

**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**

43rd Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 23rd December, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

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

Dr. 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

The Hon. E.B. McDavid
Minister of Information and Culture

(Absent)

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

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

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

Mr. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, 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. Safee

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman

Mr.M. Zaheeruddeen

Mrs. L.E. Willems

(Absent - on Leave)

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

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

Mr. Ram Karran

(Absent)

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoyte, S.C.

Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker

Mr. E.M.G. Wilson

(Absent - on Leave)

Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip

Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.

Mr. M.Y. Ally

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

(Absent)

Mr. R. Ally

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

(Absent – on leave)
(Absent)

United Force

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

(Absent - on leave)

Independent

Mr.R. E. Cheeks

Officers

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair*]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**LEAVE TO MEMBER**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Chan-A-Sue for today and for tomorrow's sitting.

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

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

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: For the information of Members, I wish to announce that after the Head, Ministry of Health, is completed, we shall proceed to discuss the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Mines and Forests, and the Ministry of Communications. If time permits, we will then start with the Ministry of Education.

When the Adjournment was taken last evening we were dealing with the Ministry of Health. Page 134, Head 54.

Question proposed that the sum of \$377,944 for Head 54, Ministry of Health, Bacteriological, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Ten minutes will be allocated for this Head.

Mr. Chandisingh: Items (2), Junior Government Bacteriologist and Pathologist, and (5), Technologists. I have just these two questions to deal with because, generally speaking, one can say that this department is doing very valuable work. With that background, we are very much concerned that after several years we come up with this recurring problem and that is, the two posts of Junior Government Bacteriologist and Pathologist appear to be still vacant. Mr.

Chairman, I am talking on subhead 1, item 2. In view of this, we would like to have some sort of assurance that the Government is trying to fill these vacancies because we know that the Senior Government Bacteriologist and pathologist is very hard pressed and because of the importance of this Department for the efficient and safe functioning of the entire hospital services, we would like to see some action on this.

With respect to item (5), Technologists, this department seems to be suffering chronic shortages, not that people are not being recruited, but many technologists who are trained and put into position seem to be leaving the service. The legend states that twelve posts are vacant. My information is that that number or perhaps slightly more or slightly less may be vacant so I wonder if the hon. Minister has found some way whereby such valuable people, so essential for this service, can be retained in the service once they have been trained.

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Green): The situation with respect to the Junior Bacteriologist and Pathologist is that there exist these two vacancies. However, we have two trained officers who are functioning, not in the posts as such but they carry out some of the duties referable to this post.

Item (5), there is the general problem of recruiting and retaining staff of this nature what with the competition from the metropolitan countries. However, Guyana took positive action some time ago and we have started to look inwards. In fact, at the University of Guyana, there are twenty persons at the moment being trained to fill the existing vacuum and when they complete their training we propose to put them on contract for three years. This is an attempt to correct a very difficult situation that exists in this sector of this service.

Head 54, Ministry of Health, Bacteriological- \$377,944 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 55 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

X- RAY

Question proposed that the sum of \$200,392 for Head 55, Ministry of Health, X-Ray, stand part of the Estimate.

The Chairman: Will hon. Members please indicate. We have 10 minutes

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Chandisingh: I had tabled a Question on subhead 1 (1), Radiologists, but as the Answer has not yet been forthcoming perhaps the hon. Minister will give us a preliminary answer on this matter because the problem, that is, that reports from the Radiologists are not issued, still exists, as far as I am aware. This has been the position for some months now.

The practice has been that when X-Rays are taken, for example when private doctors refer patients to the X-Ray Department for X-Rays, the Radiologist issues a report and sends it with the X-Ray picture to the General Practitioner.

I understand that for several months this has not been done, that the X-Ray pictures alone have been submitted, without any report, and, although General Medical Practitioners can interpret certain X-Ray pictures like fractures, it is very difficult for them because they are not trained to interpret the more difficult type of X-Ray pictures. This has been causing some problems.

I do not know if the position has now been rectified, but I should like the hon. Minister to look into this question and correct this deficiency.

Secondly, may I once again urge that fees for these X-Ray services be dropped? Would the Minister consider the question of fees for X-Rays? The sum collected is very small in toto, that is in the whole health services, but it does cause some considerable inconvenience to many people.

On subhead 7, Maintenance of X-Ray Equipment, I want to ask two questions. First, why is it that the Therapeutic X-Ray machine seems to be breaking down so often? It has been reported that this machine breaks down quite often, and naturally when this happens there can be no therapeutic

treatment.

The second question is with respect to the X-Ray machine at Suddie Hospital. It is understood that for some time now - perhaps for several years the X-Ray machine at Suddie has been out of commission. Last year, when we had the budget debate it was expected that very soon it would be put into operation. We were told that parts were not available.

Bearing in mind the inconvenience that people in that part of our country would experience in the case of simple fractures and so on if they had to come to Georgetown to have X-Ray pictures taken, we would ask the hon. Minister how soon this machine can be expected to be put into operation?

Mr. Green: The lack of reports was a very temporary situation because a particular officer was on leave. This has now been corrected and practitioners can be assured not only of receiving X-Ray pictures but the detailed reports to which they have been accustomed.

The question of dropping fees is really a matter for my colleague the Minister of Finance. This is something that we certainly can look at, but people must learn to pay for services.

With respect to the maintenance of the x-ray equipment, the problem is not an unusual one. The technicians involved are human beings and we cannot, even with the best of will and expertise, avoid an occasional breakdown. It is not a hazard as suggested by my hon. Friend. At Suddie we have already acquired a very modern X-Ray unit. All that is left is the installation of this unit at the hospital and this should be completed during 1972.

Head 55, Ministry of Health, X-Ray - \$200,392, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 136

**HEAD 56 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH
HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES ETC.**

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,916,133 for Head 56, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries etc. stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman:Hon. Member Mr. Hamid, we would like to proceed with the business without interruption and loud speech. Will members please indicate items on which they wish to speak! Thirty minutes have been allocated for this Head.

Mr. Chandisingh:Subhead 1, items (8), (17) and (38).

Mr. Hamid:Subhead 1, items (1)and (35).

The Chairman:I repeat: 30 minutes have been allocated for this Head and there are four pages. Hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh, please proceed.

Mr. Chandisingh: Under subhead 1(8) Senior Dispensers, I take the opportunity to ask the hon. Minister whether provision could not be made for an additional dispenser to be stationed in the Charity area. The problem is that when the dispenser at Charity is out of the district for three days or so, people in that area cannot get attention. It is just a specific point, but it would be useful if the hon. Minister would look into that question.

Item (17), Assessment Officer: Here again we have been very much disturbed by the reports which are coming in to the effect that the Assessment Officer appears to be very harsh on people. The Assessment Officer, as we know, is the person who decides whether a patient seeking treatment at the Public Hospital should pay and, if so, how much he should pay.

My information is that the Assessment Officer very often errs on the basis of being over-hard on many poor people. Only recently there were two cases of persons who came down from Buxton and were referred by a doctor to an Assessment Officer. The Assessment Officer took the attitude, "If you could afford to go to a private doctor in the first place, why you can't afford to pay here?" He did not realise that very often people are prepared to pay \$3 for private medical attention rather than wait a long time at the Public Hospital for attention. This eases the position at the Out-Patients Department at the Public Hospital.

In keeping with the general trend that we have been urging, that is, that fees should be reduced, we would like to ask the hon. Minister to give directions to the Assessment Officer to be as lenient as possible. This is what we have urged before.

2.30 p.m.

With respect to item 38, Farm Supervisor, I merely wish to ask what the reason is for less money being actually shown on the Revised Estimates than is shown on the Approved Estimates. Also I wish to ask whether it is the best policy for the Ministry to have a kitchen garden operating at the Georgetown Hospital Compound. The hon. Minister said that this is being done and he showed this as a positive point in the Government's health programme. I wonder whether it is the best policy first of all from the point of view of the economics of the idea having staff to operate the kitchen garden, secondly from the health point of view seeing that it is very near where dressings are thrown out etc. - I do not want to go into more details there and "thirdly, from the point of view that probably this may help to breed mosquitoes in the area. From the health and economic point of view I wonder if this is the best policy.

Mr. Hamid: Sir, I will be very short because I may wish to deal with hospital administration and specifically on maternity cases and midwifery. I am particularly interested in this point because with the deplorable condition which exists in the Georgetown Hospital persons who are pregnant are placed two in one bed, they sleep in opposite directions. It is a very dangerous thing -

The Chairman: What has subhead 1, item 1 to do with it? This is Hospital Administration not administration.

Mr. Hamid: Administration of the Hospital. I was wondering whether there has been any improvement in that particular wing.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the request for an additional dispenser at Charity has already

received consideration by the Ministry. When we complete our existing training programme we should be in a position to place additional dispensers not only at Charity but in other rural areas.

I have had reports with respect to the Assessment Officer being "harsh", to use the words of my hon. Friend, and he asked that I give directions to him to be lenient. I visited the Hospital as recently as the 17th of this month and had discussions with this particular officer. I sat down there and witnessed him going through his paces and I am satisfied that he was not harsh. I looked through the records and a number of persons who can well afford to pay the very small fee charged did not pay, as they feel that the services at the institution must be completely free.

The reason for the lesser amount on the Revised Estimates for the 1971 Farm Supervisors is as a result of the retirement of the substantive holder of the post. The post has since been filled.

We feel that the idea which prompted the establishment of the kitchen garden is an admirable one. We also feel that it is the very best policy because it is helping to give the people there at the Hospital a visible and token impression with respect to the Government's philosophy and programme. We are guaranteed that we will get the best of vegetables and greens fresh from the soil. There is no health hazard and there is no question of mosquitoes. As a matter of fact, the cultivation of crops of this nature can help to eradicate mosquitoes because if there is proper husbandry there can be no stagnant water etc. around. It will help to improve the general sanitary condition of the Hospital. I am not sure what my hon. Friend Mr. Maccie Hamid asked.

The Chairman: Page 137.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 1, items 45, 49, 64, and 65.

Mr. R. Ally: Subhead 1, item 47.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 45, Enquiry Officers. I recall that about two years ago we on this side had urged that the Government should introduce system of forms whereby patients could indicate their complaints or comments on treatments. At that time it seemed that the

hon. Minister just brushed aside our suggestion. I noted, however, and I am very pleased to note that a few weeks or months ago it was indicated that the Ministry had introduced such a system of forms for patients' comments on their treatment etc. I am glad that this has been done. I am wondering if there has been any assessment as yet based upon the results of these patients' comments that the Minister is in position to tell us now to what extent people think about the services.

Item 49, Medical Rangers: I should like to ask whether the Medical Rangers now in the North and south savannahs of the Rupununi, transportation to get around. I should also like to ask if the Ministry has heeded the advice of the Amerindian Lands Commission which urged that a good number of additional Medical Rangers should be trained particularly among the Amerindians. They should be trained and deployed in those areas, particularly in view of the fact that people do not see doctors or hardly see doctors and the role of the Medical Rangers is very important.

Item 64, Staff Nurses. I should like to ask if it is true that nearly fifty per cent of these posts are now vacant. If there is such a large percentage of vacancy in this rank is it not a reflection on the medical services available at Public Hospitals? What does the hon. Minister intend to do to rectify this large gap?

On the question of Student Nurses, item 65, we see on the other hand that the student nurses grade seems to be filled because many people are looking for jobs. Is the Government following the policy of recruitment of student nurses for training particularly from the areas where they would be required to serve on their return? How is this policy being applied?

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Chairman, some years ago, there was a mobile dental unit which was operating on the Corentyne. This unit was moved from school to school. This service has been discontinued for some years now. I should like the hon. Minister to tell us what is the Government's intention with respect to this service.

The Chairman: I will not allow that. We are speaking on the item Mechanic-Janitors, Mobile Dental Unit. This is personnel; it has nothing to do with the unit.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the question of enquiry officers, the information is available and at the appropriate time I will have a thorough study of entire situation, because there is a pattern developing as a result of the information we have, which will be of value to the Ministry and to the Government, and I can assure this House that they are serving a useful purpose.

The Medical Rangers are given transportation facilities, horses, etc., in the Rupununi area because jeeps and cars would be of little use to them, and depending upon the terrain, they are given the appropriate mode of transportation; in addition, of course, the normal allowances are given. The emphasis on Amerindians is already accepted by the Government and we are in close contact with the Interior Development Department in an effort to identify suitable trainees for this cadre of workers.

There are vacancies for staff nurses, but not as high as suggested by my hon. Friend, I am not sure what was meant, but the shortage of staff nurses is a problem that is faced by all developing countries where this particular group is attracted to the metropolitan countries where, the nurses feel, their remuneration is more attractive than in developing countries.

We have started a training programme and the new trainees are required to sign a contract to serve a period after training. With respect to area recruitment, this already is policy in the Ministry and a deliberate effort is made to identify potential nurses from areas so that they can return with the knowledge of their areas to serve in their particular communities.

The Chairman: Page 138.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 4, Dietary, and subhead 14, Drugs and Medical Appliances. On subhead 4, it has been the observation, one can say perennially, that the standard of food served in our health institutions is not always up to par. The patients are not even getting the food to which they are entitled which is prepared for them. I do not want to go into the question of quality but to use the time to refer the hon. Minister to what I consider to be a shocking state with respect to the Best Hospital diet.

One expects that patients suffering from tuberculosis should have a high quality protein diet in order to assist them to recover. But what do we find? My information is that for Breakfast in the morning, patients are served tea and bread. For lunch it is either stewed beef, or fish, or meat, and rice. At 4.30 in the afternoon, they are served tea and bread with a little piece of cheese. Two eggs are served per week and before going to bed a patient would be served a cup of milk. We have seen hardly any greens on the diet. I was tempted to say no greens, but I realize this would not be true so I put the position squarely, the whole diet, with a very small amount of protein and greens at this particular hospital calls for urgent investigation for this type of tubercular sufferer. Perhaps the Minister could look into the question of the higher incidence of patients at Best but we are not on that subject at the moment.

Going on the subhead 14, here again there has been a general shortage of drugs in this country at the Government medical institutions and now more recently not only at the Government medical institutions but even at times in the street, at private drug stores and so on. In the past, the Ministers of Government had taken the defensive position that this is no so, that only cranks and crackpots who want to accumulate drugs at home go several times to try to get drugs and these complaints come from them, but judging from reports in the press, I do not know whether they were from the horse's mouth, there seems to be move by the Ministry to accept that there has been a drug shortage and that there would be attempts now to try to improve the position by various devices including spending more money to buy more drugs. We are urging this should be done and that the Government should not merely brush these complaints aside.

May I just refer the hon. Minister to some information which has just come my way. There appears to be a shortage of drugs specifically at the health centres at Hackney, Wakapau, Cabacburri. I am not saying those are the only places. This only helps to illustrate the point I am making and I am citing those particular cases.

Mr. Green: The dietary standard is one that can only be properly debated by specially trained staff and personnel. However, the medical superintendents are generally satisfied that the situation is not critical. In fact, the high recovery rate at the institution nails the lie that the diet is bad. There is a concept among the uninformed that for a man to have an adequate diet, he needs to have a two-tier plateful of food at each sitting. What we attempt to do at the Hospital is

to ensure that patient receives what is required for particular ailment and very often people complain because they get foods to which they are not accustomed and which are not perhaps near to their normal tastes. This results in complaints in all quarters. At this very institution they have restarted a programme, which they had some time ago, of planting their own vegetables and greens, and they received instructions only a few weeks ago to use up some more of the valuable land which surrounds the institution. This should certainly go some way to help with this situation.

The shortage of drugs and the reply given in this House last year by the then hon. Minister Dr. Sylvia Talbot, that a number of people go hither and thither and would like to get repeats, so to speak, is still true, but we will not for one moment brush aside these complaints. Whenever we received complaints with respect to shortage of drugs, and I have made a note of the complaint made at particular institution, we will check them out. What we are attempting to do, however, is to have some form of standardisation.

My, hon. Friend referred to shortage in the private sector. A number of physicians like to prescribe expensive drugs and the sophisticated drugs, and they themselves are caught by the western type of high-pressure advertisements. If those drugs are not available in Guyana, they say there is a shortage of drugs. For example, Mr. Chairman, a man may need for headache, aspirin, which one can buy for a cent or a penny, but a particular physician to prescribe aspirin will prescribe some fancy drug, made of aspirin but buffered, or what have you, "Made in North America", for which the patient has to pay ten times the amount.

2.50 p.m.

As far as we are concerned, the ingredients are important and not the brand names. Very often, when there are shouts of shortages, the shortages are in a particular brand. The Ministry and the External Trade Bureau are now looking at this matter in an attempt, not only to standardise drugs - not totally because we will take into account that certain people are sensitive to certain drugs - but in an attempt to reduce the cost of drugs to the small man in Guyana.

The Chairman: Page 139.

Mr. Chandisingh: I would like to ask questions on subheads 29, 35 and 37.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 29, Medical Facilities, Orealla: I observe that the amount shown in the Revised Estimates is only \$500, when the sum in/Approved Estimates for 1971 was \$2,500. In 1970, the amount shown as having been spent for Medical Facilities, Orealla, is only \$719. We wonder why it is that such shockingly inadequate medical facilities seem to be provided for that area. When has a doctor last visited Orealla? How often does a doctor visit Orealla?

This is particularly glaring when we move to subhead 35, Medical Services, Matthews Ridge/Port Kaituma, and we see a very large amount of money being spent for a very small area. The sum of \$200,000 was shown in the Approved Estimates for 1971. When debating the budget we asked for a breakdown and we were told that the amount of \$200,000 was being properly spent, that it was the minimum that could be spent in that area for medical services.

We now see in the Revised Estimates for 1971 that only \$100,000 was spent and for the 1972 Estimates the sum of \$200,000 has been cut in half to \$100,000. If, in 1971, the Government maintained that \$200,000 was necessary for Matthews Ridge, what is the reason for the reduction?

We wish to point out that it would be useful for the hon. Minister to satisfy our qualms, so to speak, and give a breakdown of how money is spent for medical services in this area. If he cannot do it now, he should do it later on, outside of this House.

