

**THE**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
**[VOLUME 5]**  
**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE NATIONAL**  
**ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE**  
**CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

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7<sup>th</sup> Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1971

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**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Speaker**

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

**Members of the Government**

**People's National Congress**

**Elected Ministers**

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

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

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

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

### **Appointed Ministers**

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

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

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

Dr. the Hon. Sylvia Talbot,  
Minister of Health

### **Parliamentary Secretaries**

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

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

Mr. W. Haynes,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

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

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

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

### **Other Members**

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

### **Members of the Opposition**

#### **People's Progressive Party**

Dr. C.B. Jagan  
Leader of the Opposition  
Mr. Ram Karran  
Mr. R. Chandisingh  
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.  
Mr. D. C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker  
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson  
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip  
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.,  
Mr. M.Y. Ally  
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.,  
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.,  
Mr. R. Ally  
Mr. E.L. Ambrose  
Mrs. L.M. Branco  
Mr. Balchand Persaud  
Mr. Bholu Persaud  
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.

Mrs. R. P. Sahoye  
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent – on leave)

**United Force**

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

(Absent)

**Independent**

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

**OFFICERS**

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

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

**The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.**

**[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair.*]**

**Prayers**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Leave to Members**

**Mr. Speaker.** Hon. Members, leave has been granted to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1971.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS****Financial Paper No. 3 of 1971**

**The Minister of Finance**(Mr. Hoyte): I beg to present the Financial Paper No. 3 of 1971, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current Estimates for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1971, totaling \$6 million.

This amount is sought to enable the Government to honour obligations arising from agreements with the various staff associations representing the several categories of Government employees. In the course of the year, representations were made to the Government by the several staff associations for an increase in the allowance which is being paid at present, pending the revision of salaries throughout the public sector.

After negotiations with the Guyana Public Service Association, the Federation of Unions of Government Employees, the Guyana Teachers Association and the two Associations representing the Police Service, that is, the Senior Police Officers Associations representing the Police Officers Association, popularly known as the Police Federation, Government arrived at a formula whereby persons in Government's employ who receive a salary of 4428 and under a month will receive an additional allowance of 7 per cent, thereby making the allowance of persons in that category 13½ per cent. With respect to persons above the salary level of \$428 per

month, the increase will be 3½ per cent, making a total of 10 per cent in respect of that category of employee.

It should be explained that the Association representing the junior police ranks sought a revision of salaries, although the negotiation team on the Government side made it quite clear to that Association that that was not the exercise which was being carried on now. The Association then sought to persuade Government to treat them differently from the rest of the public sector and, although conceding that all of the other staff associations, including the Senior Police Officers Association, had accepted as reasonable the percentage increases which Government has offered, nevertheless claimed that they were in a special category and ought to get higher increases than the rest of the public sector. Clearly, this is a position which Government does not accept and cannot accept. So that this amount of \$6 million includes provision for all persons employed in the Government service.

I beg to name Thursday the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1971, as the date on which the Paper will be considered by the House.

**REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON  
DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Assistance for East Pakistan Refugees**

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Jagan.

**The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan):** Sir, I request permission to move the Adjournment of the Assembly to discuss the matter of urgent public importance relating to the disaster in East Pakistan, the epidemic and the general distress of the inhabitants of that area.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am satisfied that the matter is definite, urgent and of public importance and may properly be raised on a Motion for the Adjournment of the Assembly. The leave of the Assembly is required.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** The Motion will stand over until 4.30 o'clock today.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

New Amsterdam Electric Lighting Order (Extension) (Amendment) Bill,  
1971 – Bill No. 12 of 1971 [**The Minister of Finance.**]

Sea Defence (Amendment) Bill, 1971 – Bill No. 13 of 1971 [**The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply.**]

### PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### Financial Paper No. 2 of 1971

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1971, totaling \$12,182,552.00.” [**The Minister of Finance.**]

**Mr. Jagan:** Before my hon. and learned Friend starts today's proceedings may I bring to the attention of the House, sir, that on last Tuesday, when the hon. Member presented this Paper, he indicated that the debate would take place today. He also indicated that the Paper

would be circulated to hon. Members so that they would have an opportunity to study it before the debate today. Unfortunately, many members on our side did not receive their copy of the Financial Paper until they came into the House today.

It is contemplated that hon. Members should have at least one day's notice after the Paper is presented. I do not think it is the fault of the hon. Minister because he did indicate on the last occasion that the Paper would be circulated to members. I myself received my copy a few days ago but many hon. Members on this side of the House did not receive their copy until they came into the House this afternoon. It would seem, therefore, that these members were not given an opportunity, as contemplated by the Standing Order, to study the Financial Paper.

A very large sum of money is being requested and it is not only the money involved. There are many items – I think the Paper has 70 odd pages – and in view of that I do not know whether it is possible for the Government to leave this Paper to be debated on Thursday. [*The Prime Minister*: “The foreign policy debate is on Thursday.”] I was under the impression that the foreign policy debate was to take place today after discussion of the Financial Paper.

Sir, in view of what the hon. Prime Minister has said, although some of the members on this side will not be able to join in the debate, we will be prepared to proceed with the Financial Paper.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I understand that there are just three or four members on your side who live in the country who did not receive the Financial Paper.

**Mr. Jagan:** That is what I said. Members who live in the country did not receive their copies.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Hoyte:** In accordance with paragraph (2) of article 80 of the Constitution of Guyana I hereby certify that Cabinet has recommended the Motion on the Order Paper for consideration by the National Assembly.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**The Chairman:** We will now consider the Financial Paper page by page. Page 1.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Items 2 and 3.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Item 3.

**2.30 p.m.**

**Mr. Ram Karan:** I wish merely to draw the Government's attention to the total sum spent on this house between 1967 and 1971. This sum amounts to \$29,155, as separate items \$3,165 in 1967, \$9,218, \$3,039 in 1969, \$6,616 in 1970 and now \$7,105. I am not saying that it is too much to spend on a house for the President, but I should just like to ask the Government whether it is good economics where in five years you spend nearly \$30,000 on a house. Maybe it is good to preserve it to be a good museum piece in the future. I should also like to ask whether the government has given thought to the erection of a modern building, the maintenance of which is not going to be as great as this.

“On item 3 (C), the legend states:

“The payment of a personal pensionable allowance to Mr. K.W. Barnwell with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1970 inclusive.”

*[Interruption]* I want to be consistent as advised by my hon. Friend the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. In the first place, I wish to enquire if this is the same Mr. Barnwell who was engaged in carrying files in a certain case involving a certain Mr. Sase Narain and Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud so that the file was not available when it was required. Files were distributed at 11 o'clock in the night. Is this the same gentleman? If it is, he deserves an allowance but not from Government funds. It ought to come from somewhere else.

I am very much opposed to the question of giving people personal pensionable allowances. These are things which we know in the past used to be done to take care of very grave cases of injustice and so on. There was a time when we had our Estimates with a lot of them, but they have been eliminated. We now find that we are coming back with them. It seems to me that the question of personal pensionable allowance is not limited to this one case, it is now being repeated. I wish to warn against this. If an officer is doing a certain job, pay him what he is valued rather than give this personal pensionable allowance which clutters up our Estimates and makes it very untidy.

I wonder if I can also raise a question on small (a) under this same head. The note in the corner states:

“One post of Secretary to Class I Clerk with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1970, inclusive.”

I thought that the hon. Minister of Finance would have, in introducing this paper, made some general reference to all these cases of Secretaries being upgraded to Class I Clerks.

*[Interruption]* If it is a case of removing discrimination from female workers then the members of the Opposition are very glad to congratulate the Government. My friend is very happy over there. Maybe he is going to confirm that. But we have long been in agreement, in fact, we have been spearheading the question of the removal of discrimination against women workers. I

am very glad that the Government has, at this stage, in view of what the Minister said, decided to act on our advice and to remove the post of Secretary and classify these ladies as Class I Clerks.

**The Prime Minister**(Mr. Burnham): Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$31,055 sought here is to pay for extra cutlery and crockery which were ordered last year but which arrived only this year, so it comes under that Head. Normally cutlery and crockery are part of the furnishings of a residence.

One the question of a new residence or place for the President, Government does have a contemplation, and as soon as plans are ready they will be disclosed to the House.

**The Chairman:** Page2.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Item 5.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Item 4.

