area where we have not been able to keep pace year after year but we have completed the report for the year previous to the last and we are making efforts for the re-organisation of the Planning Unit to bring our reports up to date.

With respect to the water supply system, a programme of rehabilitation started with the advent of this Government. And as I said in this House last year the studies for the total rehabilitation of the entire East Coast is in progress, in fact, construction started. We have a system phased out to provide proper facilities for the entire coast by 1979.

With respect to shortage of surveyors, this is a difficult problem. It is a national problem, because with the aggressive programmes of this Government, there is the need for surveys in almost every area and though the ministry is not responsible for training we attempt to absorb all the surveyors trained and that are available to us. Perhaps the Hon. Member Mr. Persaud is unaware that there are different types of surveyors. He is obviously unaware and ignorant of this because he alluded the fact that surveyors have to re-survey. This is not accurate, because two surveyors may be working in the same geographic area but one may be doing a land survey, the other group may come in to do a geometric survey or what have you. Therefore, the mere presence to several surveyors in the same geographic area is no indication that there has been impotence by one or the other group.

With respect to the increase in subsistence, it is not accurate to suggest that because private contractors are used there is less need for transport and travelling. In fact, based on Government's programme, Mr. Chairman, you are aware, that we are attempting to keep the use of foreign contractors down to a minimum and we need to ensure there is proper supervision. This, in itself, requires subsistence and travelling. As you know, we increased we increased the subsistence rates for public servants during the current year.

Telegrams. Perhaps it is not described as best as it could be. This has nothing to do with internal communication. They are all overseas telegrams and cables.

The item "maintenance of vehicles" was referred to by three speakers. We have had some success in this area and there is now less misuse. The mechanical section is undergoing a massive re-organisation but even of now we have to do thing like log books and the like referred to. This is a serious human problem which we can only control by persuading drivers and operators to treat Government property with some amount of care and to deal with them severely when they are found to be constantly at fault. Of course we have had experience when we deal

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8.45 – 8.55 p.m.

with these persons adequately the very Opposition criticizes us and suggests that we are being harsh. At the moment we would like to keep down the cost of maintenance of vehicles.

I wish to deal with my Hon. Friend Mr. Sutton when he suggests that we should keep log books as is done in private enterprises. In his remarks he suggested that private sector operates more efficiently than the public sector. When private industry fails there is no howl, there is no cry and I think it is about time in the Co-operative Republic that we should stop these sly and snide suggestions that private enterprise can operate more efficiently than the public sector. We have recent incidents in this country where private sector folded up because of sheer inefficiency. I worry when members come here to tell us to do as the private sector does and suggesting that it can perform more efficiently than Government. This Ministry has some of the best brains that can be found in the country.

Subhead 13, Maintenance and Operation of Electrical Plants and Radio Equipment. We have had to increase this vote because we have expanded our radio communication network and we now have almost contact with almost the entire country. Being the service arm of the Government, it is necessary for this Ministry to maintain constant contact from Crabwood creek to the North West District and from the Coast to the Rupununi. This is expensive, it is costly. We have responsibility for crucial areas such as sea defenses and river defenses and this network is intended to funnel information to the centre as quickly as possible with the least delay.

My Hon. Friend Mr. Hamid raised this question of use of vehicles by inspectors. I am sure that I did tell him during this very year that we have increased the fleet of vehicles. In fact the department acquired two new vehicles during the year 1971 and I got the impression that he as one of the leading electrical contractors was satisfied that this section of the electrical inspectorate was now more mobile than it was a year ago.

8.55 p.m.

The Chairman: We are 5 minutes beyond the time. Cut it as short as possible, hon. Minister.

Mr. Green: Page 106, subhead 22, Remuneration of Project Co-ordinators. We have had this for the third year running; these persons are appointed to assist the Ministry to take information back to the centre and assist officers on the spot, expedite things, and to get things done. We still have the bureaucracy and I am satisfied that these persons are providing an admirable service for the nation.

Head 38, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, Establishment-\$5,403,571- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 39- MINISTRY OF WORKS, HYDRAULICS AND SUPPLY ANNUALLY
RECURRENT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,618,210 for Head 39, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply Annually Recurrent, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We will allocate 30 minutes to this Head.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subheads 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, and 20. Subhead 8, Roads, the sum of \$1,250,000 is being requested for work on roads. I wish to draw to the hon. Minister's attention the fact that the road leading from New Amsterdam going into Sandvoort, West Canje area is impassable because it has not been maintained for a number of years. There are problems of children from New Amsterdam attending the B.E.I as well as people going a distance of six miles towards Sandvoort area. Transportation becomes very difficult. There have been many complaints to the Government and I think the Ministry is dragging its feet on this particular area. The road was surveyed by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply and now, I am told, the Ministry is saying that the road is not its responsibility. Roads are the Ministry's responsibility and it is therefore a question whether the roads fall within a certain area, not the main roads but the adjoining roads that come under the local authority, so I cannot understand how the Ministry cannot undertake to do this job.