With respect to subhead 37, Expenses: Collection of Hospital Statistics, the sum of \$8,000 is being provided. This is a new subhead. I am wondering why this money is needed. Would not normal statistical information be collected by regular hospital staff who would be assigned such duties? Was it necessary to assign special people?

Dr. Jagan: I wonder whether we could make one observation on subhead 20, Travelling facilities for relatives and visitors, Best Hospital. I do not wish to raise a question on travelling, but I just heard what the Minister said about food and I would like him to make a statement he made check to see whether: the statement he made is correct or not so far as the Best Hospital

is concerned.

Clearly, the food there is inadequate. T.B. is partly a nutritional disease and the food is not only inadequate but patients have their last meal at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and there is nothing provided until breakfast the next morning. The time gap is too great. As far as I understand, the patients get a cup of tea with some milk and a piece of bread for breakfast in the morning and for so-called "dinner" at 3 o'clock. This is prison diet and not a diet for Best Hospital.

I would like the hon. Minister to make a check on this. Other patients can starve or get food from outside, but it is not so easy for patients at this institution.

The other point I should like to raise is in relation to subhead 23, Renewal of Bedsteads at Public Hospital. I hope that the hon. Minister will look into this question. One can argue about quality and quantity so far as food is concerned, but so far as beds are concerned, we saw in the Guyana Graphic about three weeks ago where two maternity cases were in one bed. Here is the photograph. It was stated that this ward had 32 beds and there were over 60 patients. Surely you cannot have gymnastics about this. The Government should tell us what it proposes to do about this situation, whether it has already been corrected or not.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the problem at Orealla is one that concerns not only the Ministry of Health but the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. There has been some difficulty in completing the building which was to be erected this year. That, primarily, was the reason for the shortfall in the expenditure of funds.

Matthews Ridge is in a rather different situation.

The Chairman: The hon. Member went on to ask, under subhead 29, when last a doctor visited the area? Is that not so, hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh?

Mr. Chandisingh: Yes, sir.

Mr. Green: I cannot give a precise answer, but there is a doctor that serves the area. I cannot say when he last visited, but I can get this information for my hon. Friends. At Matthews

Ridge, the whole complex was managed by the Ministry of Agriculture. Consequently, there was a lot of work done in relation to health by the Ministry, because it is an entire complex. It is not fair to say that it is a small community. Matthews Ridge/Port Kaituma is a growing community.

The Chairman: He did not say "small" community; he said "smaller".

Mr. Green: It is not smaller than Orealla.

Mr. Chandisingh: I did not mean smaller than Orealla. It is larger than Orealla, but relatively small in terms of the others

Mr. Green: The point made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition with respect to the last meal at Best Hospital at 3 p.m. is not accurate and I challenge him to come over in my company any time to question patients and hear if any of them can support his statement.

Because of the nature of maternity cases, there are occasions when there is an unusual number of potential mothers in the ward. This has occasioned some congestion recently, but we have corrected this. Until we expand our existing facilities, if there is a period of a few days or a week when an unusual number of patients come in, this problem will arise.

It is most unsatisfactory, but, as hon. Members know, we have announced proposals for the re-development of the hospital. It is one thing that we cannot control. We cannot tell how many people will come in for delivery on any one day and Guyana is a very productive society.

Head 56, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries etc.- \$7,916,133, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 140

3 p.m.

HEAD 57 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ANALYST

Question proposed that the sum of \$137,423 for Head 57, Ministry of Health, Analyst,

stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 1, item 3.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Chandisingh: Under this item, Scientific Officer, I should like to raise the question of the Food and Drugs Act which has been passed in this House and to ask whether the regulations have been prepared as yet and whether the advisory committees which were supposed to be appointed have been established to guide the Minister in the operation of the carrying out of that Act. In this connection also, I should like to know whether the complement of scientific officers shown here is satisfactory in terms of the additional work which has to be done specifically with the added responsibilities of the implementation of the Food and Drugs Act, that is, if this Act is to be satisfactorily carried out.

While at it, may I just take the opportunity to refer to the corn beef situation since the hon. Minister earlier in the debate had cause to refer to the fact to the Government's credit and had gone into the question of corn beef with chickenfoot. May I say that here again I think it is about two years ago on another Budget debate that we referred to this particular brand of corn beef, and urged the Government and the Analyst Department to check into this particular type of corn beef which came up in the recent experience.

I made the observation that it seems as if the manufacturers were passing through the whole cow into the machine, judging from the product.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, the complement of Scientific Officers will be sufficient for the time being. The regulations are in draft and the food and Drugs advisory Committee would be required to go through it and give final advice to the Minister so that the final regulation can be published for general information.

The comments about the corn beef Mr. Chairman, as you know, we are not particularly interested in whether a particular brand is good or not, we are interested in feeding ourselves.

As far as this Government is concerned the whole national thrust is to reach the stage

where we will have no need to bring into this country corn beef whether it is saturated with fowl feet, whether it has 19 percent protein as is this particular case or not. We are interested in producing fresh stuff so that we will have no occasion to import corn beef. That is the crux of the effort we are making at the moment.

Head 57, Ministry of Health, Analyst, \$137, 423, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 141.

HEAD 58 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

REGISTRATION, IMMIGRATION, BIRTHS, ETC.

Question proposed that the sum of \$118,077 for Head 58, Ministry of Health, Registration, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: I just wish to speak on subhead 1, item 1.

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mr. Chandisingh: Item 1, Registrar General. I merely wish to take the opportunity to pose to the Minister a question as to whether Government intends to remove the delays, and the great inconvenience caused to the members of the public when they attempt to get birth certificates or copies of birth certificates.

The Chairman: You had better speak on the head generally instead of a specific item.

Mr. Chandisingh: Very well, sir, because quite recently there was a letter in the Press which seemed to indicate the sort of experience which many people have been going through. People come to see me sometimes and it is a fact particularly so far as people who come from the country districts, from Berbice for example, or from Essequibo are concerned. They find that very often writing and sending letters produce no results and when they do come down to Georgetown to try to speed up matters, here again they are pushed around and they have to

return to the country districts causing them a lot of expenditure and time lost. On the whole it is very inconvenient for them. I do not want to deal much more with this matter, but I ask the hon. Minister to have a look again at this letter which was published in the Press and perhaps at least some of those points need to be corrected in order to help members of the public to get their birth certificates and other documents with the minimum of inconvenience.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, I had occasion personally to investigate some of the complaints not as the Minister responsible for Health *pro tem* but as a citizen and I have found that very often the delays are as a result of the delay of inadequate information supplied by persons requesting the certificates. I have had delays myself, because a few weeks ago I visited Endeavour on the Demerara River and a lady wanted birth certificates for her two children but she could not say what name the father used, and this is surprisingly true she did not know exactly when they were born or registered. It is a difficult situation for the officers. Mind you, sir, in every Government Department, in every sector of any society you have people who are not as competent as they ought to be. I would not for one moment attempt to defend incompetent and lazy officers. But the real difficulty which exists in this particular department which is managed by a competent public officer is persons not being in a position to supply adequate information. The Department has to ensure that when it issues and signs a certificate it is a certificate that actually reflects the information that ought to be on it.

With respect to the letter to the Press Mr. Chairman, we in this Society believe that anything that appears in newspapers is gospel. One crack pot or crank who may have had a problem can write to the Press. Therefore to come and say that there is a letter in the Press and to say that there are many people who are going through this problem make little sense. Because you only need one person who is literate or semi-literate to write a letter to the Press. As I said we have looked at this Department and we are satisfied that a substantial number of the complaints are a direct result of the persons requesting the certificate being unable to supply full and proper information.

Head 58, Ministry of Health, Registration, Immigration, Birth, etc. - \$118,077 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXIII – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Question proposed that the sum of \$777,000 for Division XX.III, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subheads 1, 3 and 8

Mr. R. Ally: Subhead 8

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 1, Rural Hospitals, Health Centres Dispensaries, the legend states that this sum is to provide for the construction of health centres and improvements to the West Demerara Hospital. I merely wish to ask, construction of which health centres, where, in other words, and with respect to improvements to the West Demerara Hospital, I wonder what particular hospital is meant by “West Demerara Hospital.”

So far as subhead 3, New Hospital, Georgetown, is concerned, we noted the sum of \$200,000 is voted for the preparation of the engineering drawings. First of all, I should like to know what about the architectural plans. I know there is some difference perhaps between architectural drawings and engineering drawings but we understand that a sum of \$200,000 or some similar amount of money here or if this is something different. That is one point.

With respect to the entire plan for the new hospital in Georgetown, here again, I do not want to take up time to delve into this matter, but merely to ask whether the hon. Minister does not see the need for a larger hospital even now, much more when we think in terms of twenty years ahead with a growing population. According to the plans that the Ministry has, it will be complete by 1980 or later. This is supposed to be a twenty-year plan for rephrasing the Georgetown Hospital and will result in providing bed, space almost similar to what we have now or perhaps less bed space, perhaps 900 to 1,000 bed.

We are aware that the Minister and other spokesmen on health have said in the

past that other institutions, healthcentres in the vicinity or in the other districts, will obviate the necessity for people travelling to the Georgetown Hospital. But taking all these things into consideration, it is extremely questionable whether in twenty years' time such a hospital with roughly 900 beds would be able to cater for the needs of population. Would the Minister give some indication, therefore, whether in twenty years' the time the number of beds to be provided at this reconstructed hospital will be greater, and if so, by how many? Will there be 2,000 to 2,500 beds? We had indicated earlier on, last year and the year before, that we needed a new hospital for Georgetown, at least to provide a hospital big enough to accommodate something like 2,000 to 2,500 beds, bearing in mind the need for expansion as time goes on. The last point I want to make on this question is that the first phase seems to be the spending of \$2 million or thereabouts to relocate the doctors' quarters to another area and also to provide new facilities in that area which is thereby vacated by the doctors' quarters. I wonder whether the Government has considered the question of perhaps spending less money in purchasing a building which, I understand, is available very near the hospital, the Sandbach Building.

I am just wondering by way of helping whether the Government has considered the possibility, instead of spending a large amount of money to build additional flats in another location, whether the Government has considered perhaps purchasing at a much smaller charge, suitable building whereby doctors' flats can be accommodated. I have no special interest in this, but this has been mooted as a possibility in terms of saving of funds and time of construction. I wonder whether the government has considered this. The main point is this long period of having to wait twenty years before we can get a new hospital which will be catering for the same population, so to speak, as we have at the moment.

Finally, Subhead 8, Environmental Sanitation Programme, we see that the Government is continuing to provide some fund, \$50,000 for environmental sanitation and I would like to ask what specifically is being provided for by this sum and to refer the Minister to the sanitation at the Jacklow Government School. I understand that the Jacklow Government School has had some work done, provision of toilet facilities, some years ago; money was spent — something like \$15,000. My information is that it has not yet been completed and one wonders whether this

money or part of it is going to be used to complete the environmental sanitation works which were begun at the Jacklow Government School.

May I make the observation that the \$777,000 which is provided under this head is much too small in terms of the needs of our country for expanding health facilities. The current needs would not be satisfied by this small amount and when we take into account the expanding needs of our population, the total amount under Capital Expenditure is much too small. The hon. Minister should have the influence with his colleagues to see to it that more money is devoted to Capital Expenditure.

Mr. Green: The hospital referred to at subhead 1 is the Best Hospital. With regard to health centres, already have a list of proposals from people in various parts of the country and early in 1972 we will sit down and decide on priorities based on the funds available, priority at all times being given to areas where the needs are great and where the residents are prepared to assist by self-help.

3.20 p.m

With regard to the Georgetown Hospital, these funds are for the engineering drawings. Perhaps I can help the hon. Member by saying that we did it in several stages. First, we decided on the siting. A feasibility study was done and we came up with the answer that we can re-develop the new complex at the existing site with expansion in a particular direction. The architectural drawings were done and now we have to get the engineering drawings. When those are completed, you get the final design drawings, do the quantities and then move on to construction stage.

The money voted in this House at an earlier stage under the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply is to provide quarters for the doctors so that we will have available that space for the hospital proper for the second phase of the re-development programme.

Twenty years may seem a long time, but we took into account the possible population growth and the trend of the health services, taking into account the change of direction that will come about as a result of the new health plan. If you do a straight mathematical calculation,

based on your population today and the number of patients you have to accommodate now, you could not come out with the correct answer.

As I said earlier in the House, the emphasis today is on preventive medicine in which case we will give the hospital the correct orientation, not as it is today. The programme for education is going to help. In fact, it will play a very important part in this whole operation.

With regard to the new building, as I said we have already given out the contract and I am not concerned, but it is rather interesting to note that a number of persons seem to have a special interest in the block of flats owned by Sandbach Parker. Government Ministers have been approached by an interesting group of persons and organisations in an effort to persuade us to purchase this building. It is an important site; there are very important members of the community in the area. We are going to watch the situation very carefully for the future.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, may I inform you that I am living next door.

Mr. Green: And a Minister of the Government is living next door to you, sir. There are two further down the street, so it is an important area and the value has probably gone up. The commission has probably gone up too.

Environmental sanitation is a programme on which we propose to expend the sum shown here this year. As hon. Members know, this is done in conjunction with the Community Development. It is primarily to provide proper sanitary facilities in rural schools. The Ministry will attempt to come up with a design to suit the particular habits of the people in the rural areas so that these facilities will last a little longer than usual. We have already had discussions with the health engineers on this.

Division XXIII, Ministry of Health - \$777,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

The Chairman: We will now deal with the Head, Ministry of Trade, page 89. We saved five minutes on the last Head. The Ministry of Trade, to which I had allocated 35 minutes, will now be given an allocation of 40 minutes.

HEAD 33 - MINISTRY OF TRADE

Question proposed that the sum of \$396,057 for Head. 33, Ministry of Trade, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will members please indicate the items on which they wish to speak.

Dr. Jagan: Subheads 9, 10, 13 and 15 on page 90.

Mr. M. Y. Ally: Subheads 3 and 15.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Dr. Jagan.

Dr. Jagan: Subhead 9, Contribution to General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. I speak on this subhead because I have made this observation before and I would like the Minister to state whether this is so or not, that is, that the Government has placed a 10 per cent service charge on goods coming from socialist countries, the Sino-Soviet bloc, as against a 5 per cent service charge for goods coming from other countries.

On one occasion I said that this was equivalent to a surcharge. The Minister said, No, that this was mainly a service charge.

I reminded the House on another occasion that the previous Minister had said that this service charge would only be imposed on textiles from the Sino-Soviet bloc countries but now I understand that it is imposed on all goods coming in from these countries.

If the information is correct that it is imposed on all goods, then there is a clear case of discrimination. My information is that this would not be within the terms of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

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The Government must therefore say why it is having this differential charge. The Government must say in truth and in fact whether it is not a 10 per cent surcharge levy on cheaper goods coming from Socialist countries in order to discourage the purchase of these

goods so as to help and to work in co-operation with the kind of thing which we saw recently in the United States, that is, a 10 per cent surcharge on goods coming from other countries. In view of the fact the Guyana Dollar has now been devalued in relation to imports from non-dollar countries I should like to know whether the Government would give consideration at this stage to the withdrawal of these service charges.

We notice here a sum of \$200,000 put here as expenditure. I wonder if the Minister would tell us how much revenue the External Trade Bureau has collected so far. What is the average monthly amount for the last period for which it has been operating? On one occasion the Minister said that the PPP's position on the External Trade Bureau seems to be wabbling in the sense that it says that it is in agreement with such an institution but at the same time it is doing everything to subvert it. I should like to say that that is not a correct view of our position. While in principle the PPP is in favour of Government control of foreign trade, on the other hand, what we are opposed to is the way it is being done. I referred a moment ago to the discriminatory levy on goods coming from Socialist countries even though it is a known fact that those goods are cheaper in price and this was admitted by the Minister of Finance in his Budget Statement as regards imports from China.

I should also like to refer to the fact that because of the method of operating this Bureau we find that the price of cement has been increased from \$2.10, before the Bureau took over less than a year ago, to nearly \$3, as I understand it, for a sack of cement at the present time

My hon. Friend mentioned a few days ago or perhaps more than a few days ago in this House that the Government did not seem to know what it was doing and this was accounting for the tremendous amount of dislocation, and not only dislocation for we saw recently where many persons were retrenched, they could not continue with their operations because there was no cement in the country. Another point which I should like to raise is the whole method by which the Government goes about making its purchases. There are many allegations of corruption. I should like to see that the Government embark upon some major principle and that is to establish some method of purchasing - calling for bids or something like that, whenever it wants to make purchases, whether in quantities at particular times, whether it gets commission

or not is immaterial so that the Government can be buying from the cheapest sources. The Government is going to be the bulk purchaser. One hears that there are bulk purchases being made by people who have their own connections. We hope that this is not so and that we are taking advantage of the cheapest possible sources which can result to the cheapest prices coming to the consumers. Unless the commercial community and the people can be satisfied that this is done we will find that we will always have, not only as a result of the incompetence but as a result of these factors prices increasing all the time.

Item 10, Contribution to the International Sugar Agreement. The Minister of Agriculture told us the other day how production of cane farmers sugar is increasing. We are happy to know that, but what we are concerned about are two things. Firstly, the amount that is being taken out by the sugar planters as milling costs from the sugar cane farmers. The Minister must not only talk about increasing production. What the farmer is concerned about is how much he gets at the end. One of the factors which robs him at the moment is the large amount taken out by the sugar producers for the milling cost. I hope that the Ministers of Agriculture and of Trade will go into the matter very quickly. What I am concerned about right now, when I refer to the International Sugar Agreement is the future market for these people. It is no use having a lot of local people going into sugar production when the future is uncertain.