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

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Chairman, it is just a simple and short question. We would like to know why it is necessary for the Government to have to pay the salaries of the temporary staff engaged in the programme for the collection of rates and taxes in the City Council. Why is this not paid by the City Council?

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Item 5, Magistrates. We see that additional funds are being provided because of the increase in the number of temporary magistrates to do rent assessments.

From information that I have the situation with respect to rent assessments in New Amsterdam seems to be moving rather slowly. I understand that since the end of 1969, or early 1970, when the new Rent Control Act was brought into operation, up to approximately March this year, only about 400 cases were assessed in New Amsterdam, whereas I believe that there are something like 1,200 cases still awaiting assessment in that town.

When we consider that this is the position for a small town such as New Amsterdam, I wonder what the position is with respect to Georgetown. Perhaps the situation is better. But I should just like to point out that there is only one magistrate in New Amsterdam who is doing rent assessment cases. I wonder if the hon. Minister concerned would give us some assurance that additional temporary magistrates would be made available so that this whole process can be speeded up as quickly as possible.

2.40 p.m.

**The Attorney-General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal):** Could I perhaps deal with the question which was first raised regarding the payment of temporary staff engaged in the collection of rates and taxes for the City Council. This is a service rendered as part of the whole business of service of process. It is not paid for directly in terms of fees for the services of marshals but there is built into the fees that are paid by those who utilize the process, fees in terms of fees for summations and so on, an element which is designed to compensate for the expenditure put out by the Government in the provision of marshals and so on. In fact, the expenditure is directed not merely to marshals but to the clerical work that is involved at the Registry end in the preparation of these various processes. I hope that clarifies the position so far as the hon. Member is concerned.

As regards the magistrates, I think I had explained to hon. Members when this measure was first before the House, that while a start was being made with the Georgetown Judicial

District, attention was being paid to other areas and I specified New Amsterdam, Linden, and West Demerara. The position is that this matter is now very actively under consideration, both with the Ministry of Housing and with the judicial authorities who naturally have to work in liaison. I can assure the hon. Member that the needs of these communities are not being lost sight of and are in fact being actively pursued.

### Page 3

**Mr. Sutton:** Item No. 8 Air Transportation to the Hinterland – Leader of the Opposition. When last, I think a year or two ago, the question of travelling by Members of this House was raised, the then Leader of the House, the hon. Member Mr. Bissember, said that the matter would be examined. It seems always to have been the intention of all Governments to make it possible for Members of this House to travel throughout the country. The question at the time was, and still is: What is the position with regard to members of the House travelling to areas which are not covered by their passes issued by the Transport and Harbours Department?

The times are changing and it is noted that this matter has possibly been raised on a personal note by the Leader of the Opposition, but I am sure that this House must realize and you too, Mr. Speaker, that it was always the intention to make it possible for Members of this House to travel throughout the country for several reasons, to meet their constituents and to go to the places where they should go. It is not only a question of being inaccessible but places which were previously covered by the Transport and Harbours Department, as a result of the operations of the Guyana Airways Corporation, are no longer covered by the Transport and Harbours Department and, therefore, except at their own expense, Members of this House will find it absolutely impossible to get into certain areas of the country.

As a result of this, the Leader of the Opposition no doubt raised the question, and I am

Sure the Government will concede this is not a question of Government and Opposition. If the Government feels it cannot afford to permit all Parliamentarians to travel in the various areas where they should go, at least it should permit the representatives of the parties represented in this House. But this was discussed not too long ago by this party with the Leader of the Opposition and we were told that it was going to be drawn to the attention of the Government because the Leader of the Opposition said he considered it was a point well taken in view of the fact that when the only means of travel was that provided by the Transport and Harbours Department, passes were issued to all Members of the Assembly to travel where they will.

As I said, the Government should realize it is not only necessary to make this facility available to the Leader of the Opposition, but if it cannot make it available to all Parliamentarians, at least the Government is in honour bound to make it available to representatives of the parties represented in this House. Possibly the matter can be discussed and a solution arrived at because I am sure it is not the intention of the Government to defeat the object for which free passes were originally issued by the Transport and Harbours Department and to prevent Members of the National Assembly travelling throughout the country and pursuing their political work.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, the only transport service run by the Transport and Harbours Department which has been withdrawn during this government's time is the service by train between Mahaica and Rosignol, which service no Parliamentarian ever used since the upgrading of the East coast road and consequently I would say my hon. Friend's reference to the withdrawal of services is irrelevant and inaccurate.

So far as allowing the representative of other parties the facilities provided at item 8 for the Leader of the Opposition is concerned, I would say my hon. Friend's argument is misconceived. You see sir, Dr. the hon. Cheddie Bharrat Jagan does not enjoy this facility, convenience, etc. as a result of being the Leader of the PPP but as the Leader of the Opposition, which post is a constitutional post. If, however, any other party were to be able to satisfy the

President that a representative from that party commands majority support on the Benches to the West of this Hall, I am sure that such a person, if he be a person other than Dr. Jagan, can enjoy the facility, opportunity and convenience that the hon. Leader of the Opposition enjoys.

**Page 5**

**Mr. Ram Karran:** A short question on item 12, Personal Emoluments. I notice an item in the legend, duty allowance to the Secretary to the Office of the Ombudsman for the period 26<sup>th</sup> May to 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1970 inclusive. Why this period? What has happened before and what is going to happen after?

**2.50 p.m.**

**Mr. Hoyte:** The answer is simple. That is the period during which an officer in the Office of the Ombudsman carried the office in the absence of the Ombudsman and therefore was paid in accordance with Civil Service procedure and regulations. This allowance is for the increased responsibility during the period.

**The Chairman:** Page 6

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 15.

**Mr. Hoyte:** Before the page is considered, may I indicate an amendment to an error which has crept into page 6. The last line of (c) in the legend against item 15 should read "January, 1971" rather than "April, 1971".

**The Chairman:** Is that an amendment of a typographical error?

**Mr. Hoyte:** I suppose it is the typist's interpretation of the hand-writing.

*Amendment put, and agreed to.*

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Sir, I am looking at page 29 of the Estimates where these posts are listed under Guyana Youth Crops. The post of Director of Guyana Youth Crops is a F 14 salary scale in the Estimates but on this page in the Financial Paper under (i) it is listed as being on the F13 salary scale. I wonder if the hon. Minister has something to amend.

I notice also at (ii) that there are two posts of Agricultural Instructor on the A21 salary scale, presumably for the Guyana Youth Crops, but in the Estimates provision was made for ten instructors. Are we reducing the number from ten to two? Or are we adding two and distinguishing them as "Agricultural" Instructors.

While on this, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this instruction on agriculture could not be done better through the Ministry of Agriculture? Or is it that this particular section of the Government has no confidence in the Ministry of Agriculture?

May I move on to (c), the regarding of the post of Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister from the A 14 salary scale to the A 2 salary scale. I assume that this person is a very competent confidential secretary but I observe that this new scale has the same maximum as the A4 salary scale and this rare confidential secretary is rubbing shoulders with people like Assistant Secretaries, Assistant Registrars, Economists, Agricultural Economists, Civil Engineers, Geologists and the Assistant Conservator of Forests. I wonder whether we are spending our money properly. I am not penny pinching with respect to an efficient confidential secretary, but there must be some sort of understanding. Why is the post of Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister taken from all the others? I believe that this is going to cause a lot of trouble.

I do not wish to anticipate the debate on the \$6 million supplementary Estimate which were are to discuss on Thursday, but this sort of thing is going to cause a lot of dissatisfaction in the Service. In fact, it is causing a lot of dissatisfaction. We must do things properly and this is not the proper way to do this unless the Government has something it cannot record. This is not a political post. When the Government was elected the heads of Permanent Secretaries were rolled and senior officers were thrown out of jobs. This is not the time for that. The Government is now stable; it has been in office for a long time and there must be fair play and justice in the Civil Service.

**The Prime Minister:** With respect to be (i), I have to admit that there was a mistake in printing in the substantive Estimates which showed this particular salary as F 14 whereas it should have been F 13. Reference to the 1970 Estimates would show that it was F 13 before. We apologise; there was never any intention to demote the Director and consequently we seek this formal amendment.

The two posts of Agricultural Instructors are additional to the other ten posts. They are distinct from those then posts and, being separated, two things are indicated: that the Agricultural Instructor is going to be asked for certain professional qualifications in the field of agriculture; and an emphasis is being put on training in agriculture in Guyana.