The road from Perth Village, Mahaicony, leading to Esau and Jacob, that road is very bad. There are large drains on the road and it is very difficult for cars as well as busses to go into the area, therefore there is need for reconditioning of that road as early as possible.

On the East Bank Demerara, the Ministry has undertaken to cut a deviation somewhere by Craig village, where there is a very bad and there are two bridges. In fact, it is a risk for motorist to travel there. The Ministry has undertaken the job to cut off the bend and to bring it more into line with what the Ministry wants. I wonder if the Minister can say how soon it will be completed.

There is also a problem on the Essequibo Coast from Lima to Charity. The Government has been using red sand on the roads. When the weather is dry, the roads can be used but it is very difficult to use the roads when it rains. And it is important that the Ministry should given undertaking to the residents of that area as to how soon the roads will be completed, whether the Government intends to put on bitumen, because the people are expecting this to be done.

On the East Coast highway from Bel Air to Buxton, the traffic is very heavy, and there is need for improvement there. Many persons tend to have accidents and it is becoming congested day by day. I am told the Ministry is thinking in terms of widening the road and that surveys were carried out for the purpose of widening the road. I wish the Minister to say how soon this can be done so that better facilities may be provided for users of the road.

Subhead 13, Stone Crushing Plant, I wish to say some time ago I made an application to the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to visit the Teperu quarry. We are spending large amounts of money at these plants for the purpose of carrying out administration plans but to my amazement, the Ministry was hesitant when the hon. Leader of the Opposition wanted to visit these quarries. Why?

9.05 p.m.

I made an application seeking permission for the Leader of the Opposition to visit the quarry. The Permanent Secretary replied saying that permission could not be granted. Taxpayers' money is being used on a public concern, yet the Leader of the Opposition is denied the right to visit the quarry. Why? What does the Ministry have to hide? Why is it that the Leader of the Opposition, or for that matter any other Member of Parliament or the members of the public cannot visit the quarry? *[Interruption]* There are only policemen there.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Balchand Persaud, please address me.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Yes, sir.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: The Ministry replied to the effect that the hon. Leader of the Opposition could not go to the quarry. I would like the hon. Minister to state the policy with regard to visits to these places. Are persons permitted to go or not? It is amazing that taxpayers' money is spent on the quarry and leading members of our community and the Leader of the Opposition cannot visit it.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, you have made that point already. Please proceed.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 14, Pumping Stations. Most of these pumping stations are not functioning properly because of the fact that the Government has not been carrying out the necessary work on them.

That is one of the reasons why most of the areas on East and West Coasts of Demerara, in Berbice and on the Corentyne, are regularly under flood. Pumps are there but the Government is not taking precaution beforehand to clean the channels. As a result, the pumps cannot be used effectively.

Since we are spending so much of the taxpayers' money for pumps to be used in the event of flooding, the Ministry should pay more attention to this matter to ensure that work is carried out to facilitate the proper pumping of water whenever there is a heavy rainfall.

Subhead 17 deals with Sea Defences - Maintenance and Reconditioning. There is a place called Ridge in the island of Wakenaam. As soon as the water rises above a certain level it tends to overflow the dam. As a result, crops are destroyed. The residents have made request to the Ministry for works to be carried out there. There is a koker which is not functioning properly. I wonder whether the hon. Minister can say how soon work will be carried out in that particular area.

Subhead 18, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works in other than Declared Areas. Could the hon. Minister indicate which are the areas concerned?

Under subhead 19, Maintenance of Trenches, Lands, Georgetown, I wish to draw to the attention of the hon. Minister that the drainage trench in Cowan Street - the main drainage trench that goes to the river - is filled with stuff and needs cleaning. Can the Minister say how soon this will be done?

Subhead 20, Rivers, Creeks, Stellings. There have been reports that grass is spreading all over the Canje Creek in certain sections. I wonder if the hon. Minister can look into this question and have the creek cleaned so that proper navigation can take place.

Mr. Green: With respect to roads, the first road to which my hon. Friend referred is not a public road and until it is declared a public road it does not come within the responsibility of my Ministry. Not very long ago, I spent some time in this House attempting to give a very clear and concise report with respect to the road works planned. I think my hon. Friend was present. Maybe he was speaking across the Table at the time and therefore is not **au fait** with what is proposed.

The Chairman: This is what happens when hon. Members do not pay attention and therefore do not know what is said.

Mr. Green: I thought that the purpose of this House was to inform hon. Members, but they do not listen. I gave this honourable House a clear and precise run-down with respect to our proposals for 1972, 1972, 1973 and 1974, with respect to rehabilitation and construction of roads. If my hon. Friend had been paying attention at the time he would not come here now to raise the question of the East Bank deviation because I did say that by the end of 1972 we would begin construction of a road from Georgetown.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: To a point of order.

The Chairman: There is no point of order.

Mr. Green: We propose to begin construction in 1972 of a road from Georgetown to Soesdyke with a four-lane highway from Georgetown to Grove and a four-lane highway from Georgetown to Buxton. We are going to continue to resurface and to realign the existing road to

Mahaica. I have said this in this House. The Press reported this and, therefore, there is no need to go into this again.