We would like the Minister to tell us about the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement now that Britain has decided to go into the Common Market. We know that when Lord Ripon was negotiating he put up a very firm position on the question, particularly of commonwealth sugar, but because his position was so strong the over Lords in the Tory party who wanted Britain to go into the Common Market were fearful that the whole question of Britain's entry may be jeopardised as result of the strong position taken by Lord Ripon. Therefore, Ripon was called home and a new position was subsequently taken when the whole West Indies became alarmed. Subsequently, we were told that assurances were given by Britain but these were not the same that Ripon was calling for before - bankable assurances - and the West Indians were calling for bankable assurances. They came back and said they were satisfied, but the publication has just come in my possession and the position is one as follows that the interpretation given to these assurances by Britain and the Common Market countries are completely different. Indeed, the

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Common Market countries which are interested in beet sugar, particularly France and Germany, have more or less remained silent on the interpretation given by Britain so far as these assurances are concerned.

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They have a new way of interpreting this and it is possible that after Britain has gone in, the sugar producers of this country- and I am concerned not only with the sugar workers, but also with the cane farmers – will find that the whole Commonwealth Agreement will go and we will be left holding the bag. I would like the Minister of Trade to say whether he is fully satisfied about the assurances.

Secondly, in case there is a rattening on the West Indian Producers of sugar – we know the British Government cannot be relied on, they rattened on the people of Rhodesia and there is nothing to prevent them rattening on the people of the West Indies- I should like to know in anticipation of this eventuality what the Ministry of Trade proposes to do in relation to this sector of our economy, on which so much reliance is placed, particularly by this Government.

Subhead 13, Expenses, National Specification Board. I see an amount of, \$45,000. So far, I do not know that we have spent that amount last year, and we are to spend the same amount this year. I wonder if the Minister can give us some information as to how far we have gone in this respect. We are forced to buy goods from CARIFTA countries. We are forced to buy all kinds of things. I have before me a clipping from a newspaper, *The Tribune of London*, since 1954. The headlines state, “Tonics to drive women to drink” and the article speaks of Phospherine, Wincarnis and all kinds of tonics. But I am not only interested in these products, I am also interested in the many products which now are produced in the Caribbean which are inferior in quality and high in price. The consumer needs to be protected and to have qualities which are up to standard. I wonder what has been done to protect the Guyanese consumer.

We heard a little while ago the Minister of Health talked about the need to educate the Guyanese people. I do hope as regards diet, that the Minister of Trade will also undertake this effort of educating the people. I think on the last occasion he was speaking of

Lactogen, that there are many other things in the country which are equally good and that people should not use Lactogen if there is a substitute as good in quality. We have no objection to that.

The Minister referred a moment ago to aspirin. I would say that the Government must not only tell us about this, that the people need to use these things. The Government must educate the people and not just use the big stick, as the Minister used the other day when he spoke about Lactogen and Quaker Oats, and Dolly Oats. I would think the Minister has a duty not only to use the big stick and say: you must use so and so. Better still, it would be in the interest of the Government and the Ministry to start a massive programme of education first, including work with the bureau of standards, making analyses, using the radio and the newspapers.

In this respect, I should like to refer him to two American publications, one produced by *Consumers' Research* and another produced by *Consumer' Union*, which put out --- monthly magazines and annual bulletins and books, where they test all kind of products and also give prices and suggest what are the best buys. There is also a magazine which the consumers' society in England puts out called, "Which" The Government can do a great deal of good for the consumers of Guyana by securing these publications and using the *Chronicle* and the radio station to publicise these articles which test products ranging from razor blades to refrigerators, radios, motor cars, and everything else. This would be a useful service to the people and once the people receive objective advice such as this, they would be willing to switch their choice of consumer items and thereby help themselves and help the Government in its objective of concentrating on some product which it might be buying in bulk.

I should like to ask the Minister of Trade if he knows of a study which was done about purchasing hospital requirements only, which would make a saving of \$1/2 million per year, a study conducted by the now Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, who was then Junior Minister, and the Hospital Administrator, that if all hospital requirements were purchased from the socialist countries instead of from the

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Crown Agents, the Government would save 1/2 million a year. Will the Government, in view of this information, channel its purchases of hospital requirements to the socialist countries, thereby saving the taxpayers, money so that the Minister of Health will be able to give more beds to the mothers in the hospital and to give more food to the patients at the Best hospital?

The Chairman: The Minister of Health said from his technical advisers he had advice they are well provided with food at the hospital. He is alleging that the Government will have more money to feed them better.

Dr. Jagan: He said they are not fed at 3 o'clock but it was between 3 and 4. There is not much difference. He did not answer whether it is true or not that there they are receiving a bun or bread, and a cup of coffee for breakfast and for dinner. He did not answer that. He said they are well fed. I would like to go with him. They do not want us to go to the quarries. The Minister of Home Affairs has refused me permission to go to the prisons. They do not want us to see what is happening.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Discussing Subhead 3, Miscellaneous, I was happy to see this item for cleaning expenses, I probably thought it was to clean up some of the corruption. Especially in this Ministry.

Subhead 15, external Trade Bureau, we find the Government asking for \$200,000. I understand it is very profitable to Government, but in looking through the Estimates, I find no account of the revenues. All I can find is \$500 for the sale of empty drums.

3.50 p.m.

As we understand it, the E.T.B. imported more than 2,000 drums of cooking oil and every shopkeeper had to pay \$3 per drum before he could take delivery. I am at a loss to know how they arrived at \$500 for drums. Are these the same drums?

I was reflecting on the utterings in the P.N.C. "Road". We can now show that most of these utterings are down the drain, they have no meaning. I should like to quote from page 23:

"When public enterprises are undertaken through public rather than private agencies, they will have in all cases to measure up to the stern demands of good management and hard work."

The same principle should be applied to the External Trade Bureau. It should have a more meaningful purpose since Government is the only importer. But what do we find? Government has bungled and has mixed up all the trading principles that apply in the field of commerce. This has been done through shortsightedness, not for progress or justice, but for envy. It is like a parasite that does not work but just clings on.

Without any legislation, the Government started to prevent private importation by using Guyana Gajraj Ltd. It was understood that the purpose of this acquisition was to assist people and control the commanding heights of the economy and take care of the nation's needs.

We found that charges of 5 per cent and 10 per cent were placed on goods imported. Apart from that, we found the Prime Minister saying that E.T.B. is here to stay, that E.T.B. is here to help the small man, that E.T.B. will transform Guyana into a socialist country.

E.T.B. has been operating over a year. There should be enough experience, enough knowledge and strategy to overcome shortages and to reduce the high cost of living. Despite high prices, we find shortages of cement and saltfish. When E.T.B. was established saltfish was about 62 cents per pound; butter was about 64 cents per pound; cheese was 64 cents per pound; milk was cheap. The public could have bought two tins for 49 cents. Sardines were 15 cents a tin, I think. There was an abundant supply of drugs on the market.

The Leader of the Opposition said that devaluation would mean higher prices for goods. We find that the Government has a strangle hold on importers while holding the ... tail of the E.T. B. [*Interruption*]

The Chairman: Order! We are giving members limited time. Please allow them to speak.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: In the field of trade, every shopkeeper knows the basic theory of business, that is, the law of supply and demand. The P.N.C. Government does not know where to

start in spite of the fact that it has been fooling around for one year. In the twelve months that E.T.B. has been in operation the price of cement has been jacked up from \$2.10 to \$3 per bag.

This is a case of greed and it is not something to help the country.

There is a classic example of an individual who was willing to help our country, when in 1947 Dr. Jagan - there was no party yet - in this same House tried to represent the cause of rice in his approach to the big magnates of the Colonial Development Corporation. It is recorded where he represented rice in this country whilst those big sharks wanted to exploit rice. They promised to give assistance to the Mahaicony/Abary Rice Development Scheme but they were attempting to have a special grade of rice which they could market by themselves instead of sending it to the Rice Marketing Board. It was Dr. Jagan who put his foot on it and fought tooth and nail to have this removed. This was a classic example of a person being unselfish.

What do we find now? Blame is being put on Trinidad Cement Ltd. Blame is put on wharf repairs at Claxton Bay, on the dock strike in Trinidad; blame is switched to John Fernandes or to shipping shortages. It is no wonder that our farmers cannot get a decent price for their rice.

The Chairman: It is four minutes to the time for suspension and you will be allowed to speak for four minutes more.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: The Government begged a group of men to help advise it on trade principles, but, from my information, Government just threw aside the recommendations made by these people. There is no firm acceptance of a trading principle.

Government must stop fooling around with this idea of trade. It has been said that the cost of goods is going up because Government turned a deaf ear to advice on bank charges, stamp duty, inward freight charges, bill of entry charges, plus pilfering and shortages. Government is only concerned with the c.i.f. value and tries to control prices on this basis, but it should be more realistic.

We find that this will get us nowhere. Instead of prices coming down, they are rising

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higher and Government must rethink its policy and take advice. The P.P.P. is always willing to help, because when the cost of living is reduced everybody in the country will gain.

We advise the Government to adopt certain principles and that is to cut out this 5 per cent and 10 per cent commission it is collecting through the E.T.B. Arrange for central importation and make use of Government funds in order to be independent! Do not bank on using the merchants' money! Some merchants will order \$100 worth of goods today and \$300 worth tomorrow and will wait two or three months to muster this money. Government should be able to have better control, if it has the importation of commodities in its hands. All the retail distribution should be handed over to shopkeepers and Government depots.

I also urge the Government to encourage free competition without discrimination. It should maintain a constant and even flow of goods throughout the country. This will bring the cost of living down so as to ensure peace, progress and prosperity to our people of Guyana.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply

Mr. Sutton: Before the hon. Minister gets up to reply I wonder if you would allow me to make a few observations. When you called page 89, Ministry of Trade, the Leader of the Opposition got up and spoke, and I could not catch your eye, and until he was finished speaking I could not have done anything about it.

The Chairman: You have got ten minutes, within which time the hon. Minister has to reply.

Mr. Sutton: I will cut it down to not more than five minutes.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence to make a few remarks on 15 and 16 taking them together. The External Trade Bureau, and Expenses, Price Control Board. The Government has stated that the establishment of the External Trade Bureau is primarily for the purpose of keeping a tab on the cost of living, that it is kept as low as possible where such cost of living is determined by the cost of goods which come into the country. In view of this, I think it is vitally necessary for the record to be put straight so that all the facts could be clearly known by all concerned, and that the Government's effort in this direction can be truly assessed and we do not use factors of no consequence but in fact look at the fact straight in the eye and decide what is the best method to reduce our cost of living if that is the intention of the External Trade Bureau.

Let us consider the services that the Trade Bureau are offering today, and the services which were being offered before the Trade Bureau came into effect. As we have heard the Trade Bureau has established a service charge of 5 per cent on goods from the Western countries and 10 per cent from other countries. Let us examine what the persons who

brought in the goods had to pay before the External Trade Bureau came into circulation. The agents of the various food products got commissions from 1 to 5 per cent. In the Trade Bureau's operations they have assumed the agencies which had been owned by agents who brought them in. In other words, the commission which was earned by the agents is now being earned by the External Trade Bureau. In addition to earning commission they are charging service charge of 5 to 10 per cent depending on the circumstances.

On the face of it what are the services rendered by the External Trade Bureau for these charges? They have to order the goods, the goods come down, they distribute invoices to the persons who would normally have imported them, the people pay their own custom clerk and expenses and, other than receiving the invoices and sending them out to the people who would have normally imported them. There is no further service extended by the Trade Bureau which is not obtained. The services extended by the agents prior to the Trade Bureau where the importer as he does now clear his own goods and pays his own duty it did not cost him a single cent because the commission as paid now to the E.T.B. was paid to the agents and there is no local remuneration to the agent who delivered invoices and had nothing further to do with the goods where the goods were duty paid by the agent and delivered on a duty paid basis. This compelled him in all circumstances to deliver only goods that were in some condition because the claims were for his account. He then charges a maximum of a 5 per cent service charge using his own money to pay duty and his own customs clerk to clear the goods, he gives the importer a delivery order and all he had to do was to go to the bond and uplift his goods.

I am informed that when goods come in, except in those cases where the importer was before the agent of the particular line which he imports in all cases the External Trade Bureau demands payment before the goods can be delivered. If we are to look at the facts in the face we will note that item 16 also mentions extension of the Control Board. If the extension of the E.T.B. was only to control the level of prices of goods. It was done in the war, it had been done several times before - there is absolutely no need for the External Trade Bureau as it is

now established.

We are asked for an allocation of \$200,000. Where is the revenue earned by the External Trade Bureau? I would be glad if the Minister would let us know what is the staffing of the E.T.B? What is the cost of the External Trade Bureau per month? Bearing in mind that in several cases agents have had to get rid of a big proportion of their staff where they no longer handle the items that are now handled by the external Trade Bureau. How can they say that they are reducing the cost of living when they make service charges which were never payable before? All the agents worked for was their commission and in the case of their paying duty naturally the person had to pay for the service of the agent using his money. Other than that no charges whatsoever were made. In these circumstances, I wonder if the Minister of Trade can tell us how the cost of goods have been reduced.

The Minister of Trade (Mr. David Singh): Mr. Chairman, I should like to deal first with the point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. His points on the External Trade Bureau I will leave when I deal with the comments on the E.T.B. by the other speaker.

On the question of the 10 per cent service charge to Sino Soviet goods, as at present advised that service charge will remain. I should like to say that it does offend the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and indeed only three of the countries classified under the term: "Sino Soviet" belong to GATT. Those countries are Czechoslovakia, Romania and Poland. I should now like to deal with Contribution to the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement.

4.35 p.m.

Guyana was represented in the discussions in relation to Britain's entry into the European Common market and the Lancaster Agreement was effected in July of this year. As far as Guyana is concerned, the Lancaster agreement assures us that the future of Commonwealth sugar is assured. He makes the point that Britain may rat on us. Well, this is a chance you take in the world of internationalism.

On the \$45,000 National Specifications Board, it is and I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, time now that the bureau of standards be established. This point about standards of CARIFTA products, I do not know if he mention Guyanese products, if we are going to have import substitution, if we are going to have import control, those who are producing must produce at a standard that is acceptable to the Guyanese community. I do not mean by that luxury standards acceptable to a certain section of the Guyanese society, but standards with reference to health, with reference to quality, reference to nutrition elements, and so on, and it is my hope as Minister of Trade to spearhead during this year the setting up of a bureau of standards.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I will deal with the remarks in general about the External Trade Bureau. It is a whipping horse especially for those jockeys who have been shifted from the saddle. The revenue of the External Trade Bureau during the first six months of its operation was \$60,000; the projected gross revenue for the External Trade Bureau in 1971 is \$1.2 million. And on page 10 of this book of Estimates one will see that similar amount is projected under Miscellaneous Undertakings, subhead 6, \$1.2 million. The vote of \$200,000 is only reflecting the system of the operation in that the revenue from the External Trade Bureau is paid into public fund and funds are provided for the running of the External Trade Bureau. But I should like to deal with certain specific attacks on the External Trade Bureau, one of which involves cement.

It is true in the process of the E. T.B. taking over, prices of cement have risen but we must begin at the beginning and show that when the E. T.B. took over cement, the street price came from \$2.25 to \$2.19 and it was held there for a considerable time. After that, we had a situation where there were three or four big cement factories in Colombia out of operation. I was there myself. Trinidad, never mind what the hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally says, had the real problem of Claxton Bay, where there was a labour dispute for two years which shut that harbour. Trinidad was producing cement, but the rate of output was so slow with on harbour closed that although we were getting all our supplies from Trinidad 100,000 sacks per month it was reduce to 50,000 sacks, as a results Guyana had to be pushed into the Venezuelan market.

If we do not get the cement, we will hear, because of the E.T.B. there is a shortage of cement. When we get the cement because of the E.T.B., the price goes up. Mr. Chairman, you must never forget that there again those who are whipping the E.T.B. are also out of the saddle and they have not been idle in trying to interfere with Government sources of cement. But we know when you make change, you will have problems. When you make changes people will fight you to revert to the old order. But, if you stand firm and they realise that you will not go back on what your decision was, the fight will stop they will retreat and come and even shake your hand and pat your back and say, "boy you are doing well."

The hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally mentioned that the prices of salt fish and sardines have gone up. My answer to that is, we are not producing salt fish here. In the old days, we used to catch fish all over the place. We do not produce sardines. How is the price controlled at the source? It is not true to say that the E.T.B., as the hon. Member Mr. Sutton said during the general debate and probably hinted just now, does not understand what it is doing. If he were to spend a week with me at my desk or with any Minister of Trade he would see the prices the moment there is a quotation and the quotation comes from the Water Street importer, who goes to the E.T.B. and says he would like to buy 1,000 cases of sardines from source "X". It is not only the E.T.B. will be able to say to that man, "That will mean an increase in the street price. We have a source here."

We had during this year two quotations for icing sugar, one from Tate and Lyle which would have come into Guyana and would have been sold at \$1.06 per pound against the existing street price of 47 cents per pound. As Minister, I took the decision not to place the order for Tate and Lyle icing sugar. Instead we placed the order for Trinidad icing sugar which when landed here will be sold at 39 cents per pound. There is a difference between \$1.06 and 39 cents. If this were left with the Water Street competition, about which they talk so much, they would have brought Tate and Lyle and Royal and the man who could advertise better would have sold better.

It is difficult for some of us to understand but I would like to have some time to deal with a statement which I know to be deliberately inaccurate and that concerns the

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4.35 - 4.45 p.m.

commission charged by the External Trade Bureau. Mr. Chairman, if I am wrong I will sit and ask your leave for the hon. Member Mr. Sutton to correct me, but he has repeated it in this House so often that he himself believes it although he knows it is wrong.

4.45 p.m.

The hon. Member says there is a 5 per cent charge on certain goods. He says that previously merchants used to get between 1 to 5 per cent commission which was included in the price of the goods, that means it was the c.i.f. price plus a commission, and that they never received anything else.

The hon. Member alleges that the External Trade Bureau takes the commission that is built into the c.i.f. price plus an extra 5 per cent. He can check with the Chamber of Commerce and with all the businessmen in Guyana. Unfortunately, he seems to have left that group so he does not know.

The External Trade Bureau takes a commission of between 3 to 5 per cent on certain goods and if that commission is built into the price of the goods supplied by the exporters, there is not an additional commission taken locally. This is a fact and he knows it because he has been affected by it. He is therefore just deliberately misleading the House.