It would not have been practicable to use the services of the Ministry of Agriculture because we want the instructors to be full time at the Youth Corps site for purposes of training and instruction, whereas if we use agricultural officers for the area their duties would have been diffuse, so to speak. If we were to use agricultural officers on secondment there would very likely be that human problem of an uncertainty as to loyalty, whether they are in the Ministry of Agriculture or are posted definitively and definitively to the Youth Corps. We thought that could be remedied or got around this way. It is not a question of lack of faith as suggested by the hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran.

With respect to the post of Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister, as the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran said, he was not proposing penny-pinching. He admits the importance of the post of confidential Secretary and, most of all, the post of confidential Secretary to the Head of the Government.

Now, since the bar, so to speak, has been removed which in the past precluded women in many instances from going into the administrative sections of the Service the present holder of the post, who is an Administrative Assistant, can move on and in due for moving on into the category of Assistant Secretaries. All that the change of salary scale from A 14 to A 2 means is that the Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister can, and will, be of the rank of Assistant Secretary.

I am sure that my hon. Friend knows that a good secretary to a Head of Government is difficult to find and remuneration of such secretary is usually higher than the remuneration for ordinary administrative posts in most parts of the world. There is nothing unusual about it and I commend it to the House in those circumstances.

**The Chairman:** Page 7.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 19.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Items 21 to 27 on the next page. They deal with the Youth Crops.

**The Chairman:** Proceed.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I merely wanted an explanation of item 19, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles. In 1969 the Revised Estimate was for \$8,587 and in 1970 it was \$10,000. This year we are going to spend \$22,000. I did not see any figure prior to 1969 against this item. It may be that we have a bigger American fleet of vehicles to take care of.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Before I start I wish to make it quite clear that the United Force is very much in favour of the Youth Crops. We are not against the Youth Corps as some people seem to think.

We are being asked to spend the huge sum of \$502,900 on these eight items all of which are new. We wish to get some information on how the Youth Crops is progressing and what contribution it is making to our nation.

We think it is a very worthwhile exercise for the young people and should stand them in good stead. It should also stand the nation in good stead. As the sum of \$502,900 is such a large sum can we be told what progress is being made and how the nation will benefit from it?

We notice that all the items are new. Why did they not come under the Estimates at the beginning of this year?

Item 23 deals with Medical Expenses and I take this opportunity of raising a question under this item. It is a medical question for the whole of Guyana. We understand that there is a polio scare in this country. As a matter of fact it has been announced over the radio in Trinidad that there is a polio outbreak. I wonder if any information can be given to this House on this question. I fully realize that this does not fall under the heading of Youth Crops, but it does concern them. Here is a large group of young people together and if there is a polio scare they could be the sort of people to be affected by it. Can we be told if there is a polio scare or how serious the polio position is in Guyana at the moment and, with particular reference to the young people of the Guyana Youth Crops, if any special precautions are being taken to have them vaccinated?

**The Prime Minister:** I was under the impression that my hon. Friend Mr. Balchand Persaud had indicated.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I stood up on two occasions, you probably did not see me, sir.

**The Chairman:** Would you let me know what items you wish to speak on?

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Sir, I wish to speak on items 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23.

**The Chairman:** Proceed.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Sir, I am dealing with the subhead "maintenance and operation of vehicles". I have noticed that the sum of \$10,000 is being sought again in addition to the \$12,000 which was voted previously. This seems to be a problem in nearly all the Government Departments especially where vehicles and maintenance of vehicles are concerned. I think there is a lot of waste and this is a problem. What I can see happening is that a particular Ministry obtains a few vehicles and two weeks later after those vehicles are not serviceable. They get involved in numerous accidents. In addition, the vehicles are not properly maintained. It is costing the taxpayers of the country a large sum of money to maintain vehicles which are used by these Departments.

In addition to that, I am told that the Prime Minister's car, the Daimler which belongs to the people of Guyana, was involved in an accident and repairs were done to the vehicle. I understand that the vehicle was repaired but not to the satisfaction of the Prime Minister and so a new one was bought from the taxpayers' money. This is not good enough.

The fact is that the Government should pay more serious attention to this question of maintenance of Government vehicles to make sure that expenses are cut down year after year.

Every year this Government has been budgeting large amounts of money for maintenance of vehicles.

Item 20, Rations. The legend states:

“To meet expenses in respect of the Guyana Youth Corps. The sum of \$37,950 has already been advanced from the Contingency Fund.”

If we look at items 20, 21, 22 and 23 we will see that money has already been spent from the Contingencies Fund without the approval of this House. The fact is that the Government has been spending money and now it is coming to this House to ratify the expenditure by asking for just a small amount. The Government must know at the beginning of the year how much money it will need.

My observations of the Youth Corps is that it is not really making any progress. There is need for an investigation and a report on how much progress is made. I can remember very well, for the past year we have been asking for a youth camp to be set up in the Berbice area. We have been getting promises from the Youth Division but nothing has been done. A few people have been asked by the Government for land to build the youth camp, but that is as far as it goes. The Government is not very serious on this youth programme. If it were serious surely it would have looked into the possibility of getting as many young people as possible together. There is this problem of the boys going up there and not staying. They join the Youth Corps and after a while they lose interest for the simple reason you cannot get girls to go. This is the basic problem. The Government has not been able to provide certain facilities which would encourage the young people to stay. The whole intention of the Government as far as I understand it is to train the youth to be engaged in agricultural settlements, but the Government is not even serious in setting up these agricultural settlements. It is doing things haphazardly; there is not a general plan. Every now and then some big idea comes up, probably the Minister dream it and next morning it is in the newspapers. That is the beginning and end of everything.

There must be a more serious and definite plan. The taxpayers must not be asked to vote so much money year after year and then there is very little result. Because most of them when they return to the towns you can see them on the streets still unemployed. The Government is doing nothing tangible to put whatever training these youths have had into good use. This is my general observation.

But in relation to item 22 where \$71,500 is sought to provide for the payment of allowances to members of the Guyana Youth Corps I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister if he will be kind enough to inform this House on what basis are these allowances to be given. In other words, what yardstick will the Government use to give these allowances? Also we should like to know how many youths will be benefiting from this. If the Government intends to give allowances as an incentive, we would appreciate this. But we would like to know on what basis the Government intends to give these allowances.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, the fact is that items 20 to 27 formerly appeared on the Capital Estimates. They were removed from the Capital Estimates in the last Estimates but inadvertently were not put in the Current Estimates. I want to apologise to the House from this. We are getting them on to the proper place and actually voting the money.

Secondly, my hon. Friend Mr. Balchand Persaud is confusing youth camps with the Youth Corps. Youth camps are where youths go for short periods. The Youth Corps is an institution with a status which goes on *in aeternum*. There was never any necessity to ask any person for land for the Youth Corps. The site for the Youth Corps in Berbice has been identified and it is on land owned by the state but the limitations of finance have precluded our proceeding up to now.

Then with respect to item 19, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles, my hon. Friend sought to introduce the irrelevancy of the car owned by the Government and used by the Prime Minister, *ex officio*. To set his penny-pinching heart at ease, though admitting that in many cases, as in that particular case, repairs are not properly done, I should like to inform him that the whole matter was covered by insurance paid by the insurance company with which the car which damaged the Prime Minister's car was insured. The damaged car was a total loss and the proper arrangements were made.

I admit that there are too many accidents in which Government-owned vehicles are involved. We are doing our best to bring an end to this but then, when consistently-negligent drivers are dismissed, supporting strikes in favour of the dismissed we hear some persons, for political reasons, persons and then the headlines appear in certain political papers supporting these strikes. There must be consistency of behavior and if my hon. Friend is going to show such solicitude for Government vehicles, I hope he can persuade those who support strikes against the dismissal of negligent drivers to desist from their opportunistic "politicking".

So far as item 19 is concerned, I should like to observe that this is a head that covers not only the Youth Corps but the whole of the Prime Minister's Office, and the \$12,000 earlier voted, has nothing to do with the Youth Corps. It is the \$10,000 that is coming in for the Youth Corps.

May I also commiserate with my hon. Friend who seems to suggest that there is some irregularity about advancing money from the Contingencies Fund. I would attract his attention to the Constitution, all of which is written in English. One particular article provides for the Minister of Finance to advance money out of a Contingencies Fund and then come to the House. If he reads again, he will see the limit of the powers, and powers there to be exercised when the need arises. If the majority of the House is in disagreement with this, let them vote against it. That again is parliamentary democracy.