On the other question relating to other roads, it is important to note that the average cost of a road is \$200,000 per mile. It costs more sometimes; it can cost less.

At the time when I gave the report with respect to our plans I did point out that with the type of economy we have we cannot promise first class roads in areas that are not earmarked for a specific type of development, and we could not spend millions of dollars to put a road into areas where there were no agricultural prospect, and, in fact, where only a few persons live. What we will attempt to do from our maintenance vote is to rehabilitate and to keep these roads in as tolerable a condition as possible.

With respect to subhead 13, I contend there is nothing for me to answer. I do not see how the application by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and reply from my Permanent Secretary could warrant a reply on the allocation of funds under this subhead.

Subhead 14, Pumping Stations. There are some problems here and every effort is being made to ensure that the pumping stations perform as efficiently as we would expect them to perform.

With respect to subhead 17, Sea Defences, I can give the same type of reply that I gave with respect to roads. Ridge, Waikenaam, incidentally, is programmed for some time during the second half of 1972 but here again I wonder if the House is aware that the average cost of first-class sea defences is something like \$500 per foot. Twelve inches of sea defence work cost this Government \$500. That is the type of problem we have for the fact that we live on the coast. Therefore, we can only tackle the seriously threatened areas at this particular period.

With respect to the Cowan Street trench, I can understand the concern of my hon. Friend. He lives in the richer part of Georgetown where many of us on this side of the House cannot afford to live. I think the trench to which he refers is the responsibility of the municipality. The trench referred to is the Kingston outfall channel which is kept in excellent condition and about which we have had no complaints.

I know, sir, that you are making an effort to bring some degree of sanity and honesty into this House. Members were accustomed to criticising the Government with respect to the Canje Creek, the accumulation of grass and the difficulty of transportation. As a colleague of mine noted the other day, the members of the Opposition seem to come to this House with set notes year after year and feel it incumbent to repeat the same - I am tempted to call - them "nancy stories" - irrespective of situations, whether they change or not.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, you were not tempted to say, you did say it.

Mr. Green: I apologise, sir.

9.15 p.m.

The Canje Creek is now in an excellent condition. In fact, a team of nurses went through the Creek without problems only a few days ago in response to an emergency call from the people at Barakara. I challenge anyone from that side of the House to say honestly whether anyone of them know for a fact, and not for propaganda purposes that the Canje Creek is now blocked with grass. In the days of a former Minister when the contract for cleaning the Creek was given to certain relatives and friends no work was done. The Ministry has insisted from 1968 that contracts be awarded to the residents in the area who have a vested interest in keeping the Creek clean and that Creek has been kept clean from the time I took office.

The Chairman: Page 108. Page 109.

Head 39, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, Annually Recurrent, \$8,618,210, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 110. Division XIX.

DIVISION XIX - MINISTRY OF, WORKS, HYDRAULICS AND SUPPLY

Question proposed that the sum of \$27,549,000 for Division XIX, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: There are three pages and the time allotted to these three pages is 20 minutes. I also wish to invite hon. Members attention to two corrections in the Explanatory Notes.

The insertion of -

- (i) 17. To provide for the completion of Uitvlugt/ Parika road project , and
- (ii) 21. To continue the construction of road from Madhia to Annai. Page 110.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 12. I wish to say that the hon. Minister said in his reply a few months ago that the Opposition tends to ask the same questions year after year but the fact is the Ministry is providing the same estimates year after year and --

The Chairman: Hon .Member, are you going to ask questions?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: The hon. Minister misrepresented the fact when he said that the Canje Creek does not have grass.

The Chairman: Are you speaking on item 12?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: The hon. Minister is misleading the House.

The Chairman: Page 111

Mr. Hamid: Subhead 40. You made me bypass the subhead dealing with pure water supply I wonder if I can speak on it under this head.

The Chairman: You must pay attention to the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Hamid: I am a bit lost to see so much on water supply generally. It is three years now since the government has indicated that it would establish a water corporation and I am of the opinion that it is long overdue for the establishment of it. Three years is a very long time. The hon. Minister stood up just now and he was correcting my colleague of not listening to what he said on a previous occasion in relation to roads. I wish to remind him that we have been listening to him and the Government in relation to water and the Corp. I am hoping that he will

be able to answer right away what is the reason for this long delay for the establishment of this Corporation.

The Chairman: You certainly mean Water Corporation Board?

Mr. Hamid: Yes, sir.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the establishment of the Water Authority is an occasion which concerns myself. As you know, we have had a heavy legislative programme and the drafting at the Attorney General's Chambers has provided us some difficulty with respect to the establishment of this Authority.