There is a commodity on which the agents were paying a certain importer in this country 7 1/2 per cent. When the External Trade Bureau took over the importation, they paid the E.T.B. 5 per cent. We suspected that the 2 1/2 per cent was going somewhere else. They are now paying 7 1/2 per cent.

Once there is a commission included in the price, whatever it is - if it is 1/2 per cent - the E.T.B. follows the commercial pattern and does not take a local commission. It is only in cases where there is no commission that a local commission is charged for the services offered by the E.T.B.

Perhaps I can explain it to hon. Members. If an article is quoted c.i.f. c., which means c.i.f. price plus the commission, whatever that commission is, when the draft is paid at the bank

the commission is credited to the accounts of the External Trade Bureau and there is no other charge. It is only when the quotation is c.i.f. - that means no commission is paid by the supplier - that a commission is charged locally. This is what my hon. Friend said that the commercial community used to do and this is what the E.T.B. is doing now.

There is another point. The hon. Member says that importers are asked to pay on demand when the goods land or they do not get them. My hon. Friend boasts about his years of business experience and refers to us in the Ministry of Trade and in the External Trade Bureau as "jokers". Whenever goods are shipped on sight draft, whether they come through the E.T.B. or anybody else, unless merchants pay they cannot move them.

More than that. When goods come on direct indent to the External Trade Bureau on 60 to 90 days' credit, it is the External Trade Bureau that has an obligation to the bank to pay on the maturity of that draft. It is the External Trade Bureau that has to go to the bank to pay on the sixtieth or the ninetieth day. Let the hon. Member find out how many of his dear friends in Water Street have honoured their obligation to the External Trade Bureau on the date when the E.T.B. had to honour the draft at the Guyana National Co-operative Bank. It is the External Trade Bureau that has to meet the obligation to the bank, because, if goods are imported on direct indent and come consigned to the E.T.B., the importers do not know the persons who took them to sell and cannot sue them.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, will you try to wind up?

Mr. David Singh: May I make this point, sir. The hon. Member is now notorious for his inaccuracies and I shall be kind to him and say they are not deliberate.

As in commercial transactions, insurances are taken out for every shipment that comes into this country ordered by the E.T.B. It is a strange type of insurance. The importers name their insurance companies; they pay for the insurance except that the E.T.B. has to process the claim. That is the only difference. The importers pay for it, not the External Trade Bureau.

The goods are insured. I cannot see any of these businessmen in Georgetown - and I have

the highest regard for some of them – importing £50,000 worth of anything through the External Trade Bureau if the Bureau says they cannot take out any insurance. Therefore, when the hon. Member makes this point about insurance and about things spoiling, I do not understand. Perhaps he has a reason for making these points.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, please wind up.

Mr. David Singh: I think that I have dealt with all the points that have been raised.

Dr. Jagan: I wonder whether I could ask a supplementary question just to clear up certain points. This is a very important Head, sir, and I would be grateful even if you have to take some time off another Head.

The Chairman: I shall allow you certain latitude as Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Jagan: The Minister spoke in answer to my hon. Friend, Mr. Sutton. Unfortunately, E.T.B. was thrown on the country without any proper debate in this House and it seems to be blowing up from day to day. Is there a difference between the commission charge and the service charge put on by E.T.B.? We were talking just now about the commission that it is built into the c.i.f. price and so on. Five per cent, as I understand it, is charged on goods from western countries. [**Mr. David Singh:** "Three to five".]

Dr. Jagan: What about the 10 per cent on goods coming from socialist countries? Does this also take care of the commission? Is there one charge only? Is the commission and the service charge the same?

The Minister said a moment ago, in reply to me, that the 10 per cent service charge, as he called it, does not violate G.A.T.T. The previous Minister has said in this House that the 10 per cent service charge was only to be levied on textiles. I believe that this was because textiles were coming in very cheap and merchants were making fantastic profits and they wanted to rake off some of that and get 10 per cent. Since then, as I understand it, 10 per cent has become the overall charge.

Leaving out the violations of G.A.T.T., why is there a differential rate, one to five and one to ten, between two sets of countries? Is there more work involved? If you are charging a service charge one would presume it would be the same wherever the goods are coming from, because it is the same amount of work involved. I do not see the reason unless you want to discriminate. That is what I am trying to get at.

Mr. David Singh: It is not a question one could answer in a short time. What I should like to say is this: The hon. Leader of the Opposition must recognise that in all of these Sino-Soviet countries the time for delivery of the goods is nearly three months. Letter of credit facilities are required; money is tied up in a bank for three months and interest has to be paid on it. In these nearby countries, when you are talking about delivery, you are talking about weeks only, not months. It is true that we are negotiating now on a state to state trading basis for a relaxation of letter of credit facilities. We have an indication, in principle, that a certain socialist country will be prepared to give us 60 to 90 days' sight draft facilities, which would mean that the situation might change.

With a letter of credit, the E.T.B. has to open an account at the bank and hold it there for three months, until the goods arrive. This is one of the reasons for the charge. I cannot answer in relation to what the hon. Member said my predecessor in office said. I would have to find out about it. Quite honestly, I do not know about it, but the explanation for the 10 per cent charge is the fact that you have to open letter of credit facilities for three months and wait for the goods to arrive as opposed to two or three weeks in other areas.

Head 33, Ministry of Trade- \$396,057, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

4.55 p.m.

HEAD 30- MINISTRY OF MINES AND FORESTS

Question proposed that the sum of \$175,538 for Head 30, Ministry of Mines and Forests stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Fifteen minutes have been allocated for this Head.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: We will do this one in less than five minutes. Item 10, Commission for Chief Clerk. I am sure that the hon. Minister would agree with me that the time is more right for the creation of the post of Executive Officer in this particular Department. Because the officer who holds the position of Chief Clerk has to be in touch with various officers throughout the length and breadth of the country. He has experience and so another holder of this position is kept there and merely prevented from going into the higher position of Administrative assistant and Assistant Secretary. Will the Minister state whether he does not consider it just fair to create the post so that the officer can be properly remunerated and his position can be in comparison with the job he does?

The Minister of Mines and Forests (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, this particular matter is being considered by the Ministry at the moment. Conclusion in this matter will be forth coming during 1972.

Head 30, Ministry of Mines and Forests, \$175,538, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimates.

The Chairman: Page 84. Ten minutes for this Head.

HEAD 31- MINISTRY OF MINES AND FORESTS

FORESTS

Question proposed that \$599,297 for Head 31, Ministry of Mines and Forests, Forests, standpart of the Estimates.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wish to make one general observation on the head. I read in the Press that the Government is considering what should be done so far as the Guyana Timbers is concerned. We all know that this is a concern that has been losing money. The Government has to be careful that it does not take on, within the state, more liabilities and so become the dumping ground for institutions and bodies that are not paying. The Minister has already said that he will establish and there is provision for a Forest Corporation. One expects

better from the forest Department, in the future. Will the Minister state what conclusion he has arrived at so far as Guyana Timbers is concerned? Will the Government nationalise? Will the Government take over? What is the position?

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, the fact that Guyana Timbers is likely to close has occasioned concern by the Government. A Team has been set up to consider this question, conscious not only of the effect that such a closure can have on the employment situation but also conscious as the hon. Member stated that this undertaking has not been a profitable one. I may add that my information is that it has not been profitable for the last twenty years.

The Government intends to take action on this matter early in the new year but the very nature of the state of the relationship between Government and the Guyana Timbers Limited at the moment would preclude us from giving as much information publicly as we would wish, since it may be detrimental to the future course of any negotiation that may be entered into when all the relevant facts have been considered and the advice of our experts has been taken into account. But we do intend early in the next year to take some positive action on this matter.

The Chairman: Page 85.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 9, 13 and 15

Dr. Jagan: I will also speak on subheads 9 and 15

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 9, Central timber Manufacturing Plant. The legend tells us that there has been increased activity, therefore a higher sum is required that was required last year. We are quite certain what is the position with the C.D.C which has caused that Company to announce the withdrawal. We have seen that they say one of the major factors is due to the length of hauling; they have now to do with the timber which makes the lumber produced uneconomically.

The Central Timber Manufacturing Plant processes rough sawn lumber that they buy at certain market prices. When this question was raised by me some time ago it was pointed out

that the price at which they bought the lumber made it uneconomical and as a result they had to operate at a loss. In view of the Government's clearly stated intention that its corporations and other business enterprises every effort will be made at least to run at a profit, would it now be more realistic either to have an efficiency survey of this Plant to see where the cost can be

5.05 p.m.

reduce, what is the relation of overhead expenses to selling price, what is the relation of intake in rough lumber at the price they pay to the output in finished lumber, and whether the plant is in fact being utilized at full capacity, or whether it is being utilized only at a portion of its capacity, thereby causing the overheads to be high in proportion to the cost of the product that they produce?

It is time an operation like this be made to run at a profit. If they can show, instead of as is shown in Appendix "C" processing 2,500,000 board feet at 20 cents, that the break-even point is "X" million, they must set a target in order to cause this timber seasoning plant to operate at a profit. If this state of affairs is to continue, we are only fooling ourselves and the statement is made again that the 20 cents per foot B. M. that is being paid for the lumber is high a price. It means that all the citizens of Guyana, who have to buy seasoned timber from the timber seasoning plant, are subsidising the profits being made by the sawmills which are selling lumber to the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant. Either that price must be re-adjusted to be realistic, or, if that is the minimum at which they can buy, the selling price must be adjusted upward in order to see that a remunerative amount is obtained and stop this plant being run at a loss.

On subhead 13, Silviculture, \$11,000, and Re-forestation at \$15,000, which is not now being considered. I would presume that silviculture refers to the planting of commercial species of timber, which are not naturally indigenous to this country. Would the hon. Minister confirm that that is so and that is, in fact, the difference between silviculture and re-forestation?

Subhead 15, Promotion of Exports, would the hon. Minister tell us, in view of the fact that a serious effort is being made to promote exports, what is the position of demand in relation to supply of exportable lumber and timber? I ask this particularly in view of the fact that Guyana Timbers Ltd. is going out of business because, the company tells us, it cannot sell lumber and timber at a price to make the operation worth while. If this is so, could the hon. Minister tell us whether he anticipates that the Government will be able to promote the export of timber economically, and we would not be in the position again like the central timber seasoning plant, that the more we export, the more we will lose?

Dr. Jagan: When one looks at this head, the whole question of forestry, one must really condemn the Government of Guyana in the strongest possible terms. Here is a product which we have in abundance, nearly three-quarters of our country is tied up with the richest resources that we have outside of bauxite, but very little is done about it. But we are chasing after rainbows! We are going to build a textile mill! We do not know if cotton can be grown economically. We cannot put on a proper footing an industry for which we have some of the most advantageous conditions in the world.

Something is wrong. We are only dealing with slogans. Feed yourself, clothe yourself, we are going off from timber on to making clay bricks. We are not opposed to making clay bricks and all these gimmicks. What has the Government done in seven years to take over the capital market in the West Indies? Tons of lumber, wall board and other things are coming to the West Indies. We are supposed to be in CARIFTA: we have to buy inferior quality goods, higher-priced goods and here we cannot sell beef, we cannot sell pork, we cannot sell. Rice, we cannot sell timber

Since I began growing up, I have been hearing about secondary species. We cannot develop the industry because it is done in a disjointed manner. If the Government cannot tackle this properly, close up the plant. To capture markets, lumber must be produced in good quality and it must be cheap. It is not cheap because of selective logging, cost of taking out so-called marketable species.

We were told over and over by the forestry department that many of the species are as good as the marketable ones. If they are properly treated, seasoned, and milled. That is a mechanical task, seasoning, treating and milling. Everybody knows the technique. Why is it not been done? I was told by the C.D. C. that it was possible to produce seasoned and properly milled and cured secondary species at about 15 cents per board foot. If that is so, that is so then we have a gold mine in our hands which we are not doing anything about.

The Government is caught up in its own dilemmas because of its trade policy, foreign policy and everything else. This has to be tied up completely, not playing international politics as it is trying to do. For instance, Cuba, the Conservator of Forests knows that in the time of the P.P.P. the Cubans wanted to take wood pulp from Guyana to combine with bagasse to make paper. They were willing to lend this country money to start the project. The Conservator advised that all the land was taken up, we had to make a road 18 miles in the Bartica triangle to get to an area where a factory could be set up. It was in fact suggested that we should approach C.D.C., because the company already had roads and it had a lot of timber which could be used for making pulp. What has the Government done to help accomplish this?

The Chairman: We are taking time from the Ministry of Communications.

Dr. Jagan: I just want to say that this is something to which the Government must seriously give thought or otherwise it is wasting the money and it might as well close up.

5.15 p.m.

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, the fact that Government has established a separate Ministry, the Ministry of Mines and Forests, is an indication of the importance which Government attaches to the development of our forest industry and its intention to do so as a matter of urgency.

In order that I may cover many of these questions at one go, let me state quite shortly some of the things that it is intended to do.

First, we intend to establish, in 1972, a forestry corporation. Secondly, we expect to have

the services of a very highly qualified Guyanese forestry expert who should be here during January next year to assist in this development. Thirdly, we intend to inaugurate a system of grading of lumber and the rules have already been prepared and will be promulgated very early next year. Fourthly, we intend to set up a marketing organisation which will comprise persons with experience in the industry, as it is established now, and this marketing organisation will seek markets throughout the world.

With regard to markets throughout the world, let me repeat for the benefit of the hon. Leader of the Opposition what we have said before: We will not trade with South Africa, with Portugal or with Rhodesia. Apart from these three countries, we will trade with any other country. He made a specific mention of Cuba and rather than have him think that I am running away from the mention of Cuba, let me state emphatically that we will trade with Cuba and that we will sell to Cuba if we get a market. We will sell to the Eastern European countries, the countries called "socialist" countries, if we get a market. We will be looking for markets both East and West next year. We have already had the indication of some trade with China. I believe that we have similar indications from Yugoslavia, but they are not the only countries in the eastern world. There is Russia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, etc. We will trade with all of them if we can sell.

Furthermore, we intend to have the benefit of an international trading organisation. The exact method of the association has not yet been finalised. We intend early next year to hold a Conference of timber dealers in this country. I have given instructions and the instructions have been carried out, that letters should be written to the timber dealers in this country telling them of our intentions and inviting them to put forward suggestions. We have done so, in order to give them an opportunity of letting us have the benefit of their experience. Up to this morning, I was in conversation with one of the leading timber dealers of this country, who discussed various aspects of the forestry business with me.

With regard to subhead 9, Central Timber Manufacturing Plant, which was specifically raised by the hon. Member, Mr. Sutton, the answer to his query answers other questions that may be asked under the Capital Estimates. We are purchasing a mobile sawmill and we do

intend to cut out the long haulage by means of the use of a mobile sawmill on the site. It will be seen, when we come to the Capital Estimates, that an amount of money has been put for this purpose so that we are fully aware of the high cost of haulage and we are doing something about it.

With regard to subhead 13, Silviculture, this provision is for the rehabilitation of the older plantations and the regeneration of some of the forests. This is a programme that we have been carrying out constantly. We would have wished to have had a greater provision for this but, of course, the exigencies of our situation did not permit us to do so.

On the question of exports, this has already been covered by the remarks I made concerning the marketing organisation which we intend to set up.

Head 31, Ministry of Mines and Forest - \$599,297, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 86

**HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF MINES AND FORESTS GEOLOGICAL
SURVEYS AND MINES**

Question proposed that the sum of \$546,396 for Head 32, Ministry of Mines and Forests, Geological Surveys and Mines, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Fifteen minutes have been allocated for this Head.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wish to speak on the Head generally and to refer to specific items during my contribution.

The Chairman: What items?

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Items (1), (7), (8), (9), (12) and (31).

The Chairman: Please Proceed

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: There can be no doubt that this is one of the most important and vital sections in our country. It is a very important Ministry and one wonders if it is given the attention that it deserves. It is this Ministry that will have to decide whether we will be able to produce adequate supplies of gold and diamonds, not only for our home market but for export to CARIFTA countries and other countries in the world.

The record is dismal and scandalous so far as the term of office of this Government is concerned. As far as I can trace, gold production started in 1884 and between 1884 and 1970 we produced 3,405,585 ounces of gold. From 1884 to 1964 3,387,440 ounces were produced. The important period that I wish to refer to is the period from 1957 to 1964 when the P.P.P. was in Government. 48,366 ounces of gold were produced during that period, an average of 7,000 ounces per year.

Let us look at that in relation to production when the P.N.C. was in office. From 1965 to 1970, during the P.N.C. regime, 18,124 ounces were produced, that is, about one-third of the production during the P.P.P. regime. It gives an average of 3,021 ounces per year as against 7,000 ounces per year when the P.P.P. was in office.

I do not wish to go into the details of production each month, but the position in the country today is that during this year, 1971, we have not produced more than 1,300 ounces of gold. The maximum royalty collected by the Government during this period is \$660. By the end of December the Government will be unable to collect \$700 in royalty from gold.

5.25 p.m.

The position is that there is a serious drop, a scandalous and ridiculous drop in the record of gold. The records will show that we are not importing gold in 1971. It is because the Ministry of Mines and Forests has withheld the granting of permission for the importation of gold. The Minister cannot deny that there are traders who have applied to the Minister for permission to import gold and the Ministry is not granting permission to these people. Goldsmiths are now without work, the big traders are retrenching people who are working in the gold industry - I am not talking about the gold mines but those making jewellery and so on.

With the establishment of a separate Ministry to deal with mines one was a better situation.

Mr. Chairman, diamond is in no better position. Because we see that January/March 1970, 121,223 carats that is in 1970 the same period 1971, 85,829 carats a drop by nearly one-third. We see this decline in production every quarter, examining the statistics issued by the Ministry of Mines and Forests, and April/June a drop by 20 per cent 102,365 carats in 1970, April/June 1971, 82,900 and July/September 1970, 127,623 carats in 1971, 58,073 a drop of 50 per cent. Therefore the position both in gold and diamond has never been so bad in the history of the country as it is in the year 1971. This year is the worst year for the production of gold and diamonds in the country. The time has come for the hon. Minister of Mines and Forests to take stock of this Ministry with a view of organising on an ordinary basis the exploration of gold and diamond. Time does not permit me to go into further figures but these are figures I challenge the Minister to deny that they are wrong because they have been drawn from a bulletin issued by the Ministry of Mines and forest. One sees that in 1971 less than \$700 would be collected in gold.