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**Mr. Chandisingh:** Item 24.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Item 25.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** I should just like to take the opportunity under this item which is to provide for workshops, tools, appliances, and materials, to ask what skills are being taught to the Youth Corps. In other words, I wonder if the skills are entirely agricultural skills or if they are not being trained also in other skills, craft skills, and so on, which would equip them for other occupations besides agriculture, bearing in mind that the youths who would come out of the Youth Corps are expected to take up residence in the interior districts to begin a new life so to speak. One assumes many skills would be required.

Secondly, I should like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is in a position to tell us approximately what proportion, roughly speaking, of the working time of the members of the Youth Corps is devoted to the learning of technical skills. This would enable us to get some idea of the seriousness and intensity with which the youths are being trained for their future life in new conditions.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** The sum of \$196,900 is sought to meet expenses in connection with agricultural projects undertaken by the Guyana Youth Corps. I would be very grateful if the Prime Minister is able to say where these agricultural projects would be, what part of Guyana, and on what basis would the youths be asked to work on the lands, whether the lands would be given to them on an acreage basis, whether it would be a state-owned project with youths participating in it and receiving a salary, or whether it would be such a concern that the youths would be able to run it on a co-operative basis. Probably the hon. Prime Minister will be able to supply the information.

**The Prime Minister:** The members of the Youth Corps are trained in a number of skills. They are trained in carpentry, mechanics, the electrician's skills, and skills in electronics, masonry. The skills imparted are not restricted to those referable to agriculture.

Perhaps I may at this stage correct a default. I should have referred to a comment by the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud and pointed out to him that this Government of all Governments is appreciative of the need to have members of the Youth Corps of the female sex and a number has already been recruited. If he used to read his newspapers he would have seen that there was a passing-out parade and the new recruits have all gone up to Tumatumari. We understand his solicitude for the ladies but it came after ours.

With respect to item 25, Farms, this sum is for the large-scale farming that is going to be carried on by the Youth Corps itself, which will serve two purposes, one, the purpose of giving the members on the job training in agricultural skills, and two, eventually to make them completely self-sufficient in all things that could be sensibly grown in the area. I said, sensibly grown because so far we do not think, for instance, that sugar cane can be grown in the area or that even if it could be grown, that it would make sense to grow it and then put up a sugar factory there.

**3.25 p.m.**

The question as to where the farms will be, therefore, is immediately answered, but obviously the hon. Member was thinking about the communities which it is proposed to have set up by members of the Corps after they leave the Corps. Those will be primarily in the Mahdia/Konawaruk/Tumatumari complex, all of which have the basic infrastructure of major roads and electricity. The communities will be eventually co-operative groups which will, in the first instance, be assisted both by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Co-operative Division and any other Ministry which can render services to assist them in the setting up of these communities.

Then, ask the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh, what proportion of the corpsman's time is spent on training in skills? I shall put it this way: Only twice per week are there drilling and parades. When his day for drilling or parade comes around a corpsman does not, even then, spend the whole day on those exercises. Therefore, it would mean that at least three-quarters of his waking time, or the time devoted to work, is spent in any given week on being trained in these skills which are provided by the Corps.

**The Chairman:** Page 9.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 34.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Item 33.

**The Chairman:** Proceed.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Mr. Chairman, I notice that the sum of \$100,000 was voted for Re-migration of Guyanese and we are now asking for an additional sum of \$100,000. I think the hon. Minister of External Affairs owes this House an explanation as to the reasons for this very large sum for the re-migration of Guyanese. He should tell us who are the Guyanese – not necessarily their names – who are paid to come here, for what purpose they are coming and whether we are recruiting new people and paying their passages to come. We should know; the legend is definitely inadequate.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 34 is a new item for publicity and information abroad. Our country has been free since 1966 and I should like to know where money was found for publicity and information abroad during the years prior to 1971.

I have made a few visits to the Office of the hon. Prime Minister and I have seen publications there which were not circulated in this country. I presume that such pamphlets and brochures are available to people abroad. I visited the office of the Guyana High Commissioner

before this country was alleged to be free and I saw there publications which were not available to us in Guyana. The simple question I should like to ask is this: Where was money found for publicity and information abroad prior to this year because this item, as we see, is new.

**Mr. Wilson** *rose - -*

**The Chairman:** What item would you like to speak on?

**Mr. Wilson:** Items 31 and 33.

**The Chairman:** Proceed.

**Mr. Wilson:** Item 31, Contribution to the United Nations Organisation. We agree that this nation should play its proper part in this world body but there is one matter which has worried me for some time. The Food and Hunger Campaign made a request to all countries and progressive organisations to participate in an International Walk from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>. The People's Progressive Party, in keeping with its progressive character, set about to participate in the organization of the walk locally. The stage was reached where we applied for police permission to have the walk in Georgetown and lo and behold! The permission was refused. I wonder if the Minister of Home Affairs could explain to this House why this request was refused.

Item 33, Scheme for re-migration of Guyanese. This, too, is a good scheme but it has come to my knowledge that many Guyanese who have returned in answer to the Prime Minister's call to come home and make a contribution to the nation are treated with very short shrift. They find themselves almost stranded in Guyana after they have responded to his call. There are no jobs available and they go from place to place being pushed around. They are told to go to Congress Place and even when they go to Congress Place they are pushed around. I think this Government should be sincere and should not fool the public that it is mindful of

having Guyanese return. The members of the Government say this for international consumption. The fact is that this Government, because of its policy, is causing more and more unemployment and cannot find work for Guyanese who have answered the call of the Prime Minister to return home.

**The Attorney-General and Minister of State:** The hon. Member who spoke last quite rightly addressed his question on the march that he was preparing to lead to the Minister of Home Affairs and I shall leave the answer to him if answer is, in fact, needed. I understand that one of the considerations was stamina and that the object was to save the hon. Member from himself. *[Laughter]*

If I may move to the substantive questions, the ones raised on items 33 and 34. Item 33 seeks provision for an increase in the amount voted in relation to re-migration. The position is – as I think hon. Members are aware – that with a considerable number of vacancies arising from the expansion of the Government services and expansion that is itself related to the Development Programme and the new dynamic that has been injected into the public sector, there has arisen a very special and urgent need for technically qualified persons to enable this variety of programmes to be implemented and implemented quickly. This has resulted in an intensification of the drive to bring back to Guyana people qualified technologically, qualified professionally to come back and join in the national effort.

This has meant that there has been need for rather larger sums under this Head than had originally been anticipated. It is, in fact, a measure of the success of the programme rather than anything else. I hope that hon. Members will share in the general feeling of elation that ought to derive from the knowledge that so many young Guyanese are returning home in such considerable numbers.

It would be idle to pretend that there are not, in any major programme of this kind, isolated cases of difficulties, problems of one kind or another arising out of the need for adjustment. These are problems which are being tackled seriously and intelligibly and I think I can safely assure hon. Members that all the agencies of the Government which are associated with the implementation of this programme – hon. Members ought to realize that although the item appears under the Ministry of External Affairs in its day-to-day implementation in terms of recruitment and placing and so on a large number of other Ministries come into play and it is truly an inter-ministerial operation – are using every means at their disposal to ensure that this scheme functions to its maximum capacity.

I suggest to hon. Members that the provision sought is one which, in the wide span of Guyana's history, is in fact a very small contribution to a very important aspect of our future.

So far as publicity and information is concerned, as the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran so rightly observed this is a new item. When he was speaking and referred to publications of various kinds that he had seen in the lobby of the Prime Minister's office and were directed to overseas consumption I thought he was going to suggest an increase in the vote because I expected him to be saying that there was a need for more of this material to be made available locally.

The truth is that we have been involved ever since Independence in a very considerable international effort on behalf of Guyana. That effort has taken various forms depending on the particular situations with which we have been confronted but more recently, in relation to the great national effort of control of our own resources on which we are embarked, an effort on which this House has spoken with unanimity, it has been essential for us to present abroad the right type of material in relation to what we are endeavouring to do. The funds that have been provided first of all by contingencies warrant and now through this Head by supplementary Estimates, these funds are earmarked for that type of publicity and hon. Members can be assured

that the publicity that is produced and generated is of the same high order and quality as that which the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran has just recently praised.