As I mentioned in reply to the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud last week the Water Authority is intended to encompass all water resources - ground water, surface water and everything. We also have to take in some of the existing authorities like the East Demerara Water Conservancy etc. We expect that by the early part of February, to bring this legislation here. There is no doubt that there has been some delay. I want to assure this House that the delay in the establishment of the water authority has not delayed the execution of works. If one were to go along to the East Bank and East Coast Demerara and other parts of the country one could see evidence of the works being done, overhead tanks that have been established at places like Herstelling, L.B.I., to provide first-class water supply, purification, proper wells. These things have all started. In fact, in some areas the residents have already seen and had the benefit of pure water supply.

Division XIX Ministry of works, Hydraulics and Supply, \$27,549,000 stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 112 Members will observe that there are two items. We will deal with the first one.

DIVISION XX- MINISTRY OF WORKS, HYDRAULICS AND SUPPLY

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,941,000 for Division XX, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply stand part of the Estimates.

Division XX, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, \$4,941,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**DIVISION XX A- MINISTRY OF WORKS, HYDRAULICS AND SUPPLY,
IBRD /IDA PROJECTS ,
SECOND SEA DEFENCE PROJECT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,839,000 for Division XXA, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, IBRD/IDA Projects, Second Sea Defence Project stand part of the Estimates.

Division xx A- Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, IBRD /IDA Projects

Second Sea Defence Project-\$3,839,000-agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We will proceed to the Ministry of Health. We will allow 150 minutes for the entire Head.

HEAD 52 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Question proposed that the sum of \$747,772 for Head 52, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.-

The Chairman: We will allow 30 minutes on this Head . There are two pages. The Minister also has to reply.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 1 item (14) and item (24), subheads 6 and 9. Under item (14) Secretary, Central Board of Health , I would like to draw the Minister 's attention to the fact that building applications from various parts of the country , including the Berbice area , are very long delayed. I think there has been some recent change in the system of applications being processed but it would still seem that applications generally take several months before they can be processed. People who wish to apply for loans to build houses under the Sugar Industry

Labour Welfare Fund, and many other ordinary people who want to build houses, find these applications take very long. I wonder if under this role, which the Central Board of Health has to play, the hon. Minister of Health will see to it from that end that these applications are speeded up and the procedure is speeded up generally. I know there is another aspect to it which has to do with the Ministry of Housing. Perhaps we will deal with it when we come to it.

Item 24, Temporary Clerical assistance. We see a very large amount of money actually spent, as shown in the Revised Estimates, \$21,000 whereas; only a small amount of \$100 is shown in the approved Estimates. What I wonder is this, whether there are many vacancies in this section of the Ministry for which a lot of temporary clerical assistance is necessary, or whether this is accounted for by the need for additional people to do more work, and, if so, what sort of work.

Passing to subhead 6, Pharmacy and Poisons Board, Expenses of, I recall that only a few days ago really, we had supplementary estimates. I did ask the hon. Minister for an explanation as to the expanded work which this Board is expected to do by virtue of the increased sum of money being voted. The Minister referred to expanded staff, or something like that, and I did not want at the time to come back again to seek further clarification, but I wish to take the opportunity to ask now if the Minister could give more concretely what additional work or expansion is being done with respect to the duties performed by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board.

With respect to subhead 9, Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity league, I wish to make the observation that this sum of money being voted seems to be rather static for some time now. Even in the days when the P.P.P. was in the Government, it appears that around the same sum of money was being spent. The same number of maternal and child health stations were in operation. At that time, I think, there were 110. I believe now there are just around 102. But I would like to suggest that the Ministry, which must be aware of the importance of maternal and child health work, should do more in this field, because apart from the fact that the sum of money being spent is more or less static, there does seem to be several instances where maternal and child health stations, where they were operating before, do not now function.

I just want to refer in passing - to show the hon. Minister that this is the case - to merely two which have come to my attention recently, for example, at Fort Island in the Essequibo area.

I was made to understand that the visits are rather irregular and that when the nurse visits, there are no drugs available. Furthermore, I was made to understand that in western Hog Island there used to be a M.C.H. station but there is now no M.C.H. station functioning. No nurse visits the area and there are similar conditions in other areas.

I just wish to make these observations and to urge that more work be done to restore these services and to extend the M.C.H. station.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh, I wish to compliment you upon the precise manner in which you have asked your questions. Hon. Minister.

Mr. Green: In respect of the first query on the Central Board of Health, this is a problem which we have attempted to correct, but I am afraid that by the very nature of the exercise, what with the Central Housing and Planning Authority being involved, they will have to give their assessment on the work aspect of it to ensure that the conditions, which are precise in some cases, are met. With the necessity for inspection of sites and the large number of applications we have had over the past two years, the delay is inevitable.

We have attempted to advise persons to apply in good time. Too many people want to apply today for permission to build; they then apply tomorrow for their loan and expect that the following day they can begin construction. In fact, persons have actually done this and, as hon. Members are aware, we have had to take disciplinary action in a number of cases.

The question of the temporary Clerical Assistant is something that will occur, I am afraid, as long as our present system is maintained, because leave is still offered to public servants. This vote is used to accommodate the replacement where necessary of such staff from time to time. It is normally voted as \$100 in the Estimates, but it is adjusted as hon. Members will notice if they look through the other areas of Personal Emoluments.