Now to refer specifically to some of the items. Item 1, will the Minister state how early will the necessary legislation be passed to put into operation item 1 on these Estimates.

The Chairman: The time allocated for this Ministry is fifty minutes. We have already used up forty five minutes.

Mr. R.D. Persuad: Item 7, Petrologist / Minerologist. This officer I am told has resigned and apparently there is no one there.

Item 8, Geophysicist: Again there is an expatriate in this post. What is being done in the field of training for this particular Department?

On item 9 Geologists and Assistant Geologists the Estimates show that we have got eleven, such officers. The establishment is eleven and I know we have eleven, but in addition to the eleven there are about six Geologists paid by the Ministry of Economic

Development. Why is the Government paying some from the Ministry of Economic Development and some from the Geological Surveys and Mines Department when they are serving that Department. The time has come for an increase in the number of Geologists so that in another couple of years we must have a minimum of 30,35 Geologists.

I move on to item 12. It is a shame. There is no Mining Inspector in the country at all. We have got a Chief Inspector of Mines but not an Inspector of Mines as is provided for in these Estimates. We have six mining districts and for us to succeed we must have a minimum of six Mining Inspectors.

The other point I wish to refer to is a serious grouse that is existing in the Ministry at the moment among Geologists. They are claiming that expatriates are being paid better than they are, substantially higher than they are and I understand that they have spoken to the Minister concerned and they have actually said that unless the position is resolved they will refuse to go to the Exhibition in January/February next year. How early would the Minister answer the grievances of the people.

The Chairman: You want answers to these questions hon. Member Mr. Persaud?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: I am coming to an end, sir. Item 31, Assistant Draughts men. It is necessary for this Ministry which is a technical Ministry for persons to be satisfied. You have men in various places of technical operation in the Ministry. There is a situation where Assistant Draughtsmen have been serving in this position for over ten years and they have not been promoted nor their salaries revised. What is the Minister doing with respect to creating additional posts under "Senior Assistant Draughtsmen" so that these men can be promoted and paid for the services they are offering to this important Ministry? What will happen is unless these men are satisfied we will lose them and there will be further brain drain in this country. I hope that the hon. Minister in view of the points I have made and the brief contribution I have made will try to answer what is responsible for these weaknesses in the Ministry of Mines. How early will the government decide to establish a mine so that there will be any exploration of gold and diamond in our country.

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5. 25 -5.35 p.m.

Head 32, Ministry of Mine and Forest, Geological Surveys and Mines, \$546,396, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I wish to protest very strongly. It appears that you are spiting me personally in this House.

The Chairman: I will not have you saying that . Will the hon. Member please withdraw his remark?

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that I had to speak the truth and I withdraw it.

5.35 p.m.

DIVISION XVI- MINISTRY OF MINES AND FORESTS

TheChairman: Page 88, there are some corrections I would like to mention . Please insert in the legend. "3 To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment." In the legend at 9, please delete "male" and substitute "small".

Question proposed that the sum of \$1, 85,000 for Division XVI, Ministry of Mines and Forests, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will hon. Members who wish to speak please indicate.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 10.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 4,6 and 10.

The Chairman: The time allocated for this is 10 minutes. If the time is taken up, the hon. Minister will not reply and I will put thehead.

Mr. Bissember: May I seek your permission to seek some information. It appears to me that just now the hon. Member was criticising the Ministry.The Hansard would have criticism against the ministry but the Minister will not be able to correct the criticising not the

observation of the Opposition if he is not given an opportunity.

The Chairman: The time is taken up . Hon. Member Mr. Persaud.

Mr. Bissember: I am just making an observation.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Under subhead 10, Assistance to Miners, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Minister can be allowed the opportunity to answer my criticism generally. There is a provision for \$85,000 to assist small miners. We are not against assistance but the point we are making is that the Government has not been showing production and if we are going to spend money, there has to be production. In 1969, there was a provision of \$17,807 and from 1969 there was a jump of nearly 500 per cent to \$85,000. Who will benefit from this vote? What yardstick will be used for the distribution of this fund? We cannot afford to waste the taxpayers' money the way the Government has been wasting money. Piecemeal development of the Ministry cannot help. The Government has to organise it fully. It is one unit and one link, and having handouts here and there cannot help; the Government must establish a mine so that the State can take command and control of the mining industry.

Mr. Sutton: Speaking briefly on subhead 4 , Reafforestation, in view of the intensive working of greenheart over the years, would the hon. Minister tell us if the reafforestation of green heart is tending to be successful and what is the Government's hope for this particular species?

In connection with subhead 6, will the hon. Minister say how the Forest Corporation will affect the operation of the sawmillers and timber extractors as they operate now? Would it have any direct effect on them or the Forest Corporation? Will the activities be in addition to what is being done by the private sector at the moment.

With respect to subhead 10, assistance to Miners, it is noted that \$ 85,000 is allocated . When the assistance originated in 1969, round about that time the amount involved was \$17,000, as the hon. Member mentioned. The hon. Minister, I am sure , must be aware of the abortive attempts made in certain areas, particularly in the Puruni area in Mazaruni, where the

person who was then in charge did very little , the money was spent, very little results was obtained ,and it was even alleged on strong evidence that lots of the items that were supposed to be shipped into the area for the benefit of the miners never reach at all, and it is still a question mark, who benefited by the money spent in this respect.

Assistance to miners is a very necessary thing and in the view of this situation of which the hon. Minister must be aware, checks and balances ought to be built in to see that the money given to assists miners, serves the purpose which they have in mind, to get some benefit as far as the working of gold and diamonds is concerned, and not frittered away to certain controllers who benefit themselves and nobody else.

Mr. Jack : As regards subhead 4 , we have prove that the reafforestation of greenheart is feasible but it is extremely expensive and it takes 120 years. As a result, we are looking at the possibility of producing other commercial species which have a much more rapid rate of growth.

With regard to subhead 6, I can state that the Forestry Corporation will not affect the individual logger or sawmiller except beneficially. It is not intended, for instance, to take them over. We have the Forestry Corporation entering into certain commercial aspects of forestry while letting the other sawmiller and loggers continue their operations. However, Regulations will be introduced to improved the whole nature of the forest industry.

With regard to Assistance to Miners, I myself went into the mining district and held discussion with the miners. As a results of that, it was decided that rather than attempt initially a scheme where one would have to decide to whom to give money, and to whom to give benefit, which, of course, could result in all forms of dissatisfaction, we have decided initially to assist miners by giving them a subsidy on passages into the interior and putting a subsidy on food, putting a subsidy on fuel, that is , diesel and gasoline. In this way, any miner going into a mining area, which is designated by the Geological Surveys Department as a mining area, will have the benefit of subsidized passage, and any fuel going into a designated mining area will have the benefit of the subsidy. This will be something that will be, as it were, across the board. There will be no question of any particular government officer deciding who will received the

benefit. All persons going into those areas will receive the benefit.

Division XVI, Ministry of Mines and Forests - \$1,885,000- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Question proposed that the sum \$362,510 for Head 34, Ministry of Communication, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will hon. Member please indicate.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 6

Mr. Hamid: Subhead 8

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

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Dealing with subhead 6, Ferry Service, Barima N.W.D Subsidy, I wish to make to observation that the steamer operating the North West service is too small to accommodate the passengers and cargoes.

5.45 p.m.

As you know, sir, this is a very tedious journey. Most passengers have to travel for nearly a day and a half to reach their destination. Persons are so clustered on this steamer that the conditions under which they travel to the North West District are almost inhuman.

I wish to ask the hon. Minister if the Government considers that the North West District steamer is suitable to take passengers and cargo. If not, would the Minister say how soon a better service will be provided? By this, I mean adequate facilities for passengers, seating and resting accommodation, a place for passengers to have meals and space for cargo as well as machinery and equipment.

Mr. Hamid: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a point on subhead 8. I shall not be very long.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Hamid: With respect to subhead 8, Contribution to International Civil Aviation Organisation, I was wondering if the Minister could tell the House if this covers the Guyana Airways Corporation in terms of the I.A.T.A. Convention.

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Kasim): The Ministry is fully aware of the difficult problems that people in the North West District have to face. We are doing everything possible to remedy the situation. We put in for funds in the 1970 development programme in order to alleviate the difficulties in that district.

With regard to subhead 8, this is a contribution that we have to make to the International Airways, I.A.T.A.

The Chairman: Page 93.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to make a few observations on the Head, sir. The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Balchand: The services rendered by the Post Offices are very important to the people of our country, but there are many problems which customers as well as workers employed in the post offices face.

The Chairman: Are you speaking on subhead 10?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I am speaking generally on the Head, sir.

The Chairman: There is a separate Head for Post Office. It appears on pages 94 and 95.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I am sorry, sir. I am one page ahead of you.

Head 34, Ministry of Communications- \$362,510, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Page 94.

HEAD 32 - MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONSPOST OFFICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,949, 444 for Head 35, Ministry of Communications, Post Office, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: The time allocated for this Head is 30 minutes. Will members please indicate the subheads on which they wish to speak?

Mr. Balchand Persaud: With your permission, sir, I wish to speak generally on this Head.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 1 (9).

Mr. Balchand Persaud: It is a very important service that is rendered by the post offices in our country. The Guyanese public would therefore like to see that the services rendered by this department of the Ministry are efficient, but there are certain problems that face customers and these can be solved by the administration.

First of all, in the General Post Office in Georgetown there is the question of having people do their business quickly so that they could get on with other business. The system there is that a few officers are given the responsibility of selling stamps. Some are given other responsibilities such as selling postal orders, writing receipts and so on.

As a result, during the course of the day you will see long queues of people waiting to purchase stamps, while nobody is waiting at the other cages and the officers are sitting idly.

I think the Ministry can solve this problem by giving the same responsibilities to all the officers in their respective cages, that is, they would all sell stamps, issue postal orders and

write receipts. As customers enter the Post Office to do their business they can join the shortest queue. The problem of having people wait a long time to buy a five or six cents stamp can be solved in this way. I think this is an administrative problem which the Ministry can solve.

Secondly, there is the problem of adequate space in the General Post Office. There is general congestion which does not allow workers to do their jobs efficiently. I think there is a need for expansion at the General Post Office. There has been an increase in the staff.

There is also the problem of lunchroom facilities for persons who work at the Post Office and who are not living in Georgetown. No proper place is provided for them to have their meals. On many occasions the workers have to sit at their desks and have their lunch. It is not good enough for workers at the General Post Office to suffer under such conditions. There is need for a proper lunch room to be provided by the Ministry where workers can take their meals and spend the lunch break at leisure.

The fourth point is that there is need for more Post Offices to be built in the City of Georgetown itself. The Post Office on Regent Road, Bourda, is very small. Sometimes you can see people standing in long lines waiting to do their business. The line normally extends as far as the road because there is not adequate space in the Post Office itself to take care of the customers.

5.55 p.m.

As a result when it rains you find they have to run helter-skelter. There is need for a bigger post office. If you go to the Charlestown Post Office you would want to know if it is a shack. It is a disgrace to have such a Post Office. The Government should be able to do something about that Post Office to make it bigger and more convenient so that the workers can be able to carry out their duties more efficiently. I wonder if the hon. Minister would see the need to erect another Post Office somewhere by the South Ruimveldt area. Because as you know, hundreds of people go to the General Post Office to do their business and if the Government is able to provide the facility in the area around Georgetown then there will be less persons going to the General Post Office as such. Therefore, there will not be the

confusion and congestion that you normally find in these places.

A place like Kwakwani in the Berbice River where there is only a postal agency you have hundreds of people working in that area and thousands of dollars are in circulation there. Many times workers find difficulty in buying money orders; there are not even proper arrangements for people to put money in the Post Office Savings Bank. There is need for a proper post office to be erected in the Kwakwani Berbice River area.

There is also the problem of the post offices which lack maintenance throughout the country. Some of the post offices are very shabby, they lack painting, many of the glass windows are broken. This does not augur well for the Ministry as such. I hope that the Minister will look into these questions.

There is one additional point I wish to make about the General Post Office. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would consider this point. Normally when persons post their letters in the Post Office and the assortment section is on the southern side of the building. Every hour or longer than that an employee has to go with a bag to collect all the mails and take them to the southern side of the building where the mails are assorted. This is a long and tedious task.

I wonder if the Minister would consider the erection of a conveyor belt from the section where the posting is done which will take the letter as it is being posted to the assortment area which will help the situation much more. I wonder if the Minister will be able to reply to some of these points which were made and indicate whether Government intends to do something to assist the public going to the General Post Office.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 1, item 9, Postmasters. The legend states:

"See note (7) above. Two new posts of Postmasters created by Supplementary Estimates in 1971".

There seems to be a misprint somewhere because I note there is no (7) above, But apart from that it will be noted that there are eight Senior Postmasters and forty Postmasters in the grade of salary scale of Senior Postmasters A18 and A25. When we turn to page 18 A25 which is the grade represented by the majority of these postmasters we find that it is a grade which starts at \$230 x \$11 to \$290 monthly. Even the higher posts of Senior Postmasters, there are only eight, starts from \$292 to \$364 a month. Bearing in mind the duties of those hardworking Postmasters in Georgetown and in the rural areas that there have not been more ... than those we have had within the recent year or so, this is a ridiculous salary for people who carry this type of responsibility. They are in charge of a Post Office; they do banking services, this is not the pay of even an ordinary bank clerk. I hope when the revision of salaries is spoken about that it would be realised that the Postmasters are among the "galled horse" of the community and should be given a flexible pay in relation to the responsibility which they carry.

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman., first, I must thank: the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud because he started off by saying that the post office service is up to standard. As a matter of fact, from next year we intend to introduce the all purpose services where one clerk will be able to sell stamps, postal orders etc.

He mentioned the Post Offices at Charlestown and Bourda. These two Post Offices are now under consideration by the administration and the architect is in consultation with the Ministry to see how best the conditions at these two Post Offices can be improved.

He spoke about bad conditions that the workers are faced with during their employment. I want him to understand that the Ministry is doing everything that is possible to assist. Quite recently at the General Post Office a canteen was built which will be run by the workers on a co-operative basis. If the hon. Member would like to go there I will be happy to show him the modern conditions we have provided. There is better facility for them to have their meals.

He spoke also about the erection of a post office at Ruimveldt. We are hoping to get funds to start a Post Office at East La Penitence which will service Ruimveldt and East La Penitence. With regards to Kwakwani we will ask the workers to assist. That Post Office will be built by self-help.

With respect to what the hon. Member Mr. Sutton said I want to inform him that the job evaluation will take care of this.

Head 35, Ministry of Communication, Post Office, and \$2,949,444 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 96.

HEAD 36 - MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Subhead 1.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 1.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 1.

6.05 p.m.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Year after year, there has been a deficit on the accounts of the transport services provided by this Ministry. There has not been much of a decrease, just about \$78,000, from last year to this year, but more than half of the railway services provided by the Transport and Harbours Department have been cut off. Why this big deficit which the taxpayers have to pay at this time? I thought by now the deficit would be small in view of the fact that the services provided by the railway have decreased, the train services have been cut down, and the distances have been cut down also.

In view of the fact that the Government intend to phase out the railway services over a period of time, I wish to say that the services provided by the Ministry for transportation are not adequate and efficient and there is general complaint by the citizens that the services given by the Ministry are not of a good standard. I should like the hon. Minister to tell us what plans they have for the future to provide better transport facilities.

Mr. Sutton: There is just a slight remark I should like to make. When a previous speaker was making his remarks on subhead 6 of Head 34, Ferry Service, Bariina N.W.D. Subsidy, the hon. Minister of Communications said that the Barima service had nothing to do

with the Georgetown- Morawhanna service, so I thought it could not be mentioned there, but the point has already been made that the steamer services to Mabaruma could not be worse. I hope the hon. Minister's undertaking that something will be done about it will soon bear fruit.

In the light of the deficit shown in the transport services, I know the Government has announced the phasing out of the East Coast railway and part of that has been done from Mahaica to Rosignol, would the hon. Minister tell us if a firm time-table has been fixed for the phasing out of the Georgetown-Mahaica section so that we can see a further reduction of this deficit? If this has not yet been done, because the Government feels that the present road communication would be inadequate to take off the pressure of traffic which would result if the balance of the East Coast services were phased out now, perhaps the hon. Minister would like to comment on it and let us know what are the immediate plans for the phasing out of the balance of the East Coast railway, and whether any decision has been arrived at whether a trunk road will be put on the bed of the railway embankment so as to relieve congestion on the East Coast road.

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Chairman, my question is specifically with respect to the operation of the Berbice River service - not referring to the ferry. Apart from the general question of the need to improve this service, I should like to ask the hon. Minister specifically, in view of the fact that there have been certain rumours that there is a likelihood that the Berbice River service may be curtailed from once a week to once every two weeks, whether he would give an undertaking that there will be no curtailment of the service.

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud has stated that half of the services have been cut off and the subsidy has been reduced very little. I should like to inform him that only half of the East Coast railway services have been cut off, not half of the services of the Transport and Harbours Department have been cut off.

Our ships are very old, we have some 35 and some 40 years old. You will agree, Mr. Chairman, when one gets old, no matter how much vitamin supplement one takes, one cannot be rejuvenated. This is the position with those old ships, but we must compliment our engineers and those who are responsible for keeping those ships afloat, and this is why we are

expending more money on maintaining those ships. Regarding the improvement, we have decided to build a new barge type ferry boat next year. We have made provision in the Capital Estimates so that this vessel can be available at peak hours to take passengers and cars to relieve the Vreed-en-Hoop ferry, and then we are going to remove the present power pontoon from Georgetown so as to assist in New Amsterdam. Regarding the steamer services in the Berbice River, there is no truth in the rumour which the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh has heard. We are not stopping that service. It will continue to be run.