**3.40 p.m.**

**The Chairman:** Page 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Items 42 and 44.

**Mr. Wilson:** Item 44.

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

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** This honourable House has been asked from time to time to vote sums of money to help certain organisations such as voluntary, youth and social organisations. I shall be grateful if the hon. Minister can tell us which organisations are to benefit from this sum so that we can be able to be clear in our minds as to how much they are getting. Since this House is asked to vote certain sums of money for these organisations we must be able from time to time to have a report at least from the particular Ministry in relation to the functions of these organisations and what are their activities. Because while most of these organisations can be considered good ones nevertheless, it is important that this House be informed as to their activities and their programmes whether they have the national objectives in view or whether they are selfish organisations only trying to have a small group which isolates itself from the society.

Item 44, School Feeding Scheme. I would feel that this scheme is very important. I wonder whether the hon. Minister can say if all the aspects of food hygiene have been taken into consideration in helping our children in the schools. I know for a fact that there has been a mal-administration in the issuing of foods to the schools from time to time. On many occasions

when the schools are supposed to have their quota it does not turn up and there have been many complaints from various Headmasters in relation to this problem. I hope that there will be more efficiency in the administering of this Scheme.

**Mr. Wilson:** It is a fact that the school feeding scheme is being carried on as a sort of supplement to whatever meals children are supposed to receive in their homes. I should like this Government to know that the conditions are so bad for parents that with widespread unemployment and underemployment, skyrocketing prices, the high cost of living, there are many parents who cannot give their children the basic meal. There is no question of certain children getting a snack; there is need for children to have the basic meal or meals. It is not sufficient for the children just to be given a snack at school.

I wonder if the hon. Minister of Education knows that about 30 per cent of children, let us say, between the ages of 6 and 12 years are roaming the streets. Their parents would not insist that they go to school simply because the parents have not got food to give them, and they just have to allow the children to stay at home. When the parents have gone to work the children roam about the place. It is no wonder that there is so much juvenile delinquency. I think this Government should consider this problem very seriously and embark on a programme of assistance to parents and ensure that they have the means of feeding their children. The Prime Minister spouted I think at Queen's College of feeding everybody and clothing everybody. Let the Prime Minister know that large numbers of children are going hungry every day and because of that they do not go to school. I think it is a blot on the books of this Government that this should be the case in a country where the Government boasts of being socialist, to be having so many children starving in Guyana and not being able to go to school.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, item 42 represents, as the legend states, a transfer of only part of the voted provision under subhead 12 of Head 9 of the Prime Minister's Office. This sum of \$1,000 is intended for Women's Destitute which work closely with the Community Development Division which Division was transferred to the Ministry of Economic

Development at the beginning of this year and subsequent to the passage of the Estimates for this year, which passage as you will recall took place last year on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December.

The School Feeding Scheme in this particular context is also a transfer of part only of the voted provision, that part which is relevant to the work that the Community Development Division of the Ministry of Economic Development is responsible for. At least, I personally, am aware of the problems of feeding, the sufficiency of feeding and the quality of feeding amongst the young people. Perhaps if my hon. Friend Mr. Wilson had looked at this item more carefully he would have recognized that this is coming under Community Development where specific work is being done amongst the youth of the school and post school age. The Government has set us a target of feeding the nation. Now if we were not confident of feeding everyone in Guyana we would not have set that as a major target. This particular item is not directly relevant, but I may observe that some of the food used here is in support of agricultural production and projects even by children of school age.

**The Chairman:** Page 15.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 45

**Mr. Lall:** Item 45

**Dr. Ramsahoye:** Item 49.

**Mr. Wilson:** Item 48.

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

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I will give way to the hon. Member Mr. Lall.

**Mr. Lall:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to commend the Government very much on its sympathetic attitude towards Mrs. Mabel Barker in awarding her this ex gratia payment. But while I congratulate the Government on its action I should like to draw its attention to a similar matter in court last year when the Chief Sanitary Inspector for Berbice was killed by the Berbice train after returning from a conference in Georgetown.

**3.50 p.m.**

This gentleman, the deceased, was due for long leave at the end of the year. If he were alive, the Government would have had to pay leave passages for him and for his wife. The same thing which applies to Mrs. Mabel Barker automatically applies to Mrs. Barron, because Mr. Barron was due for pre-retirement leave at the end of 1970 and I am asking that the same consideration that has been given in relation to Mrs. Mabel Barker should also be given to Mrs. Barron.

**Mr. Wilson:** I too would like to compliment and congratulate the Government on taking this measure. I think this officer was an ideal public servant. During the PPP regime, he served loyally. He did the same during the time of the PNC and I know that he did more than his normal duty because I had some contract with him and he was always very busy. I think it was because of the way he devoted himself to more than what was his duty that his early death was brought about. I would say the Government should be complimented for taking this step and I want to pay tribute to this officer, particularly in connection with his work in relation to displaced persons in planning the areas. He did it without malice, without emotion. He just did his duty to the people of Guyana.

**Dr. Ramsahoye:** Your Honour, since under this Head 17 there is only one item for land registration, I think it is my duty to bring to the House a very grave anomaly which was confirmed today by the Commissioner of Title. Land registration for which this vote provides is done in Guyana under the Land Registry Ordinance of 1959. Section 127 of that Ordinance provides that moneys received by the Registrar by way of fees are to be paid into a fund to be

known as the Assurance Fund and certain claims including compensation for deprivation of land are to be met from that fund. Where the fund is deficient, the Ordinance provides that the deficiencies are to be met from the general revenue.

I discovered today that no money has been paid into any assurance fund. No assurance fund has been established as is required by law, and that no payments by way of compensation have been made to people who have been deprived of their land as a result of the operation of the Ordinance. The commissioner of title in awarding titles has the power to make reserves of private lands; he has the right to set aside private lands for public purposes and so on, and it is the intention of the Ordinance by its expressed language to provide that compensation should be paid out of that assurance fund.

The assurance fund is also established in order to maintain the indefeasibility of titles under the Torren system of land registration, which is a system we have borrowed and which we intend in the end to replace what system we have inherited from the Roman Dutch law.

It is therefore vital and, indeed, I should have thought that the establishment and maintenance of the fund is a sine qua non of the proper operation of this legislation. In view of the grave concern which the Attorney General must feel because this fund has not been established, I wonder whether this House would not make an immediate attempt to vote extra money for the immediate establishment of this fund.

I could say to my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, that if an omission of this nature were brought to my notice and I were sitting in his seat, I would have had an immediate consultation with my Cabinet colleagues and a decision would have been come to at once. We cannot afford to have a delay in a matter like this and I would urge the Government not to continue administering the Torrens system unless the assurance fund is established in terms of section 127 of the Ordinance. I would further urge the Government at this time and at this meeting to take such steps as are necessary to have the fund established.

The Ordinance says that the fund is not to be diminished below \$100,000 and that is the sort of figure which the Government should vote to establish that fund. The Accountant-General is the one who is supposed to have this fund established and the Registrar is supposed to pay the monies into it. I doubt whether the Accountant-General is even aware of his statutory duty in this respect. This is a matter of very grave public concern and it demands immediate attention.

**The Attorney-General and Minister of State:** May I start by returning the compliment to my hon. and learned Friend. He was good enough to say that if he were sitting in my seat and a suggestion of the kind that he has made were made to him, he would take immediate steps in the House this afternoon to vote the funds that he thinks are needed to rectify the omission that he alleges. May I say, Mr. Chairman, that if I were sitting in his seat and in the possession of information of the kind that he has advanced this afternoon, I first of all would have brought it to his attention in his seat here and given him the opportunity of verifying the statements that have been made and of consulting with his technical advisers.

**4 p.m.**

I am in no position, Mr. Chairman, to comment on the accuracy, although, of course, I entirely accept the sincerity of the observations that have been advanced. Until I can do so it is obviously quite impossible for me either to advise the Government to do anything about this situation which may not, in fact, exist or indeed to take the matter any further. I would urge my hon. and learned Friend in future to confine his observations on land registration to the item in relation to which provision has been sought, namely, \$4,100 to enable the purchase of binders and indexes.

**The Chairman:** Would the hon. Prime Minister like to reply to item 45?

**The Prime Minister:** All I have to say is this; one aspect of the case referred to by my hon. Friend Mr. Harry Lall is not on all fours with the Barker case. It is the case of a widow having to repay 20 days' pay that had been overpaid since the money was transferred to the bank.

So far as the leave entitlement is concerned, I have been informed and verily believe that it is being actively and perhaps favourably considered.