With regard to the expenses of the Pharmacy and Poisons Board, this primarily concerns the attempt to improve efficiency and take care of the larger area that the Board now has to cover. We have put up proposals for the appointment of two additional inspectors for 1972. The increase primarily revolves around the appointment of this additional staff.

There was a question on subhead 9, Grant to Infant Welfare and Maternity League, and it was asked in two parts. The Ministry of Health itself, as I said some time ago, is moving afield and most serious consideration has not yet been given to increasing the grant to the Infant Welfare and Maternity League because the Ministry itself is providing services in several parts of the country.

Certainly this is an area in which, perhaps, we can get the advice and the views of the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh. We can discuss it. I am certain that the substantive Minister (Miss Field-Ridley) and the Cabinet will not be unwilling to entertain discussion and will look favourably at proposals to increase the grant to the League.

The Chairman: Page 130.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subheads 16, 17, 22 and 24.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Chandisingh: With respect to subhead 16, Distribution by Guyana Red Cross of U.S.A.I.D. Foodstuff. I seem to recall that last year when we posed some questions on this an answer was given that this foodstuff is now out of the hands of the Ministry of Health and was going over to the Prime Minister's portfolio.

I remember that the point we made was that many persons do not seem to see where this foodstuff is being distributed. I have no doubt that foodstuff is being distributed, but it would help us very much to have some breakdown, if possible. If it cannot be done now, perhaps it could be done in the future so that the public will be apprised of the way in which such foodstuff is being distributed.

Subhead 17, Contribution to Maintenance of Handicapped Children. I merely wish to find out from the hon. Minister what were the results of investigations to discover handicapped children. We were told previously that some work was being done to discover cases of handicapped children, that is, not just physically, but mentally and so on. I wonder what were the results of such investigations.

I notice under subhead 22, Contribution to U.W.I. Advanced Nursing Education and Administration Course, that the amount has been reduce. I merely wonder what the reason is for this. Does this indicate any reduction, during the coming year, in the advanced training of certain personnel who normally receive training under this scheme?

Subhead 24, Contribution to Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute. Since this is a new subhead, with a provision of \$15,900, we would like to have an explanation as to the function of this Institute and the way in which this money will actually be spent.

In passing, I may say that I appreciate that the hon. Minister has told us that a survey has been made on nutrition. I remember we had been urging that this should be done in view of the problem of nutrition in our community, particularly malnutrition. Previously the Minister had indicated that some of our figures seemed to be correct.

I notice that the hon. Minister has said that there is this plan more afoof to carry out/work in nutrition, but we would like to have explained in more detail how this money is to be used.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Green: The information that my hon. Friend has under subhead 16 is accurate, but it is still the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. What happened was that administrative arrangements were made for the Office of the Prime Minister, the Community Development Division, to assist with a substantial part of the distribution.

I can assure this honourable House that there are very strict audits with respect to the distribution of foodstuff and the accounting system for this particular item is very rigid. As a matter of fact, as a result of that we have had recently to construct a bond at the Ruimveldt

Industrial. Estates and all the food is housed there.

Under subhead 17, the hon. Member requested information with respect to whether we have done anything to discover handicapped children. This exercise was conducted over the past few months. In fact, Mr. Imram Ally is heading this unit. In February of next year we expect to open a school on the East Coast Demerara for spastic children. We have information, as far as the survey went, with respect to handicapped children in Guyana. We have, of course, the difficulty in our society where some people are still reluctant to come forward with handicapped children for treatment.

With regard to item 22, Contribution to U.W.I. Advanced Nursing Education and Administration Course, the World Health Organisation is now contributing to this. Hence the amount required from Guyana is reduced.

9.45 p.m.

The contribution to the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute is primarily concerned with research in the region. In fact, they assisted us with the recently concluded nutrition survey which we found invaluable, to advise Government with respect to what our needs are in terms of food not only for the present, but to assist us with the preparation of the le Development Programme .

Head 52, Ministry of Health, \$747,772, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 131.

HEAD 53 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MEDICAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$2 ,986,587, for Ministry of Health, Medical, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak on subhead 1, items 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 25, 28, 29, 32 and 33 .

The Chairman: Proceed hon. Member.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 1, item 4, Medical Superintendent, Georgetown Hospital. I understand that the person who is Medical Superintendent is also a Pediatrician. I am wondering whether that person is now actually performing both duties or whether he is only performing the duties of Medical Superintendent, If he is only performing the duties of Medical Superintendent it would seem to be a pity that his other skills are not being utilized.

Item 5, Senior Surgeons. It is to be noted that there are posts for three senior surgeons although the amounts in the Revised Estimates for 1971 do not seem to indicate that these posts are filled. My question is: Are these posts now filled? We have been informed unofficially that there are supposed to be about 2,000 surgical operations which are to be performed, but because of either the absence of surgeons and/ or the absence of sufficient operating theatres at the time that this backlog is there. Is the Minister in a position to say what is the position now with respect to surgical operations, the backlog in other words, and how soon can this backlog be wiped out.