The hon. Member Mr. Sutton wanted to know if we are going to phase out the railway and at what time. I can assure him that we have made our decision and we are going to phase out the East Coast railway in June, 1972.

We have on order more buses to improve the services because as the hon. Member would know, we have the Guyana Transport Services now operating on the East Coast and when the rest of the services are phased out, we will improve the company by providing additional buses so that there will be no inconvenience to the travelling public on the East Coast and persons travelling from Berbice..

Mr. Balchand Persaud: If Government's decision is to put additional buses on the road, I can imagine the inconvenience that will result for road user, because the width of the road is inadequate at the moment. The Minister of Works, Hydraulics, and Supply said that there is a long term road programme from 1972 to 1976. The hon. Minister is talking of introducing more buses by June, 1972 so I do not think Government is planning is good.

Head 36, Ministry of Communication, Transport and Harbours- \$2,200,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS**CIVIL AVIATION**

Question proposed that the sum of \$542,780 for Head 37, Ministry of Communications, Civil Aviation, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Ten minutes have been allocated for this Head.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I shall be very short, sir. There is a general complaint among persons who use the services provided by the Civil Aviation Department for the transportation of persons from Georgetown or any other part of the country to the interior areas.

First of all, persons have been complaining very strongly about Government's decision to increase the charges for transportation. They have to pay much more for freight as well as for passenger fares. For this reason, many persons cannot use this service, and it is used mostly by persons who are employed in the department and persons in high positions in the Government. Very few farmers and workers in the interior areas can afford to travel on this service, which is paid for out of taxpayers' funds.

In view of the fact that the Government is phasing out the East Coast railway and there will not be the big deficit occurring year after year, will the Government consider the question of subsidising this service so that people in the interior areas can use these facilities?

Mr. Sutton: I have chosen this Head in order to bring certain circumstances to the attention of the authorities concerned. I am not quite certain if that authority is the Airport Manager.

I wonder if the Airport Manager, or other authority, is aware of the fact that when cars are parked in the parking lot at Timehri a fee of 25 cents is paid for an hour, I believe, but, if you exceed an hour, an additional fee is charged but the ticket is not stamped and no extra ticket is given.

It would appear that there is a lot of room for improvement, because if there should be dishonest collectors there is no means of knowing how much was paid by people for parking in excess of one hour. The money collected can never be checked because there is no system of checking the time spent in the parking lot in excess of one hour.

I know of a case where one of my friends from Trinidad was passing through this country. He paid the exit tax at the airport and when he asked for a receipt, he was told not to worry about that. I wonder if a receipt for an exit tax is not obligatory. Some method should be introduced to see that receipts are issued without fail.

Mr. Kasim: The hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud spoke about the service to the interior. That service is being provided by the Guyana Airways Corporation. For his information, let me say that officers whose services will have their fares subsidised by the various Ministries in which they work. When farmers in the interior ship their produce, the Ministry of Agriculture will subsidise the freight. They will pay the economic rates that they paid previously. I think they used to pay three cents per pound and this will be subsidised by the Ministry of Agriculture.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. Member Mr. Sutton, we are aware of some malpractices at Timehri. Quite recently we dismissed a number of the clerks who were working there. I think it was at the beginning of this month that we employed a number of girls there. It has been reported to us that people who pay do not get receipts. This is a fact and we are doing everything to straighten out this department.

Regarding the exit tax, this comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs, under Immigration. It is not my responsibility, sir.

The Chairman: Page 98.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wish to ask a question on subhead 6, Maintenance of Interior Airfields. Over the years we have been paying considerable sums of money for maintenance of interior airfields and there is now an increase of \$5,000 over the Approved Estimates for 1971.

I am wondering if the hon. Minister can explain why there is need for this additional sum of money and why it is that the amount for maintaining the airfield cannot be reduced. Why is an additional sum needed?

Mr. Kasim: We had to increase the sum provided under this subhead because we are now developing most of the areas in the interior. We have new airstrips in the interior and therefore it must cost more to maintain them. No matter what is done, when there is heavy rainfall the airstrips are affected and, if they are not maintained, they will become very dangerous for the passengers and those who use the Guyana Airways services.

Head 37, Ministry of Communications, Civil Aviation -\$542,780, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 99.

DIVISION XVIII - MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,084,000 for Division XVIII, Ministry of Communications, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Hamid: I wish to speak on subheads 1 and 4 and to speak generally on the Head.

The Chairman: Only ten minutes have been allocated for this Head.

Mr. Ba1chand Persaud: I wish to speak on subhead 4 and 6.

Mr. Hamid: Not very long ago, the Minister, perhaps because of lack of funds, indicated that he may wish to relieve this Ministry of certain subsidies. He also saw fit to revise the postal charges. The postal rates for inland and overseas surface mail, for Overseas airmail and parcel post, both surface and airmail, will be increased from the 1st of January next year.

One would feel that if the postal rates had to be raised, the increases would have been very small, but this Ministry has increased the charges at a very fantastic rate. We feel that the charges are too high when one considers that the postal rates in other countries are far less than the rates we have to pay for mail going out of Guyana.

6. 25 p.m.

I hope that the Minister would explain the reason for this steep increase so that we would know in what form it will help in the Development Programme.

The other point I wish to raise is the new telephone system which was introduced. It seems as if the Minister without making the public fully aware went ahead and changed the system. This is a simple way, if you are going to change the number of your telephone then surely the Minister should see that the necessary arrangements are made. A new directory should have been prepared so that persons would know what are the new numbers by virtue of the system introduced. In this respect many people who do not have a telephone of their own or in possession of a telephone directory but may know the number of the telephone of friends, they do not remember that the number has been changed, find it difficult because we find that people were paying far too much in excess of what they would normally pay to try to get a number and dial again to get the correct number. The lines are crossing all the time and it is difficult at times in as much as you get the correct number you have to phone several times before you can make your contact. This is very costly for the population. I am hoping that the Minister in future if ever another system like this should be introduced then a directory should be printed long before so that all can be aware of the new changes.

Sir, I may wish also to speak on another problem which consists of transportation by ferry in the Berbice River. Surely the time has come when stollings should be introduced. In most cases when you go into the River you see small beats coming to collect mails and things like this. Even at Kwakwani in the Berbice River, it is difficult to purchase money orders. I do hope that the Minister will look into it to see that when persons require money orders to send to their family in the City and other parts of the country that it can be done quite easily and as quickly as possible.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: On subhead 4, Purchase of Equipment, I only wish to ask the hon. Minister one question. Could the hon. Minister indicate to the House the type of vehicle the Ministry wishes to purchase?

Subhead 6, Purchase of Tugs and Barges, \$483,000. I can recall very vividly that in the Report of the Director of Audit for 1966, the Director of Audit said the Ministry purchased second-hand barges and tugs for \$330,000, and when the barges and tugs were brought here they were not serviceable. As results, the Ministry had to spend large sums of money to re-condition the tugs and some of the barges and on to today about four of the barges I am told are not in operation. I wish to point out that the Ministry should be much more careful when it is spending taxpayers money for purchasing things. While the possibility may be there that they are getting things very cheap they must look into the question of quality and whether it is serviceable or not. I hope that the Ministry would not make this mistake again.

The second point is that in the Government's Seven-Year Development Programme in this particular Ministry on Capital Development it was expected that during the seven years the Government would have spent \$54,664,000. But over the seven years they have only been able to spend \$15,014,962, a shortfall by \$39,650,038, which is about 60 to 65 per cent. I wonder if the Minister could explain to this House why is it that the Development Programme failed by so much.

Mr. Kasim: Mr. Chairman, it seems as if the hon. Member Mr. Hamid is somewhat peeved because of the increase in postal rates. I wish to borrow a sentence from the hon. Minister of Finance's Budget Speech when he said, "Corporations should be paid economical rates for the service they provide." If the Post Office is providing a service then I think the post office is also entitled to economical rates. As a matter of fact, there was a Conference held in Tokyo, Japan during the latter part of 1969 where the U.P.U. met and because of the increased freight charges by shipping companies, the increased charges by the airways and the handling charges on the other side in the United Kingdom and the United States it was felt that each member country should be given permission to increase their freight and charges so that it

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6.25 -6.35 p.m.

can become economical. Guyana being a member had no other alternative because it is costing the Post Office section more. It is stated in the *Daily Telegraph*, London of Thursday 4th November that there are "Dearer posts and fewer deliveries." It shows that in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, have all increased and Guyana has only now increased her charges. To post a letter from Guyana to the United Kingdom is 25¢ by air and from the United Kingdom to Guyana it is 30¢. Therefore we are still far cheaper. Those countries are contemplating increasing next year again. The Post Office has no other alternative but to increase because the cost is rising rapidly. We all are aware that the shipping companies have increased their charges; the airways have increase their charges. Where must the Post Office find the money. The Post Office or the P.N.C. does not have a magic wand. We have to do everything possible to see that this department runs efficiently.

The hon. Member Mr. Hamid also spoke about telephone directory. How can we produce a directory when we do not know who are the persons we are going to give the service? The hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud is now getting a telephone. How could we print a directory and anticipate that he was going to get a telephone? We are not prophets. When a telephone is issued it is only then we can prepare a telephone directory. I cannot see how the hon. Member Mr. Hamid is asking me to do something which is impossible,

The vehicle that we intend to purchase is for the conveyance of mails.

Division, Ministry of Communication, \$2,084,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, on the resumption we will deal with Ministry of Housing first. Thereafter we will proceed with the Ministry of Education.

Sitting suspended at 6.35 p.m.

On resumption --

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, it has been drawn to my attention that when I spoke at an earlier stage this afternoon you interpreted it to mean that I was insulting to the Chair. I have never been disrespectful to the Chair in the past nor do I have any intention of being so now. If what I said this afternoon is interpreted by you as disrespectful I deeply regret it. [*Applause*]

The Chairman: At the suspension it, it was agreed we would proceed with the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, page 143. Head 59.

HEAD 59- MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,438,809 for Head 59, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: On item (16), Quantity Surveyor, this is a post which has been shown here every year and so far, it seems as if the government is unable really to fill this post. Our position in the past has always been that there seems to be no need really for such a post of quantity surveyor in view of the poor record of house building in this Ministry. I merely wish to ask the hon. Minister whether the Government has any intention really of employing a quantity surveyor, whether anyone is in training, and in view of the fact that for so long nobody has been in it, whether the post is actually necessary. I wish to direct similar remarks to the post of Architect, item (18).

In respect of item (21), Rent Collectors, I merely wish to ask the hon. Minister if he is in a position to let us have the latest position with respect to the arrears of rents in the Government housing schemes. I do not expect the Minister to give an accurate figure, the latest figure so to speak, but to say whether it is around \$1/2 million, \$3/4 million, or so.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, may I be allowed to say a few words on items (16) and (18). Will the Minister say whether the number of houses constructed last year is available, whether the target was reached and, if so, how many houses have been built and have been available in relation to the applications therefore, have they all been sold or rented, how many do they compare with the applications they have had for years.

Speaking on item (18), Architect, we see the sum allocated for Architect is \$4,656, while the amount shown in the Revised Estimates is \$1,164. Will the hon. Minister say whether the Department has succeeded in getting an architect at this figure, how the figure of \$1,164 which was shown in the Revised Estimates last year was arrived at – it is unbelievable that an architect would be employed at that figure - and whether the Government can expect to see an architect at that figure.

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

Inevitably, where there is an ever-increasing programme of house construction, the need for a quantity surveyor is imperative. Up to recently, we have had no locally-trained quantity surveyor but through the auspices of the Canadian Government a quantity surveyor has been made available recently. Efforts are in train to secure the services of a quantity surveyor but we all know this is one of the scarce fields in the professional disciplines. We hope that renewed efforts in 1972 to secure the services of such a person will bear fruit.

By the same token, the architect is a vital post in an ever-expanding Ministry. This post too was filled some time in 1969 and early 1970 but the post now is vacant. I can assure the hon. Member and this House that efforts will be mobilised to secure the services of an architect. Mr. Chairman, it is inconceivable that one can make such a statement, that the Ministry of Housing can proceed without having the services of people like architects and quantity surveyors who are necessary for the execution of a proper housing programme.

I cannot give the exact quantum of arrears due to Government with respect to the housing estates, am I do not wish to be rash and to make a statement on this. I would wish to ask my hon. Friend, Mr. Chandisingh, if he were to table a Question to this effect, that a specific

answer will be forthcoming.

The hon. Member Mr. Sutton asked whether all the houses we had proposed to build in 1970 were actually built. The answer is yes. The houses were built in 1970, and in 1971, it is programmed that well nigh 1,000 housing units will be completed in this country.

The Chairman: Page 144.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 15.

Mr. Sutton: Subheads 7, 9, and 15.

8.10 p.m.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 15, Expenses, Central. Housing and Planning Authority. Under this subhead I should like to follow up the question which I posed earlier on today to another Minister with respect to building applications. I am putting the question again to this Minister, because both Ministries have something to do with the processing of building applications.

It is my understanding that in the Berbice area a change in the procedure was effected several months ago. In the past, building applications used to be submitted directly to the Central Board of Health in Georgetown and then to the Central Housing and Planning Authority for approval. I understand that very early in the year this was changed and the procedure now is that the Health Department in that area submits these applications directly to the Central Housing and Planning Authority. In other words, the Central Board of Health is by-passed and, on the face of it, there should be a speed-up of the processing of these applications.

The hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply when he spoke on behalf of the Minister of Health said that one cannot expect to make an application today and get it tomorrow. Certainly we do not expect this; I do not think anybody does. From recent investigations I have made it seems that, even with this change of system, there is considerable

delay which causes great inconvenience and problems to people who want to secure loans, for example, to build and extend houses.

I am also asking the hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction if he can find out the reason for the delay and if such applications can now be speeded up from his Ministry.

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

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 7, Rates and Taxes, Local Authorities. Several authorities which were not included in Georgetown are now in Greater Georgetown. If it is a fact that rates and taxes which were paid by the Housing Department for areas, which are now incorporated in Georgetown, are still being paid, would the Minister be good enough to say if he is satisfied that the rates and taxes which were paid in these areas can provide the amenities that the areas should have. I am talking about the areas that were outside the perimeter of old Georgetown, which are now in Greater Georgetown.

It is noted that, notwithstanding the Government's undertaking to help in providing the amenities in the areas which have been brought into Georgetown to bring them up to the standard of old Georgetown, the subvention given to the Town Council is still \$137,500. Is the Minister satisfied that the rates and taxes paid in these areas could provide all the amenities, such as roads and water and so on?

In connection with subhead 9, Materials for Maintenance of Government Housing Estates, would the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction be good enough to say whether the administration of the T.U.C. Housing Scheme is how the responsibility of the Housing Department? I am informed that several of the houses are giving trouble. It would be interesting to know which is the authority that is now responsible for the maintenance of those houses and the amenities of what used to be the T.U.C. Housing Scheme.

With regard to subhead 15, Expenses, Central Housing and Planning Authority, the point I intended to raise has been covered by the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh. I wished to ask whether the need for streamlining the applications for building could not now be tackled, as it is certainly becoming a very difficult matter. Three authorities are now involved - the Central

Board of Health, the Central Housing and Planning Authority and the Municipality of Georgetown. Will the Minister tell us if there are any active arrangements for streamlining this operation?

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction. (Mr. Ramsaroop): There is some truth in the assertion that in some cases undue delay does attend the processing of building applications. This is a matter I view with some concern and I wish to give both hon. Members my unqualified assurance, and the unqualified assurance of this Government, that efforts will be taken in 1972 to speed up the processing of these applications.

My colleague, the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply raised another dimension of this matter yesterday in his contribution to these Estimates. He said that because of the increased rate of building activity much more administrative work has to be done to process applications. That is one factor, one imponderable element on the scene, which has accentuated, to some extent, the problem of processing building applications. I share his concern. Sometimes I think it is a matter for disquiet rather than concern. In 1972 efforts will certainly be intensified to see that these applications are put out with expedition and dispatch.

The question of rates and taxes, which was posed by the hon. Member Mr. Sutton, is somewhat incomprehensible to me. I would have thought, all humility that a question of that type should have been more properly posed to the hon. Minister of Local Government. This subhead merely refers to the expenses that the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction incurs with respect to its own areas which are subject to rates and taxes. I do not think it would be pertinent, or proper, for me to reply to that question.

Head 59, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction- \$1,438,809, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 145.

**HEAD 60 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING**

Question proposed that the sum of \$206,506 for Head 60, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, Town and Country Planning, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Hamid: I may wish to speak generally on this Head

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

Mr. Hamid: Mr. Chairman, when one considers the new approach of the Government in saying that it intends to house, clothe and feed the nation by the year 1976 one would expect see on these Estimates a new approach. But as I looked through the Estimates the whole thing seems to be rather static. There is no improvement, there is no proposition for new development and everything to my mind, seems as if it is old story of just using big phrases; fooling the nation world is getting us no where.

Let us consider in this particular Division of the Ministry what provisions are made to train Town Planners, Chief Building Inspectors, Surveyors, Draughtsmen and what have you. In previous Estimates, the same amount that was earmarked in the Establishment exists in this year's Estimates. What we need is an approach to show that if the Government is to do these things as it says by 1976 a rapid approach something more positive should be made so as to guide the nation because all these statements that it is making.

My hon. Colleague Mr. Ranji Chandisingh mentioned about the delay of building applications in this particular Department. This is due not because members are in the Central Housing and Planning Authority; we are there to assist, to see and to guide and we are doing our duty. The fact remains we cannot do the administrative work. What is needed is staffing, people who would be able to take an application as it arrives, do the necessary investigations and report immediately. Secondly, what we need are new schemes to be implemented.

The country must be able to take a new look so that people coming in will be able to say that there is new development in the country. The money must be found from somewhere so that this Development can be done. We heard of the Castello Plan, an antiquated plan that we are basing all our arguments on. We need a revision of the planning system every five year so to speak, so that new ideas will be put in, so that people who are trained in modern techniques and approaches can be able to have these things implemented.