May I say, Mr. Chairman, that matters like these are not for public debate. These are matters which can be informally discussed with the Minister and settled. These appeals and misericordiam when publicly made show a certain lack of sensitivity. If you want to get certain things straightened out like this with respect to survivors it can be done. Raising them in the House does not make it any better. It only publicises the individual's embarrassment.

**The Attorney-General and Minister of State:** I wonder if I can crave your indulgence and that of the House to take just before the suspension the first item in Section B of the Supplementary Estimates which is just one item.

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps this is a convenient time for suspension of the House until 4.30 p.m.

*Sitting suspended accordingly.*

**4.30 p.m.**

*On resumption -*

**MOTION FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY TO DISCUSS  
A DEFINITE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Assistance to East Pakistan Refugee**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Jagan.

**Dr. Jagan:** Sir, it is sometimes said that tragedy arrives in double doses and this is certainly true for the unfortunate people of East Pakistan. It was not too long ago that these people suffered a great deal from a natural calamity. By that I refer to the tidal wave and cyclone which swept East Pakistan and did a tremendous amount of damage. There was loss of life and I am told that numbers of people were made homeless and so on. During the recent elections conducted in that country the area affected was left out of the electoral process as the havoc from that period was so great that it was felt there was not enough time to make the necessary arrangements tabulating people, putting them on the roll and so on.

We have all read now where recently millions of people have been moving across from East Pakistan into India. We have been told what a tremendous problem this has been, not only for the Indian Government but also for the people themselves. The figure which has been released indicates that the total number of persons who have been displaced is in the vicinity of over 4 million.

We who live in this country, when we talk of the Guyanese nation are thinking of a little over half a million people. When we think of a bigger entity like the West Indies Federation or the West Indies we are thinking in terms of 2 or 3 million people and we see the enormity of this problem when we realize that this is virtually a small nation we are talking about in terms of the number of people who have been displaced and who are suffering today.

The Prime Minister and I were in India in 1953 and I recall – he will recall it too – that even as late as that time the conditions in the refugee camps were horrible in Delhi and in different parts of the country which we visited. In Calcutta we saw thousands and thousands of people who were living in these camps for displaced persons without proper sanitation, without enough food to eat and so on. That was as a result of the upheavals following the partition of India. In other words, those problems persisted as late as 1953 from 1947. Thus we can imagine what the scope of the problem is like today. We have read and heard that cholera has killed thousands of people. We understand also that the monsoons are now coming and this is likely to pose a very big problem because it is difficult to live in those countries even under normal conditions during the monsoon period. One can imagine, therefore, what it will be for these millions of refugees who are living under makeshift conditions.

So colossal, apparently, is this problem that the Minister for External Affairs in India has gone on a mission abroad to alert Governments all over the world about the enormity of this problem which has been thrown into the lap of India, no doubt with the objective of seeking assistance. The Prime Minister herself – refer to the Prime Minister of India – has asked for international aid referring to this/as not an Indian problem but an international problem.

The other day I heard over the B.B.C. where the Foreign Secretary in Great Britain had said that Britain had given more than her share to help with this problem that is confronting India. That Minister went on to say that such problems in the future should be dealt with internationally through an international organization, and he suggested the creation of a disaster fund by the United Nations.

We recall that when the earthquake disaster struck Peru – I think it was some time last year – a move was made by Cuba for the United Nations to establish such a fund. Unfortunately at that time there was not much support for that proposal. We were critical of the fact that the Guyana Government did not support this measure. The United States had opposed it also, but now we find that Britain is calling for the creation of such a fund.

I would think that even though we did not support this proposal when it first was made by Cuba we should certainly at this stage make a clear statement that the time has come when such a fund not only should be set up through the United Nations but that Guyana should support it. I understand that a committee has been set up in this country to collect money for this cause and that the Government of Guyana has contributed \$10,000 worth of rice. No doubt anything that is given is welcome today, but I feel that we can do much more. I do not think on such a grave occasion we should depend only on what individuals or organisations will be able to contribute because we know from past experience generally not much support is forthcoming and since this is a rather urgent matter we should like to appeal to the Government to consider increasing the amount which has been given as a donation towards this cause.

I am sure, sir, that in doing so the Government will be contributing funds from Guyana to a very worthy cause and I hope that early consideration will be given to this, and sympathetic consideration, so that a much larger contribution can be made. We all appreciate the fact that we are going through difficult times but in keeping with our generosity, in keeping with our stand of international solidarity, we should make a very generous contribution on this occasion. I therefore commend to the Government further support for this humanitarian cause.  
*[Applause.]*

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

**Mr. Sutton:** Mr. Speaker, we in this section of the Opposition would be failing in our duty if we did not associate ourselves with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in this very serious matter. We think that there is every justification for this Government to show more than a passing gesture in this serious crisis that is taking place to the Pakistanis. There is no less an obligation for us to do so than to associate ourselves with the difficulties, changes and oppressions of those sections of our ancestors who come from the African continent. A major section of this community have their roots in the continent of India and I think we would be

failing in our duty, when a catastrophe such as this takes place, if we do not feel a sense of obligation to give the maximum amount of help of which we are capable.

In these circumstances we trust that the Government will entertain the suggestion and explore every means of increasing the aid that is offered for the benefit of the Pakistan refugees.

4.45 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye.

**Dr. Ramsahoye:** Your Honour, I should like to urge this House to consider the gravity of the situation which has befallen the people of East Pakistan and particularly the five million or more refugees who have crossed the Border from Pakistan into India. In some cases, little towns which accommodated 20,000 people must now accommodate 200,000. The suffering is intense, people are dying on the streets, mothers are clutching their dead babies and a horrible tale is being told of genocide in East Pakistan itself.

India is a country in which hunger and starvation are everyday occurrence. India is a country in which even in time of peace people die in the streets of want, and when a tragedy of the nature which has now befallen Pakistan is added to the economic troubles and the destitution of so many millions in that sub-continent we must, from our position of advantage, lend a helping hand to the suffering and to the distress.

We talk of poverty in the Caribbean but we have no idea of what poverty really is unless we can sit and think about the poverty in the Indian sub-continent. Their distress is dreadful with cholera, pneumonia and monsoon rains, people living huddled together, some of them obliged to move for twenty-four hours of a day in water must be a sorry sight. It is a grave indictment of our civilization that such a thing ought to have happened at this time in the twentieth century. We, who are here can in sober moments of reflection, think of the situation

as it now is, think of the deprivations which are being suffered, think of the future of those people who probably will not be able to recover for generations from what has now befallen them, and lend a helping hand.

In East Pakistan itself academicians have become the subject of wholesale slaughter. At the University in Dacca leading Pakistani scholars have been killed. Even if the refugees were to be able to return to their home land they must return in many instances to start anew. These are conditions of great grief; they are conditions of degradation. It is a situation which would cause millions of people to be condemned to servitude for generations.

For our part, on this side of the House we give our support. We urge the Government in the confidence that in this matter the Government will stretch itself to the utmost bounds of its liberality. When we consider that the cost of feeding and providing medical care for the refugees runs into nearly £1 million a day we will realize the enormity of the situation which now faces India. The Indian people have shown great restraint in this hour of disaster. Their Government and its administration in this time of trial have shown sanity and an example to the rest of the world. It is not too much for us to help them as much as we can. It is with distress, but regarded nevertheless as a privilege, that I should be here to add my humble voice to plead that our Government and people should lend support.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member Mr. M.Y. Ally.

**Mr. M.Y. Ally:** Mr. Speaker, in giving support to this very tangible suggestion made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition I feel that we as representatives of Guyana and of this honourable House should be in full sympathy with what is happening in East Pakistan. We should forget whatever little differences we have whether political or racial. We all know at times we do have these difficulties and calamities and it is fitting now that we as an emerging nation, should show that we are always willing to help other people in distress.

I urge this Government to try and muster support not only from one section, but from people throughout the whole country. We should try our utmost; our funds might be a bit low, but nevertheless, we should count ourselves free and in a position to help others. I again urge that we should try and do little more than what we are doing.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any need to emote to impress the Government because both the Government generally and myself personally have been affected by the evidence which has been brought to our attention of the suffering which is now taking place amongst the millions of refugees who have left their homes, or former homes, in East Pakistan.

**4.55 p.m.**

The Government of Pakistan and the Government of Guyana have diplomatic relations. The Government of India and the Government of Guyana have diplomatic relations. The Government has taken the view that this is a matter of human suffering and consequently a contribution towards the relief of that suffering is in no way indicative of any judgment as between the two nations, Pakistan and India.