Item 7, Leprologist .May I take that together with item 12, Medical Superintendent, Mahaica Hospital? My question is: Do we have a Leprologist in post? If so, is that person so to speak, actually a Leprologist? Is that person qualified as a leprologist in fact, or is that person just performing the duties of a leprologist? - I think the hon. Minister understand what I am trying to get at. Furthermore, with respect to Medical Superintendent, for Mahaica Hospital, do you have such a person actually in the post? Does that person live at the Mahaica Hospital or does that person travel from Georgetown everyday?

We turn now to item 9, Surgeons .Just a small question. There seems to be discrepancy here. There are supposed to be three surgeons but I note that both in 1970 and 1971 the amount actually to be spent has come up to over \$60,000 whereas the amount being voted is

just about half of that amount . I wonder if we can get some information. Is this a mistake? What is the position here?

Item 14, Surgeon - Ear, Nose and Throat. I should like to ask the hon. Minister why has the previous holder of that post - to be exact Dr. DasGupta - left the country after serving for sometime like eighteen years or so in this country . Would the hon. Minister indicate whether there was any disgruntlement on his part with respect to the appointment of another person to fill that post or to act as a consultant in that Department?

Item 25, Psychiatrists. It seems that we have only one Psychiatrist. In any event, at the Mental Hospital, Fort Canje it does not appear that it has the services of a trained Psychiatrist. Granted we know that the officers there are trying to do a good job , but as in the past , we seem to be plagued by the absence of proper psychiatric treatment at the main mental hospital in Guyana.

Secondly, in the same connection, I should like to ask the hon. Minister why is it that for several months now, at least four months or over, there seems to be no possibility of having new cases being referred to the Psychiatric Clinic at the Georgetown Hospital. It has been reported to me that private doctors who have been referring cases to the Psychiatric Clinic at the Georgetown Hospital - those patients have been turned away and are told that there is no room , they do not have enough staff to handle the cases , so there can be no new cases. What is the position here in other words?

Item 28, Medical Officers. In this category, I should like once again to point out that there seems to be a great dearth of Medical Officers in the governmental services. I have referred in the general debate to the poor health services to the population particularly in the riverain areas. I merely wish the hon. Minister would tell us what the Government plans to do. How does it intend to relieve the sufferings and grave neglect which have been taking place in recent times by virtue of the fact that many of the riverain districts, the population in these districts have not seen a doctor visiting them for a long time.

We are glad to hear that the situation has been restored in the North West District. I hope this is the position - according to the recent reply - but in many other areas the position seems still to remain, that doctors never visit these areas. I am not referring to areas which were in the past not visited by doctor. In many cases, doctors used to visit these areas, but nowadays, we see doctors are not visiting. When last has the doctor visited the Berbice River? I am told that in that river, there is a lot of neglect; similarly, with respect to the Essequibo Islands area, to which I have already referred Bonasika River, here the service is very poor.

I should like in passing even though we do not want to take a lot of time at this stage, perhaps when we come to discuss the health plan later on, we will discuss again the question of doctors and medical training, but I want to urge again --

The Chairman: Will the health plan be discussed under this Head?

Mr. Chandisingh: No, sir. I am referring to the national health plan that the Minister referred to earlier on, that will perhaps have an opportunity, but I merely wish to urge again the need for an urgent beginning of a medical school to train more Guyanese doctors to solve some of our problems.

I turn to item (29), Dental Surgeons. How many dental surgeons are there now? Are all the posts filled and is it realistic, if there are vacancies, to expect that all the will be shortly filled? I raise this point because very little work seems to be done in this field of dental treatment, particularly in the riverain areas, school children, and so on. Only extractions are being done in some cases, but not enough work is being done in the dental field.

Item (32), there are 4 post of port health officer and we are glad to see that these posts are filled, according to the legend. I merely wish to point out that it does seem more can be done by these port health officers with respect to the question of venereal disease, particularly inspection of ships and sailors who are coming into the port. My information is that conveyors, so to speak, of the disease come from this source and it would be a good thing if the port health officers would do some additional work in this sphere by checking up on sailors incoming and giving them advice and information where they can receive treatment.

The last item on this page that I am speaking on, item (33), Health Education Officer. Here again this is something which I hope the hon. Minister will not say we keep repeating all the time, but the whole point is there is need for repetition, because up to now we cannot see what is being done in the field of health education. Apart from certain booths at fairs, maybe some lectures to schools or churches, we would like to see more being done by way of health education, particularly since the Ministry itself seems to appreciate the value and the need for health education. The time is short so I shall not elaborate further on it but I think the hon. Minister understands what we are getting at.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9 (1)

Mr. Ramsaroop: With respect, Sir, I wish to move the suspension of Standing Order 9 (1) in order to enable us to sit beyond the statutory limit of 10 o'clock . We seek to see the completion of this Head.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order 9 (1) suspended

RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES

Mr. Green: The information raised by my hon. Friend with respect to the medical superintendent being asked to perform the duties of the pediatrician is accurate. Actually the other pediatrician is on leave and this resulted in the one officer having to do both jobs. Not the ideal condition, but as will obtain in many of the Ministry of Health, we are competing with the developed world for very scarce medical personnel. If I can make a general observation, we have done reasonably well, and over the past few months we have had a number of applications and we are already filling many of these vacancies.