We also need legal advisers; this is urgently needed in this articular Department of the Ministry. There should be legal advisers so that they can give the necessary advice to the Department. *[Interruption by the hon. David Singh]* The hon. Minister is asking me a question. He should know better, he was also there. He was removed from that Ministry because of not putting together the things that were necessary.

The sum that is earmarked for this Department is totally inadequate. We need more. Members of the Authority should be in a better position and should not sit in a room and advise what should be done. Members need opportunity to visit various areas in the country so that they will have first-hand knowledge and information. Of course, I must admit that an approach was made and we are more or less getting some sort of co-operation, but what we need is something more positive. *[Interruption]* My hon. Friends knowing that I am a member of the Central Housing and Planning Authority are a bit worried because they feel that I may be letting the cat out of the bag. But I want to assure them that we are basing our argument on principle.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, you cannot fight a new animal as you would fight a new snake.

Mr. Hamid: In this Government one must expect to fight all sorts of things, new animals, new approaches, new everything I do hope that the hon. Minister in answering would tell us is it more draughtsmen are not trained, why for a country like Guyana with a Programme, why more Town and Country Planning Officers are not trained? We need more people in that capacity to assists in this drive if this Government is going house, clothe and feed the nation by 1976. The Minister must tell us, do not only make big phrases and big

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8.20 -8.30 p.m.

statements and try to confuse the nation. If an approach must be made it must be made with the feeling, it must be generated with the spirit and that alone cannot help. If the funds that are necessary to have this plan implemented are not there then the whole exercise will become a farce. The small man must become a real man and if the Government thinks in terms of a Co-operative Republic let it tell us what provisions have been made so that whatever is said it will be meaningful generally.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, it ill-becomes the hon. Member Mr. Maccie Hamid to speak about changing the 1954 "Black Book." *[Laughter]*

The Chairman: Hon. Leader of the House I wish to warn you not to use big phrases so as to confuse Members and the nation. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, I thought I was contributing to the verbal enlightenment of some Members of this House.

The Chairman: I think you would like to do that for all hon. Members.

Mr. Ramsaroop: As I was saying, sir, the hon. Member Mr. Maccie Hamid was a member of the Central Housing and Planning Authority and I think he is still a member up to the 31st of this month. Indeed, my observation is that an admission like the one he has made in this House just a short while ago that the plan for Greater Georgetown has not been changed is an admission of very little work being done by the Authority to which he belongs. As I understand the laws and the position, recommendations for the alteration for town and country planning principles must first come from the Authority that is by statute designed to promulgate such planning principles.

8.30 p.m.

It therefore appears to me to be an indictment collectively on the Authority and individually on the hon. Member Mr. Hamid. He speaks so glibly about the incompleteness of the present plan.

One does not need the gilded eye to see that under item (14) of the relevant subhead there is provision for Town and Country Planning Trainees and, therefore, I do not know whether to

impute blindness to the hon. Member or to impute a deliberate act on his part to confuse and misrepresent facts before this House. It is clear that there is adequate provision for training to be done in the field to which the hon. Member refers. I think those would be the answers if I am to glean the wheat from the chaff of the last hon. Member's contribution.

Mr. Hamid: The hon. Minister is apparently shirking his responsibility. He seems to be getting away from the questions I asked. I do not want to force him to answer. Item (14), Town and Country Planning Trainees. In the Approved Estimates for 1971, the sum of, \$8,452 was earmarked; of that, only \$618 was actually spent. How can this add up to what the hon. Minister was saying? The sum of \$7,020 is now earmarked for training. Who can be trained for \$618? The hon. Minister must tell me.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you wish to reply?

Mr. Ramsaroop: Except to say, sir, a number of trainees were recently appointed and maybe I can indicate to this House that the P.S.M. can make available scholarships for training in Town and Country Planning. That is another area in which training at a professional as opposed to the sub-professional level can be got.

Head 60, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, Town and Country Planning - \$206,506- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

DIVISION XXIV - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Question proposed that the sum of \$407,000 for Division XXIV, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chandisingh: May I speak on subheads 3, 9, and 11.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 3.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh.

Mr. Chandisingh: Subhead 3, Self-Help Housing. Mr. Chairman, I am a bit puzzled over certain central aspects of the Government's housing programme particularly since the announcement has been made in connection with feeding, housing and clothing ourselves. It is expected that 13,000 housing units will be built every year between 1972 and 1976. The hon. Prime Minister, when he spoke in the general debate, seemed to make a distinction between houses and units. I take it that this means housing units whether they be flats or separate houses, the fact is 13,000 housing units.

So far, self-help housing has been carried at a very low level over the last few years and this has been one of the sore points on which we have been criticising the Government. This is a good way of achieving low-cost houses for low-income persons. Now we see the sum of \$250,000 being devoted to this. I think it is an improvement over last year but still it is very small. However, we see a note at the bottom that this sum will supplement the \$2 million available to the Housing Fund from other sources for the purchase of land and the construction of houses. One of the questions I should like to ask specifically is, how will this additional sum of \$2 million fit in with the \$250,000 shown here for self-help housing? Is this sum of \$2 million to be involved in 1972? Will that entire sum be used up? How will this be used?

The Chairman: I am not with you on the \$2 million.

Mr. Chandisingh: The legend that goes with subhead 3 states, "See note below." I would like some more concrete information on the net result we can expect in terms of actual houses being constructed next year. In other words, this \$2 million from the Housing Fund plus the \$1/4 million shown here, will this be used up next year, and then what will happen in the following year? Is it expected that perhaps another sum of \$2 million or more would be available again to the Housing Fund? This is one of the concrete points I would like to have answered.

I mentioned earlier the question of the achievement of 13,000 housing units per year over a five-year period. The public takes it that the Government is saying not that there is need for 13,000 housing units per year to solve the problem but that this is something achievable in order to solve the housing problem between 1972 and 1976.

This is what everybody seems to think particularly since it is mentioned always in terms of the three-pronged programme of feeding, clothing and housing ourselves by 1976. This is the impression we get.

The Ministry of Housing has been carrying out a miserable programme of housing in terms of Government financed housing, which is the only type of housing in Guyana which meets the needs of the very low income category of people. Bearing in mind the record of 700 houses in seven years, roughly 100 houses a year with perhaps a slight increase now, we would like to know how the Government intends that our housing problem will be solved. How will we be able to build 13,000 housing units per year? This I understand that this is to be done not only by Government, but that private persons are included in it.

What we are trying to say is that it is not good enough for Government spokesmen to issue slogans, to talk about feeding ourselves, clothing ourselves and housing ourselves, that is, 13,000 housing units a year, without at the same time showing us, in some concrete way, how this can be achieved.

In the case of clothing ourselves, for example, one can say, whether one agrees with this or not, that some attempt at an explanation was given when the hon. Prime Minister spoke earlier in the debate about textile mills and so on.

I have noted there has not been a similar type of explanation so far as housing ourselves is concerned. This is why I took this time to make it clear to the hon. Minister that we are not content merely with generalised statements which seem to be vague wishes or hopes. This House and the nation would very much want to know what are the concrete step by step plans that the Government has to solve this problem. Let us not have magical incantations. These cannot solve the problems.

I do not want to deal any further with this: I hope the hon. Minister has noted the point.

I pass on to subhead 9, La Penitence. The legend states that this provision is "To continue development works." I should like to know what stage has now been reached with respect to this La Penitence area and how much longer it will take to complete the whole scheme.

The sum of \$30,000 is being voted again this year for subhead 11, Staff, Development Projects. The legend states, "To provide additional staff for the Development Programme." I should like to know how long it is intended that such special staff will be needed. In other words, how long will it be necessary to include such staff under the Capital Estimates? If it is not a question of putting such staff under the recurrent Estimates, how long will this Development Programme take? Is it just a matter of a couple of years or is it intended that this will take a long time? In such a case I do not see why it should continue to fall under the development estimates.

Mr. Sutton: I shall be very brief. The questions that the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh raised must occur to anyone who has been giving this subject some thought.

We all remember very clearly that the hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction said that the Government's plans call for providing 13,000 housing units each year. Putting it very shortly, will the hon. Minister be good enough to say how many of these houses are to be provided from the self-help sector, how many from the private sector, as represented by the housing companies, and how many by private building?

Although the Government may not have these figures with complete accuracy, if a statement can be made that it is expected to provide 13,000 housing units a year, there must be some projection of how much is coming from the self-help sector, how much from private housing schemes and how much from private building. Would the Minister give us a breakdown on this section so that we could appreciate what is being done by this department?

Finally, could I ask the Government, through the Minister, as this is such an important sector, whether it is not considered desirable to lay a report of the Housing Department in this House every year? In the light of the Government's plan, it is of vital importance for everybody to know what progress is being made by the Housing Department.

The Chairman: The hon. Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

Mr. Ramsaroop: It is true that there has been no statement with respect to the unfolding of the housing plans over the next five years, that is, the operational period of the imminent development plan.

It is proposed, however, that, as was done in the past, the execution of the plan will engage the attention of three specific agencies: (a) the Government, or public sector; (b) the private sector, including local developers, local financial institutions, etc. and (c) the co-operativesector.

I would say - and the figures bear this out - that Government, as an earnest of its intention next year, will be embarking on a public sector plan, which certainly is a serious approach to the problem of housing this nation by 1976.

Let me make it crystal clear that 1972 is proposed to be a year when the major agencies and forces necessary to be mobilised for the execution and expansion of this programme will be mobilised. Government itself is going to expand its present housing stock and it might be illuminating to refer to the figures as they unfold themselves.

Next year it is proposed that the 385 houses that are now in the course of construction will be completed and construction will start on 460 new self-help units in addition to 100 odd hire-purchase units. Next year, therefore, will see the commencement and completion of well-nigh 1,000 houses in Guyana and this is from the public sector contribution only.

The figures in the past present a dismal reading. Maybe my friends, whose memories are very short, might like to refresh those memories by these figures. In 1961, 81 houses were built in Guyana; in 1962, 230.

The Chairman: In the public sector?

Mr. Ramsaroop: Yes, sir. In 1963, 28; in 1964, 29; in 1965, none; in 1966, 94. One can see that in those years, when the members on the opposite side were in office, the momentum of public sector construction was very depressed.

It does not need the sophisticated mind to compare these figures with what I have just told you that it is an earnest of our intention and an index of Government's bona fides in carrying out this programme of 1,000 houses. Indeed, I can say this will be the greatest number of houses ever built in the history of housing development in Guyana.

8.50 p.m.

On the other hand, I want to say that it is not only Government's intention to build houses, but to promote activity that would conduce to the expansion of the housing stock. The hon. Minister of Finance has already hinted in his budget speech that discussion is in train with respect to new incentives to be given to private developers mainly, financial institutions, in the country. In addition to this, efforts are being made to mobilise long-term mortgage finance. Therefore in addition to efforts at the public sector level there are efforts also at the private sector level. I want to say that in the past, as we hope it will be in the future, the private sector has always been the biggest contributor to the housing stock in Guyana. New agencies are being mobilised.

My colleague the hon. Minister of Local Government during his responses said that Municipal and Districts Councils will soon be in the act of building houses and developing lands.

The year 1972 therefore will be a year of mobilisation. It will be a year when public sector housing will increase, a year when procedures, regulations, incentives, etc. will be implemented and carried out with respect to the expansion of the housing stock by the private sector. There are also active efforts within the Community Development Division of the Ministry of Economic Development for the construction of more clay brick factories. I understand that from next year in addition to the factories which have been built at Victoria, Cumberland, Canje and Manchester, Corentyne, that factories will be constructed in the

following areas: Golden Grove, Buxton, Mocha/Arcadia, Leguan and Matthews Ridge. The effort to complement the building of houses in the traditional style will be intensified in this area. There will also be a massive co-operative thrust mainly through the building of clay bricks for the construction of housing units.

There are other areas in this exercise. New designs will be promulgated in a short while because we feel there is a distinction to be made between housing units and houses and with new designs in house construction there can be several units within one building so that in this way you can cut down on land space, provide a reasonable degree of physical accommodation and maximise on the use of land we have for housing construction. Apace with all this as the Prime said when he wound up the debate, a serious effort will be made in 1972 to start industries that provide components articles for the stimulation of a housing programme. The material requirements for this programme will cover several areas of house building equipment - foundation materials steel rods and cement, material for the construction of building like pipes, tiles, bolts, window panes, etc., material for interior furnishings like plastic basins, sinks, lavator basins, electrical supplies, fuse boxes etc., material for exterior and interior decorations and preservation of paints, putty and varnishing, materials like chain link fencing. Apace with all these efforts at the private level, at the public level, at the co-operative level new industries will be flourishing and flowering to provide ancillary equipment that is in the construction of a house. It can be seen that the results of all this would be to see a housing programme growing in momentum so that by 1976 the objective of housing this nation, that is of providing 13,000 housing units, can be made. In fine, that is a programme as I see it! There are ramifications that I will have to go into but time does not permit me in a debate of the nature which does not pertain to matters of policy to adumbrate to those matters. I have sketched out the broad aspect of this programme and maybe in subsequent debates, I can spell out separate aspects of our plan.

With respect to La Penitence Village, I understand that the sum voted will complete half the work on that drainage scheme and next year the budget for 1973 the other half will be done

Dr. Jagan: If wishes were horses the Minister of Housing would have been Prime Minister in 1976. Clearly the Minister is only blowing a lot of bubbles because he does not understand the laws of economics. No one can project about building and satisfying all the consumer needs of the people, no one can do that. In the world of economics and developing science there is such a thing as means of production and also that a factory will produce means of production and a factory which will produce consumer goods. The Minister has been telling us about all the consumption things that are going to be produced for use by the people. What he has not yet told us is how all this fits in with the big global plan. Where all the money is to come from? It is not being generated in the Budget and from what we can see in the Budget there is a declining tendency in terms of revenue as compared with expenditure.

9 p.m.

The economy of Guyana is not generating its surpluses to finance a development programme. Even in socialist countries, full socialist programmes have not been achieved in this short period the hon. Minister is talking about. It is easy to talk in an airy-fairy manner. Let us have the programme so we can assess what the hon. Minister is saying properly.

When we had the last \$300 million seven-year plan, we knew how much was allocated for industrialisation, how much was allocated for housing. What was projected for drainage and irrigation has not been spent. That is why the country is in a mess. Any plan has to consider income, expenditure, where it is coming from, what will be allocated to different sectors, carefully weighing planned proportional development, what is needed for consumption, what is needed for productive expenditure before. I am not saying we must not tackle our problems. All this is very airy-fairy.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): The hon. Leader of the Opposition, every time he gets up to blow his bubbles, demonstrates his fundamental misunderstanding of the whole government structure, because if he did take time to study the things which he ought to study, he would be aware that the development plan will not emanate from the Minister of Finance or the Ministry of Finance. That is why it is so difficult to make any proper response to the Opposition because the members do not know the simple things which they ought to know.

If the leader of the Opposition does not know, it is no wonder that those who follow him show a deeper lack of knowledge of the simple operation of the Government. [Dr. Jagan: The hon. Minister has not said anything.]

The Chairman: What he said was that the development budget does not emanate from his Ministry.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, for his enlightenment, in case I did put it politely and perhaps it has gone above his head, there is a Ministry of Economic Development and the hon. Minister of Economic Development, and the Minister of Economic Development, as the hon. leader of the Opposition ought to know, is the hon. Prime Minister.

Dr. Jagan: What I am saying, sir, is if you have a sectoral plan to house the people as we are hearing now, this sectoral plan must fit in with the overall plan. You can give the people houses, you can give everybody jobs

The Chairman: I feel the point the Leader of the Opposition is making is that the Minister must hurry up with the development plan and I think he rose to point out to the House that he is not responsible for the development plan.

Dr. Jagan: I am sorry if that was the criticism he was taking, because my fundamental point was missed. I was not placing responsibility on him only. I was talking of the Government of Guyana having a plan

The Chairman: You did point to the Minister of Finance and ask him.

Dr. Jagan: I am not talking about the Minister of Health or the Minister of Finance. I am talking in terms of the Government and collective responsibility. They must treat this House and the nation as they should. Any Minister can come here and blow bubbles. Even the Prime Minister, he can come and say what he wants but let them bring concrete facts.

The Chairman: It is your duty as the Opposition to prick those bubbles.

Dr. Jagan: You cannot do it unless you have the statements.

Division XXIV, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction- \$407,000- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We will now go back to page 113, Head 40.

HEAD 40 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,448,395 for Head 40, Ministry of Education, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Teekah: Subhead 1, items (20),(22), (24),(29), and (30).

The Chairman: In our discussion, it was agreed that we would take 45 minutes or more on this discussion. Do you wish to speak on all the items or divide your time on all of these?

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, we agreed a total of 150 minutes will be given for all fourteen pages and I suggested to you that I am deeply interested in Heads 40, 41, 42 and the two Capital Heads and therefore I would spend most of my time on the first three Heads, and if the 150 minutes are consumed on the three Heads, I do not mind.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item (20), if it is not covered by my hon. Friend.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: One cannot be excessively critical of the Ministry of Education, its problems and its weaknesses. It seems to me that there is an acute shortage of professionally qualified personnel and the Ministry suffers very gravely because of this.

Subhead 1 (20) deals with Assistant Chief Education Officers. As a result of the acute shortage of professionally qualified personnel there are many acting appointments. I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Education, or the Government, why the post of Assistant Chief Education Officer (Industrial Arts) has been vacant for about two years and has not yet been filled.

I observe that the post of Assistant Chief Education Officer (Secondary Schools) has also been vacant for some time now. I think there are persons acting in these posts but why have they not been appointed?

With regard to item (22), Senior Education Officers, here again there are acting appointments. I refer particularly to the acting appointment of the Senior Education Officer (Personnel) and the Senior Education Officer (Primary Schools).