It will be recalled that some time ago the Secretary-General of the United Nations did propose the setting up of an international fund and organization specifically to deal with this problem. The Government of Guyana has in the circumstances made a first contribution of \$10,000 worth of Guyana rice and is in communication with the relevant organization of the United Nations as to how this rice will be shipped. And I want to say here and now, lest it be misunderstood, perhaps be misrepresented – already there is a measure of misrepresentation, unfortunately – the Government's present contribution was not intended to be a once for all contribution. It was the first contribution we were making. We have been in touch not only

with the United Nations Organisation but also with the Government of India, with whose Prime Minister I have been in personal correspondence.

We are looking at the situation. We, like so many other Governments and people in various parts of the world, want an opportunity to assess the enormity of the situation and to discover in what way we can most helpfully contribute. Admittedly, the first contribution is to show our intention. The other contributions will flow in time depending upon the areas in which we are advised it would be best to make such contributions.

The party to which I belong proposes to make a substantial contribution to the organization which has been set up here called the East Bengal Refugees Fund. I feel that this is properly a case for us not merely to urge Government, which needs no urging, to continue making contributions but for us as individuals to contribute, for us to ensure that the organizations which we control, like political parties and business houses like Gimpex, contribute to this fund.

Mr. Speaker, too frequently I get gooseflesh at the palpable hypocrisy. There are people who speak in tempered tones and sobbing voices about suffering, and when you ask them, “What have you given as an individual, what has the organization which you control given, what have your friends with whom you have influence given?”, you sometimes get a disappointing answer. I want to assure my hon. Friends that the present contribution is not a final contribution. Secondly, the party which I lead has allocated a substantial amount to be given to this fund – [*Applause.*] – and thirdly, I personally propose to make a donation of \$1,000.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this disposes of the matter raised under the Adjournment of the Assembly. We therefore return to the consideration of Financial Paper No. 2/1971.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2 OF 1971**

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**The Chairman:** We will now deal with page 16 of Section "A" of the Financial Paper. Will those Members who wish to speak on items kindly indicate?

**Mr. Jagan:** Item 53.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Item 53.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member Mr. Jagan.

**Mr. Jagan:** Item 53, National Honours. Your Honour, I see that the voted provision is \$5,000 and the hon. Minister is now asking for an extra \$29,720. Could the hon. Minister tell us why this large sum of money is now required when the Ministry had anticipated an expenditure of only \$5,000? Is it that the Government intends to give out many honours this year?

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Mr. Chairman, the Government has set up a National Honours Committee. I think the heads of those members of the Committee should be examined. I do not think the Government is very serious in awarding national honours. From what I have been observing, the honours which were handed out by the Government were mostly handed out on a political basis, persons who are able to carry out the whims and fancies of the Government are those who are honoured, but the fact is that persons who have given very dedicated services to the country are being by-passed. I think there is need for a complete revision of the composition of this Committee. Surely, taxpayers cannot be asked to pay large sums of money to buy medals and what have you for these persons who have been awarded honours.

The Government should review its policy as regards the granting of awards and ensure that the whole country feels happy when national awards are made. Unless the Government changes its policy, we will not be getting anywhere and those persons who have been giving dedicated service to the nation will no longer wish to give such service.

**5.05 p.m.**

**The Minister of Home Affairs**(Mr. Clarke): I should like to reply to the question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Derek Jagan. The sum of \$80,000 was approved last year by supplementary provision of which only \$50,280 could have been paid on account for the manufacture of national honours insignia up to the end of last year. There was therefore some money remaining from what voted last year and Government felt that the additional \$5,000 would have met the bill. Unfortunately, it has not, and we have now the final accounts for medals up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December last year. Thus we have come to the House for this additional amount to meet the bill as of that day.

In reply to the question raised by the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud in relation to the awards, I should just like to observe that it is entirely wrong to suggest that the awards have been made on the basis of politics because when one examines the list of persons who have received awards one finds that farmers, cane cutters are people who have received awards; people who have worked in community development and co-operatives, people who have served in defence of this country, steelband players, people who have contributed otherwise to the cultural development of this country have been included in the number of persons receiving awards. Therefore it is totally untrue to say that only political activists have received awards. I am surprised that the hon. Member Mr. Persaud should seek to misinform this House. Had I time to get the list of awards I would have referred to them individually. The hon. Member must not mislead this House.

**The Chairman:** Page 17.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Item 55.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Item 55.

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

**Mrs. DaSilva:** I should like to use this Head to ask the hon. Minister if he can give this House any information on what arrangements or plans are being made for the custody of young people who have been charged with committing crimes. Right now we can all think of a recent very sad case of a young boy who is alleged to have murdered his brother and who, I understand, is being housed and cared for by the Salvation Army. There are other cases not as serious as that, there are young first offenders and, as far as I understand, there is no place in Georgetown where these young people can be kept until they are brought to trial.

Will the hon. Minister tell us if there are any plans to take care of this?

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Item 55, Probation and Welfare Service. The manner in which the administration is handling this situation is not desirable at all. Those who travel around Guyana will be able to see that at different points, especially in public places, many young children from the age of 10 are walking the streets begging.

Also many persons are convicted of crimes; they are sent to prison and their children and wives are left on the streets. There are many cases in New Amsterdam of persons who are convicted and sent to prison and their families cannot get any assistance from the Government. Some are charged with capital offences. There is a case of four persons who are accused on capital charges and they have spent 14 months in prison and up to today they cannot be given a trial. One of these persons has a wife and six children. What assistance are they getting from the Government? It took them about five months to get the first payment of \$23.

There are many other case of persons who are in prison and their families are receiving very little. Others are not getting at all. All of this comes under the welfare service of the Government. Unless the Government is serious with regard to helping these persons – it is voting the money; I am not saying that it is not voting the money, but what I am saying is that the administration is not good. More persons are needed to administer the scheme.

The question of taking care of juvenile delinquents is also a sore problem. There are regulations under which parents can be prosecuted if their children do not attend school, but the fact is that the administration is not taking all these problems into consideration. The way things are going I wonder whether the Government may not have to provide social welfare service for everybody because it seems that this will be a country of beggars and unless the Government can change its course and seriously take into consideration the problems affecting young people, especially children, I do not think we will have very far to go.

**Mr. Clarke:** The two hon. Members who spoke unfortunately did not refer particularly to the matter which item 55 concerns. One hon. Member did seek to get information and I would like to tell the hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, that Government gives a subsidy to certain agencies for this type of work. The Salvation Army Remand Home, which I am sure the hon. Member knows about, gets a Government grant as well as the Belfield Girls School, which the hon. Member also knows about. There is also the Essequibo Boys' School, which is the institution to which this type of deviant youth is sent when he is convicted by the Courts.

With respect to the statement made by the hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud in relation to relatives of prisoners not getting any assistance from Government, I should like to say first of all that I noted his solicitude for my Ministry in respect of the additional staff which we require. We shall certainly pay some attention to that and I hope that when I come to this House for additional staff he will not say that we are making the bureaucracy larger.

May I say that there is, in the Probation and Welfare Department, the Prisons Welfare Officer whose job it is to investigate all cases referred to him and to locate relatives of prisoners with a view to recommending the necessary allowances. What has happened is that in a number of cases the Prisons Welfare Officer has been unable to find persons at the addresses given and this has occasioned great delays in the payment of these allowances.

The hon. Member would be of assistance if he could help those whom he knows are in such circumstances by referring them to the Probation and Welfare Officer rather than coming to the House and suggesting that they cannot get what he knows is there for them to get. He knows that provision is made for them to get something and he also knows what ought to be done. He does not do that but comes to the House and makes a mountain out of a molehill.

**The Chairman:** Page 18.

**Dr. Jagan:** Item 58.

**The Chairman:** Proceed.

**Dr. Jagan:** We note an item here, item 58 for \$468,800, Subsidy on Oil, Guyana Marketing Corporation. This sum represents the utter bankruptcy of the Government's policies. Only yesterday we read in the newspapers that the Minister acting on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture was lecturing the people and telling them we must get away from a one-crop or two-crop economy. Not even in the days of the P.P.P., when farmers and consumers were subsidized, did it cost the Government this sum of money for oil. What do we find now? Go and ask any consumer! He has to be subjected to shortage of oil and black market all the time. Where are we going?