The senior surgeons, there is only one vacancy now and we expect that to be filled in March of 1972 if the offer we have made to a very well-qualified surgeon is accepted. He is a Guyanese gyno-surgeon. The new operating theatre which was opened a few weeks ago has started to relieve the very serious situation which obtained with respect to operations. It is

difficult to give a precise answer to the question because one can hardly say how many emergency operations will be performed over a particular period. We may programme say the execution of 50 operations in week "X" but if there are a similar number of emergencies, those normal operations which should have been done will have to be put back with the existing staff and hospital facilities.

Item (7), the question is whether the leprologist is properly qualified. He asked who the doctor was. It is Dr. Patricia Rose, whom I think, we all know. She has had special training in this particular area. It is difficult sometimes to answer this type of question because our attitude is, and I think the members of the Opposition themselves at several times and at several levels urged this, once a person can function and perform adequately, it should be the important criteria and this is what we have accepted in this particular case.

Item (12), there is no medical superintendent at Mahaica at the moment, but here again, there is an application which is now being considered and we are making every effort to ensure that this post is filled early in 1972.

There must be an error at (9), and I would seek to have a correction here, because we now have all the surgeons as listed on the Estimates and I want to thank my hon. Friend for drawing this to my attention.

The Chairman: What correction

Mr. Green: The figure should be \$60,000. With respect to item (14), Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon, that surgeon recently retired because he was anxious to return to his country of birth, and I am not aware of any friction or problem, and there exists at the moment, a vacancy. Item (25), Psychiatrists. The psychiatrist at the Mental Hospital is fully trained and he is trying to cope with a rather difficult situation.

10.05 p.m.

This is not like the ordinary turnover of medicine and the relationship between the patient and doctor is somewhat different. With psychiatry, you will perhaps have a patient visiting a

doctor for several years and it is difficult, first, to have a cut-off area and, secondly, to take in additional patients no matter what staff you have. If an ordinary patient goes for a disease or a common cold, he is given an injection and that is the end of it, but with psychiatric treatment one needs to have years of continuous treatment. Therein lies the problem. We attempt to control this area as best we can.

With regard to subhead (28) , which deals with medical officers, I would say that I think, for the first time in the history of the medical services, we have the full complement of medical officers as provided for in the Estimates, but with the mobility of the people of Guyana and expansion into new areas, this is proving inadequate. Part of the programme which I referred to in this honourable House last week is to ascertain what additional medical staff is needed and in what areas we will be required to cater for our population, taking into account our Development Programme. Here again, as I said earlier, is an area that is causing some difficulty.

To answer the question directly, we are short by three with respect to dental surgeons, but I think that I can hint to this House that we have had discussions over the past few weeks with the Chief Medical Officer and the senior dental surgeons in the Government service to put up proposal which we will bring to this House to help the dental situation in Guyana. I cannot say more at this stage, but we hope to bring plans which we hope will have the sympathetic and active support of the Opposition to deal with this problem.

There was a proposal to use Port Health Officers to inspect ships and the concern was expressed by my hon. Friend for the fact that venereal diseases are brought in primarily by sailors, as suggested by him -I suppose he has better knowledge in this area than I have. This is a problem that I do not think any country has yet solved, because the medical staff on the ships are supposed to take care of this problem. I think it is almost an international joke, and a fact, that sailors convey this type of disease wherever they go.

We have arrested some cases, but here again you are dealing with a very sensitive thing based on our attitudes. Part of our programme for education, which deals with the other question, is to ensure that we have competent officers who will help to educate the people of this country so that they will perhaps treat a venereal disease in the way they will treat a common cold and,

therefore, go for treatment. We hope to stop this disease from spreading, but there will need to be a more intensive programme of education. As my hon. Friend said, we have had lectures; we have had booths at fairs and exhibitions. I submit there is need to do much more in the field of medical health education. This will be part of the overall plan which we propose to have in the not too distant future.

The Chairman: Page 132. The time allocated was 30 minutes.

We have completed 25 minutes, but we will proceed a little longer as we are going beyond 10 o'clock.

Mr. Chandisingh: Items (38), (51) and (54).

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item (38), Public Health Inspectors. We note that the position with respect to Public Health Inspectors still needs much improvement. For example, Public Health Inspectors, we understand, are not in a position to do a lot of their normal work because of their preoccupation with preparing building applications and so on, even though these are greatly delayed. Nevertheless, it is a very important aspect of public health to have Public Health Inspectors in adequate numbers and properly trained.

I wonder how soon we can expect that the position will be improved and become satisfactory. In terms of the training, which we understand is being done, how soon can we look forward to the position being improved?