Concerning the latter, I wish to express to the House that an Education Officer who does not have the minimum qualifications for this post was appointed to act as Senior Education Officer (Primary Schools). The regulations and rules of the Ministry specifically state that a Senior Education Officer ought to be someone with a degree and Mr. Luke certainly does not have a degree. As a matter of fact, I know he has a trained Teacher's Certificate and he has had one year's training at Edinburgh. These are all the qualifications that he has and he is now Senior Education Officer (Primary Schools).

With respect to the position of Senior Education Officer (Personnel), here again, someone who is not the most senior person in the Ministry, Miss Britton, has been appointed to act. These appointments could cause a drift of brilliant people away from the Ministry, as has been happening over the past years when people have been discriminated against.

I know of two persons who have been jumped, namely, Mr. London and Miss Johnson, who are senior to these officers who have been appointed to act as Senior Education Officers. They are senior in service, they are professionally qualified and they have been bypassed.

This, I think, is one of the reasons why some of the most brilliant men who were in the Ministry of Education during the regime of P.P.P. have left. Dr. Kassim Bacchus, the Deputy Chief Education Officer, who was acting Chief Education Officer at one time, has left the Ministry. There was Mr. Krishna Singh, who was Senior Education Officer (Personnel). He left the Ministry. Mr. Mooniram, who was an Education Officer, left the Ministry. Mr. Chris Blackman, who was supervisor of the In-Service Teacher Training Programme, also left the

Ministry. These are brilliant men, outstanding Guyanese, whose services the Ministry of Education has lost. I think that one of the contributory factors has been that there is too much discrimination in appointments to the key positions in the Ministry.

With respect to item (24), Education Officers, I would say that, as a result of the things I have mentioned - discrimination and the by-passing of adequately qualified personnel and the brain drain away from the Ministry of Education and from Guyana as a whole - we find today that, of the ten education districts in the country, four are without education officers.

As a matter of fact, there are only five permanent appointments. There is one Mr. Alexander who should be in the Essequibo Education District. He is now abroad on a scholarship. There are four other districts, namely, the Corentyne Education District, where there is an acting appointment; the New Amsterdam Education District where, again, there is an acting appointment; the West Berbice Education District with an acting appointment and the North West Education District with another acting appointment.

This shows clearly that there is something radically wrong in the Ministry of Education. Many people are leaving and, as a result, there are under-qualified persons in these posts. Consequently, there are many acting appointments and, of course, the whole Ministry suffers.

It is pertinent to point out that with the appointment of Mr. Luke and Miss Britton to the posts of Senior Education Officer, there are now two districts without any person attached to them, namely, the Georgetown Education District and the East Coast Demerara Education District. I do not know if anything was done this morning, but up to yesterday there was no Education Officer even appointed to act in the meantime as Education Officer in the Georgetown District and in the East Coast Demerara District, two large education districts.

The situation is alarming when you observe that in four of the ten there are acting appointments; in one case the person is abroad studying and two are without anyone at all because the officers have recently been asked to act as Senior Education Officers. This is what is

happening in the Ministry of Education.

Speaking about Education Officers, I want to mention the case of Mr. Roman. I do not know if the Ministry of Education is aware of it, but certainly it is something which is very wrong that one of the Education Officers, the Education Officer (Social Studies), Mr. Claude Roman is violating the General Orders of the Public Service or the Ministry of Education in that this Education Officer openly flouts the regulations. He participates in public meetings of the ruling party he does more political work than educational work, much to the disgust of the teachers and headmasters and even supporters of the Government.

I should like the Ministry to call this Education Officer to book. Why must he be openly flouting the General Orders? I am sure that if this were done by someone who did not have the sympathy of the Government he would be promptly called to order, whereas Mr. Roman is allowed to flout the General Orders openly.

I know for a fact that he was engaged in public meetings held by the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply in the North West district. Not too long ago his name was advertised to speak at a public meeting and he did speak at public meetings. He struts around like a colossus; he goes around and terrorises the teachers in the various places telling them they have to do political work, that they have to buy the *New Nation* they have to join the P.N.C. and such things. I must stress that even supporters of the Government party who are teachers headmasters strongly protest the behaviour and conduct of this Education Officer.

9.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, item 27, Statistical Officers. I see that the posts are vacant again. These are important officers. I want to ask the hon. Minister how early the posts would be filled. If the Minister says she does not know then I am asking the Government how early it contemplates filling these posts.

Item 29, School Welfare Officers: I have had cause to criticise Welfare Officers in this House. I did so not because I had a dislike for School Welfare Officers but it is just because I want to see them performing their duties efficiently and effectively. Looking through the latest

issue of the Digest from the Planning Division of the Ministry I observe that in 1969 only 78.1 per cent of pupils or students enrolled have been attending school. Therefore it proves the point that the School Welfare Officers ought to do more. Because Headmasters complain that for many months they do not see Welfare Officers. They must be more vigilant if they are to have a higher percentage of attendance recorded in schools. With the given situation in Guyana where there are very few places available in schools, where there is so much over-crowding now that we have X number of students enrolled it is very important that those students take care of their places that they make the maximum benefit of the places given to them, and that they do attend schools. When they are lagging they only hold up the places of other persons. Therefore, it is important that the School Welfare Officers should buck up and get these students to turn out to school. This I am sure could be improved with some more vigilance on the part of the Welfare Officers.

Item 30, Supervisor School Furniture Supplies. I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Education to investigate these Charges which have been brought to the attention of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. Since we have an office many people bring their grievances to our Office, and we have had reports from schools, they only come to us as a last resort. Headmasters and even District Education Officers have been complaining - they have asked me to raise this question in the House - that the Supervisor, Schools Furniture Supply, seems to either have been discriminatory in supplying furniture to schools or the fact that he has been dragging his feet on this question. Because Headmasters have been complaining time and again that they have been making repeated request for supplies and none has been forthcoming. This is particularly so with the denominational schools. Supplies have been very poor and so far, from an investigation carried out, only the secondary schools could speak of any great efficiency or benefit from the Supervisor, Schools Furniture Supplies. As far as the primary schools are concerned the whole machinery has broken down and there have been endless complaints coming into our Office on this question. These are all the queries for page 130.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, item 20, Assistant Chief Education Officers. In 1971 the sum of \$26,640 was provided in the Estimates. The revised figure for 1971 is only 113,320 which is half of that, and the Estimates for 1972 is back to the old 1971 Approved figure of \$26,640. This seems to indicate definite vacancy or vacancies in this

particular item. It calls for a complement of three Assistant Chief Education Officers. Could the hon. Minister tell us how many vacancies there exist in this particular category? Is it really that these vacancies are expected to be filled early in the new year? It indicates that if there are vacancies now the Minister expects them to be filled during the new year because the full amount \$26,640 is provided for 1972.

Perhaps at the same time the hon. Minister could explain to us why it is that under item 21 there was necessity for creating the post of Supernumerary Assistant Chief Education Officer when there are vacancies among the category Assistant Chief Education Officer.

The Minister of Education (Miss Baird): Mr. Chairman, first of all, I should like to point out with respect to appointment of Education Officers to the Ministry of Education, that is the proper function of the Public Service Commission. It is true that there are sixty-five acting appointments in the Ministry of Education and three districts are temporarily vacant. The appointments to these areas will be filled in the new term; by the time school reopens officers will be in place. Some of these vacancies were created by the resignation of officers. With respect to the Education Officer for Industrial Arts, no officer has been appointed. This is due to the fact that there is again a re-organisation of technical education and this brought us to consider at what level an appointment should be made, whether it should be made at a very high administrative level or just a mere supervisory level. This is why the appointment has been held up because the Ministry is restructuring technical education and widening it, placing more responsibility on someone who is competent enough to co-ordinate technical education.

9.30 p.m.

As I said before, the S.E.O., Primary Schools, has not got a degree but this is not properly the function of the Minister or the Ministry of Education. This is the function of the Public Service Commission.

The hon. Member Mr. Vincent Teekah referred to the vacancies for statistical officers. I think there are two vacancies. The position is, people have to be qualified before they can be appointed to the post of statistical officer. People are in training and they are to write these examinations next year, I am advised.

I think the hon. Gentleman was emphasising some misunderstanding of the role of the school welfare officer. The school welfare officer is not an attendance officer. His function properly begins with looking at attendance at school, identifying absentees, but this is only a small part of his task. The real task is to ascertain the reasons for absence and in that sense he will properly take on the role of guide because he will find that the reason for absence will lie in undesirable home conditions or poor conditions at school. That is really the function of school welfare officers and I can assure the hon. gentleman that these officers are being educated for their role on behalf of the Government at the University of Guyana and their main function is to deal with the problem of children, resolve them and establish a good relationship between home and school.

The post of personnel officer is held by one of the officers in the Ministry of Education, that is, it has been filled. I think I have covered most of the points raised by the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman Mr. Feilden Singh spoke about the appointment of the technical education officer and I have already commented on the reason why this post has not been filled.

The Chairman: Page 114.

Mr. Teekah: Subheads 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 2.

Mr. Teekah: On subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, at the present time there is a very serious and regrettable lack of water transport for education officers, especially in the river districts, and the areas which I want to stress very much are the Corentyne, where they have to go into the river, the Essequibo, the Demerara and the North West. This lack of water transport has caused many of the schools in these areas not to be properly supervised by the

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district education officers. To reinforce this point, I want to mention the fact that the hon. Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Philip Duncan, when he recently toured the interior put up his report that his findings were that many headmasters were complaining that they cannot see the education officers and that is due to the fact that these education officers do not have water transportation at their disposal. I call upon the Ministry of Education to correct this early.

Subhead 6, Library and Publications. I see the sum of \$750 is being voted this year but most of the school libraries, even the library in the Ministry of Education itself, are occupied by books which have been donated by the Canadian Government and/or the United States Government. As a matter of fact, the Ministry, for its own library and School libraries, depends largely on gifts from the Canadian and United States Governments. But that is not the main criticism.

The main criticism is that these are discarded books, which are out dated and not in use in the educational system of Canada and the United States. They are used as gifts to underdeveloped countries and Guyana is one of the victims. This is a typical case where the metropolitan power, having no use for particular equipment, passes it on to an undeveloped country and that country thinking it is free, accepts it. Books help to orient people and this is where we have to be very careful. We are trying to break away from the same thing which oppressed us for so many years and we must take a careful look at those books which are not for the use of metropolitan countries but are thrown upon unsuspecting students. As a matter of fact, the logical follow up of this is that the Ministry ought to make a careful examination with a view to trying to stop the libraries being stocked like this.

9.40 p.m.

With regard to subhead 10, Expenses, National Council for Education

The Chairman: You also wished to speak on subhead 8.

Mr. Teekah: Yes, sir. With respect to subhead. 8, Broadcasts to Schools, I observe that there has been a steep drop in the provision. In 1969, the actual amount spent on broadcasts to schools was \$80,532. In 1970, the actual amount was \$54,781; in 1971, there was

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the sum of \$25,000 in the Approved Estimates and in the Revised Estimates and now for 1972, the sum of \$25,000 is proposed.

One observes that there has been a progressive decline in the expenditure from \$80,532 in 1969 to \$25,000. This must be criticised because the Broadcasts to Schools programme is a very comprehensive and a very good programme. I must compliment the persons who manage the programme, Miss Celeste Dolphin and Mr. Arthur Seymour. They are doing a fine job. As a matter of fact, the scripts are excellent and I myself like to listen to them.

This is a very popular programme and I would have thought that greater emphasis would have been placed on it. With all the energy, time, patience and skill that are put into the scripts, one would have thought that the Ministry would have ensured that all the schools in Guyana were in a position to receive these programmes. This is not the case because in the North West Education District and in the Interior Education District people are so poor - the hon. Member Mr. Stoby was saying how poor they are - that they can hardly afford to buy their own radios and one would have thought that the Ministry of Education would have voted enough money under this subhead to ensure that these schools are provided with high-powered radios.

In these areas the reception is at most times very poor and programmes can be received only with very good radio equipment. Also, these are some of the areas that have been neglected for a long time. I would have thought that it would have been a good thing to have these programmes reach out all over Guyana, especially to these interior areas, and that the schools would have been provided with good radios.

Most of radios which were provided by the German Government some five years ago are not working well now. There has been no new supply of radios and I want to call on the Government to increase the sum being voted here.

Further, as the programmes are so thoroughly prepared, I wish to ask the Minister to see to it that all the schools, especially those in the interior, receive these programmes. The Government should supply good radios to the schools, or get them donated, so that the reception would be good.

Subhead 10, Expenses, National Council for Education: The sum of \$100 is being voted this year and a similar sum was voted last year for this subhead. I want to draw to the attention of this House that in 1969, also, in the first budget that I participated in the sum of \$100 was also provided. It was shown in the Revised Estimates but was taken out afterwards because, when one looks at the actual expenditure for 1969 there is nothing shown. There was no actual expenditure on this subhead, National Council for Education, in 1969 or in 1970.

I want to quote from page 11 of the White Paper on Education, which was written by the former Minister of Education, Mrs. Winifred Gaskin, and which was approved in the Parliament of Guyana in 1968. Mrs. Gaskin stated:

"National Educational Council: A National Educational Council, also representative of the varied interests within Guyana will be set up to serve as a consultative body for the Ministry of Education."

This White Paper was tabled in the Parliament of Guyana on 4th January, 1968, and was approved. I challenge the hon. Minister of Education to tell this House, to tell the nation, that this Council has been set up. I know for a fact that what is there is a National Committee for Education, but National Council for Education has not, so far, been set up and, that being so, \$100 could not be sufficient for a Council to function.

The Council was to be set up in 1969; the whole of 1968 passed, 1969; 1970 and we are now at the end of 1971, but the National Council for Education has not been set up. When established, it is supposed to reflect the varied interests in education. I would think that would be the Government, the Ministry of Education, the professional organisations, the opposition, the local authorities. The hon. Minister of Local Government speaks a lot about the involvement of local authorities in kindergarten nursery education and so on.

The National Committee for Education, which was in existence last year, is certainly not the National Council for education. The commitment given to the nation in the White Paper on Education in 1968 has not been discharged.

Subhead 11, Guyana Scholarships - Allowances and Passages for Scholars and Expenses of Examinations: I would like to say that more scholarships should be given in agricultural science. I may be wrong, but I think that only one scholarship is presently given in agricultural science at the University of the West Indies, because there is no Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Guyana.

I would like to call upon the Government to increase the number of scholarships in agricultural science because this Government speaks glibly about developing agriculture, about training people in agriculture and it is empty and meaningless talk if the Government does not support this by seeing to it that scholars are sent abroad for proper training in agricultural science.

I recall that one Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Robert Jordan, said that it is better for Guyanese to mess their fingers with mud than with ink. Put this into practice! Increase the number of scholarships in the field of agricultural science at the University of the West Indies. If it is too costly for us to increase the number of scholarships tenable at the Faculty of Agriculture in Trinidad, then I propose that Guyana should have its own Faculty of Agriculture. If the emphasis is to be placed on agriculture, one cannot conceive of this being done without a Faculty of Agriculture.

I would think that the Mon Repos School of Agriculture is a good base for the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Guyana. I strongly emphasise this point to the Government for consideration.

Subhead 12. It is stated here "Scholarships - - - for Amerindians". I have been doing some investigation as to the performance of Amerindian students who have been brought on Scholarships in Georgetown and the results, I observed, are not at all satisfactory. It is due I think to several factors, maybe environmental and so on. But the fact is that although we want to integrate the Amerindian community I think there are many ways to do this. I want to propose to the Government that rather than offering these scholarships in Georgetown where you have a high percentage of failures, that these scholarships should be tendered at the Government Secondary Schools in other areas for example Lethem, Mabaruma, Bartica, where

there are good Government Secondary Schools because of several factors advantageous to the Amerindian personality, etc. I think that Amerindian students would be able to make better with these scholarships, to pass their examinations, and be able to contribute much more tangibly to the Ministry of Education, to their Amerindian community and to the whole Guyanese society. If the Minister of Education is not aware of the poor results of Amerindian students on scholarships in the Georgetown Schools, I think she should carry out an investigation and she will find the results very interesting indeed.

Subhead 13: Free Places Secondary Schools. I want to say this is a very important subject which must engage the attention of the whole nation. For a long time now Guyana commenced on a programme of giving free secondary education to its citizens. This was started during the term of office of the Peoples Progressive Party Government. The then Minister of Education had this programme as adumbrated in his White Paper on Education in 1963. Since then we have had a new White Paper on Education but there have been efforts in the direction to give free Secondary Education but the efforts have been very limited, the scope of free secondary education in this country is very limited at the present time. Has the Ministry any programme whereby it envisages Guyana having a secondary education system whereby students would not have to pay at all for such education? Is there any timetable to give free secondary education to all the Guyanese citizens who require such education? Because at the present time both the Minister of Education and I are aware of the fact that at the end of the term of primary school, whether it is at the top of the primary school, the post primary section of primary this is rather strange term of course because it really should be an all-age school - but in the post-primary Department of primary school, after that is reached there is a very sharp bottleneck, because from then on the bulk of the students would have to leave school or if their parents can afford to send them to private secondary schools in most cases private secondary schools.

Therefore, I should like to know if the Government has any programme whereby all the Guyanese citizens of that age would be able to get free secondary education. When the child reaches the age of 12 rather than writing the Common Entrance Examination, has the Ministry been able to work out a system where the child will not have to write the Common Entrance

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Examination but that the child would continue school whether the school is a secondary, a multilateral or comprehensive - let us say multi-lateral school, that is the term the Government likes. Could we see in the near future whereby Guyana would have enough multi-lateral schools? Rather than being kicked off by the Common Entrance Examination the child will now proceed to the multilateral school and thereby be fitting in the various streams various streams corresponding to his aptitude. If the child has aptitude for mechanical engineering he fits into that stream, industrial arts into that stream, grammar type education, into that stream. Has the Ministry any such programme? I know for a fact that six multi-lateral schools have been built.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, it is two minutes to 10 o'clock. I do not know if you are going to be much longer on this Head. If you are we can take the Adjournment and continue tomorrow.

Assembly resumed

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will sit up to 4 p.m. tomorrow as agreed to by both Government and Opposition,

This Assembly stands adjourned to Friday, 24th December, 1971 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Adjourned accordingly at 10 p.m.