In that connection, too, I should like to know if the Public Health Inspectors are giving attention to the question of tuberculous meat. We know that they should be inspecting all carcasses, but we would like to direct the attention of the hon. Minister to this question of the inspection and detection of tuberculosis meat so that he can bring this more to the attention of his officers, to make sure that they are paying attention to this, since we know that tuberculosis can be passed on to human beings through this source.

I did not indicate that I wished to speak on item (48), Mosquito Control Service, but if I may, I should like to deal very quickly with it.

I know there are two aspects of mosquito control and one is under another Head, but I should just like to ask what is the position now with respect to the prevalence of the aedes aegypti mosquito, the carrier of yellow fever. Is the hon. Minister satisfied with the position as it is? Is the situation still not grave by reason of the fact that yellow fever is a danger not only to health, but to the whole economy of the country if we did have an outbreak?

Passing now to item (51), Personal Pensionable Allowance in lieu of Consulting Practice, I merely wish to raise once again the most scandalous situation whereby many consultants at the specialist level are most guilty, so to speak, of fleecing the public by virtue of being given the right to do private practice after hours.

I do not want to repeat what we have said over and over again. The point is that the position is getting worse. The need for poor people to fork out large sums of money to pay consultants even to get admission into hospital, apart from having to pay for the operation when they get into hospital, is causing a big dent in the funds of the poor man. When he cannot afford to pay his life and the lives of his family are endangered.

We are again urging the Government to do its utmost to put an end to this position. We are very sorry that the Government opened the way to this practice by introducing private practice after hours.

With respect to item (54), Staff Nurses, does the amount of money shown under the Revised Estimates for 1971 indicate that there are many vacancies in this field? I should think that this would not be the case as the complement is only 22. I wonder why the Revised Estimate shows only a small amount. Can it be that these posts are not filled?

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, on the question of Public Health Inspectors, we have, at the moment, going, a two-year training programme in an effort to strengthen the existing staff. We do meat inspection and we have had as recently as a few days ago meat discarded, as a result of the vigilance of these inspectors.

I am glad my hon. Friend referred to Yellow Fever, because I can state here that the index is low and we will continue the effort to eradicate this serious disease from Guyana. The staff here is doing what we consider an excellent job. In fact, at twenty-five minutes past nine this morning I learnt from Mr. ... , the now Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Guyana, that Guyana was among the only two tropical countries that reached the final goal of total Malaria eradication. We will receive the World Health Organisation certificate attesting to this fact. Even if I say so I think we ought to congratulate ourselves for this fine achievement.

The question of consultants is a very serious matter and the only comment I can make here is to ask that all persons recognise that it is the poor people who can ill-afford it, to use the words of my hon. Friend, that are being fleeced. We, in the Ministry, are doing our best to ensure that this very bad practice is brought to a halt. But we cannot succeed unless we have the co-operation of the public who must come forward to give information and evidence when required, and to ensure that some members of the Opposition do not, when we attempt to move on these consultants, charge discrimination and all sorts of things. Some of them use the hospitals for their own private purpose. In fact, we have one such gentleman charged before the court and it is as a result of the vigilance of one of my coordinators that he has been round up.

Staff nurses. This head refers to the public health sector. There are a few vacancies but the situation is very much improved. Maybe the pressure of outside world is persuading a number of our girls to return home and the remigration scheme started by the Prime Minister last year has some success even in this very area. By 1972, we expect that many more nurses will be with us to assist in the service.

The Chairman: Page 133.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subheads 5 and 23.

The Chairman: Proceed

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 5, Maintenance of Vehicles. I should like to bring to the hon. Minister's attention to the fact that the medical launch in the Pomeroun River I understand is very unreliable and that the wooden hull of this launch is about twenty-one years old. Furthermore, the engine breaks down quite often and only the other day, the 9th of this month, it had to be towed in to Charity Therefore in terms of maintenance of vehicles I would ask the hon. Minister to look into that situation to see that the position can be rectified. There should either be a new boat or some such thing to improve the situation.

Subhead 23, Health Education. I wish merely to indicate that the figures of the amount spent according to the 1971 Revised Estimates, \$2,000 as against \$3,500 for the Approved Estimates would seem to indicate that less is being done than could be done when less money is spent than even allocated. This is just a point in substantiation of what I said earlier on.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the plans are to rehabilitate this boat in the Pomeroun which is in a deplorable state. It has already been programmed along with the Northwest and Berbice for 1972.

On Health Education, I do not think there is much more that I can say on this head, I dealt with it before.

Head 53, Ministry of Health, Medical, \$2,986,587 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed

Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we are 600 minutes behind our Schedule which, in terms of sitting time of this House, means 1 2/3 days, that is if we go up to 10 p.m. each day. I do not

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know whether any further pruning can be effected tomorrow. I merely indicated this to show what the position is.

Hon. Minister, please move the Adjournment.

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) (Mr.Ramsaroop):

I move that this Assembly do stand adjourned to Thursday, 23rd December, 1971 at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.25 p.m.