This is a land which can produce coconuts, there is no doubt about that. Yet we are spending nearly half a million dollars a year for subsidy. What does this mean? As far as I can read here, it probably means that we are paying for oil or copra imported from the West Indies which should be produced here. Now, note the bankruptcy of the Government's policy. During the P.P.P. regime there was a crop bonus for coconut producers, this Government has cut that out with the result that coconut farmers are not producing. Secondly, they are buying copra from the West Indies at a price of 19.2 cents per pound; but the price in Guyana is 14½. What kind of policy is this? Are we not going to have a shortage if we pay the farmers about 5 cents less than they are getting in the West Indies if we cut out the crop bonuses? And when we have the shortage we have to pay a higher price for the oil or the copra from the West Indies.

What kind of logic is this? Yet we are saying that we have a policy to help the farmers, that we have a sound agricultural policy. Where is the soundness of the policy? This is madness. This is why I say this is utter bankruptcy of a policy where this country is wasting half a million dollars over two years, a quarter million a year roughly, when, with an intelligent policy, I am sure it did not cost the P.P.P. that amount of money a year to subsidise farmers and the consumers.

I was Minister of Trade at one time. When there were shortages we imported soya bean oil and copra from the West Indies. The Government made a small profit on the soya bean oil which balanced the loss from oil from the West Indies. And realizing that situation I remember telling officers once in my Ministry then that if there was any shortage again somebody's head would be rolled; that we must always have a sufficient quantity of oil in stock – buy it, keep it, so that there would be no blackmarketing. Why can that not be done now? We said that we must have a sound policy which will stimulate coconut production in the country and thus the policy came of giving a crop bonus to coconut producers.

This Government comes to this House and tells us that it has a sound policy for agriculture when we are neither subsidizing the farmers nor the consumers and the taxpayers

have to meet a less of quarter million dollars and yet suffer from shortage of oil all the time and have to pay black market prices. Only last night some small traders were telling me that people are willing to go in to the market and pay black market prices rather than have to wait in a line for a whole day at the Guyana Marketing Corporation so as to get oil. Surely the Government should review its policy.

When the union which bargains for coconut workers goes to the employers they say, "We cannot pay". Then they throw the figures at your face. They say, "In the West Indies they are paying 19.2 cents, we are getting 14½". The union took the matter to the Minister and requested that legislation should be made with respect to fixing minimum wages for these unfortunate workers. The Government does not do that, because it is in a dilemma. If it fixes the minimum wage, then the employers would say we want more money for the copra. So it does nothing and so the workers, the farmers and the consumers suffer, and the country goes to the dogs. This is precisely what is happening out of this bankrupt policy. Surely the country deserves better than this.

A loss of a quarter million dollars loss a year in a country which is supposed to be the agricultural base for the whole Caribbean is not good enough. We are importing copra from the West Indies, we should be producing today not only sufficient oil in this country for our own consumption but all the other products so that we could really be supplying the West Indies. We would get duty-free concessions from CARIFTA – it was alleged we would benefit from this – and thereby expand our oils and fats industry. But it does not look as if we are going to get anywhere. This is very bad and I hope that the Government is not going to come back to this House to ask the people of this country to subsidise; any subsidy we will vote for the next time is subsidy to the consumers. *[Interruption by an hon. Member (Government).]* This is not subsidy to consumers. The hon. Minister of Finance says that without this the price of oil will be higher. Of course we understand that. What we are saying is that there was a subsidy on oil which was cheaper than what you were paying the producers for in the P.P.P. time. In other words, the Government bought from the Maharajah and Wieting and Richter oil Mills at a certain

price and sold it to the consumers at a lower price. That is what happened in our times. If the coconut industry was prospering in Guyana, if the Government had an intelligent policy, one could say that this expenditure is justified, one could say that it is a subsidy to the farmers and to the consumers. But the coconut industry is going down. This is being paid not to our producers but to the West Indian producers. If we are subsidizing the consumers, as the Minister claims - -

*[Interruption.]* I am speaking of the subsidy in relation to what was given in the P.P.P. time. I am talking about a policy of keeping the cost of living low, and at the same time helping the national economy. That is what I am talking about. *[Interruption by Mr. Hoyte.]* The hon. Minister like a clever lawyer takes a little point. Anyway I hope the point which I have made has been taken and the Minister of Finance is not going to try to score lawyers' tricks or split hairs. *[Mr. Hoyte: "You don't have common sense."]* There is no common sense in this. Are you satisfied with this policy which involves our subsidizing West Indian oil or coconut production to the tune of a quarter million dollars a year? If you are satisfied, well then that is all right.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** On this question I am speaking merely because the hon. Minister of Finance spoke about water coconuts. Let me explain to him because I do not think he understands this particular field

**5.30 p.m.**

Mr. Chairman, the reason why the coconut industry has fallen, and this is education to the hon. Minister of Finance, is that they are paying the farmers between 13½ and 14½ cents for copra. Some receive as low as 13½ cents per pound and if the farmer can get the picker to pay him ten cents without any problem, he will sell all the coconuts at that young stage. And people buy them as water coconuts in Georgetown.

I am saying the prices paid by Government to the farmers are unreasonable and ridiculous and the Government should make a statement this afternoon in this House announcing an increase in the price of copra, because unless the Government does this, what will continue to happen is that the coconuts will be picked at an early stage.

The Government has failed to give the farmers any assurances that it has any interest in this particular industry and the Government would be well advised to have a talk with the hon. Minister of Communications who knows much more than any other member on the Government Benches about coconut production. I am sure if they were to have a talk with him, he would have given them the same advice.

When the Maharaj Oil Mills were burnt down, while we subsidized Dominica, Trinidad, etc., we were faced with a situation where copra produced in this country could not be sold. We did not have such a trade agreement with the Caribbean countries that in our moment of difficulty they would be able to help us. As I said, and I am emphasising my point, we are helping Trinidad, Jamaica, and so on, to pay their farmers higher prices for their copra while we are neglecting to pay our own farmers right here. The answer is to increase the prices, to a minimum of 20 cents a pound for copra, paid to the farmers of this country.

I have tried to scrutinize to the best of my ability the estimates, but I have not found any provision where oil as such was subsidized during the year 1970. The legend states, "To meet the deficit in the 1970 subsidy and the subsidy estimated for 1971." The legend is very inadequate and one would read this to mean that there was in fact a subsidy on oil shown in the estimates for 1970 and in the 1971 estimates. I did not see this. There was a subsidy of \$207,000 or \$900,000 to the Guyana Marketing Corporation.

The other point I wish to make is that in spite of all this, right now, consumers are without adequate supplies of oil and in spite of the announcement that the Minister is going to appoint inspectors to investigate black-marketing; people are paying black-market prices for oil.

**The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply** (Mr. Green): The question of the subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation is one that has been with us for several years, where the Government and the people attempted to tackle the dilemma with respect to the coconut oil industry. We in the Ministry of Agriculture think we have found the answer and hope that very shortly this will come to an end. Contrary to what the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) said, it is a subsidy to the housewives to ensure that they do not pay more for their oil.

The Ministry is at the moment engaged in an aggressive programme for producing soya bean, peanut, and palm oil, and we hope that the experiments and the planting being done will produce sufficient oil to serve not only the territory but perhaps to have a small export market. The coconut dilemma is one that is known to us for years. There is the question of larceny, there is the question of indiscipline by the average coconut farmer. Then there is the question of indiscipline as far as the use of the earlier product is concerned. As I said, and I wish to emphasise, this is a subsidy to the housewives and the Ministry is engaged in a programme to produce and to find alternative sources of oil.

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**Mr. Lall:** Item 64, Contribution to International Sugar Agreement. The supplementary provision now sought on this Head is \$345. I should like the Minister of Trade to tell us what is the function of this body. What has this body done to protect the sugar market now that the United Kingdom, Britain, is joining the E.E.C. One has to consider the economic instability of the sugar industry. My organization and the hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security have had dialogue time and again in respect of the underemployment of the workers in the sugar industry. Only today, I spoke with the Personnel Director of Bookers, pointing out to him that thirty-seven fathers of children have been out of employment for six weeks now. They have not worked for a cent. What are we doing to protect these workers? Only the other day over 250 workers were given work at Blairmont, job work, task work, piece work, and they were given 78 cents a day.

How can one exist? Let me explain. My hon. Colleague in the House does not know or understand. They give you a task for the day and you are given 78 cents for it. This is what is going on in the sugar industry. We have old workers who are injured who have given 25, 30, 35 years service in the sugar industry, if they receive an injury and get 10 per cent permanent partial disability from the N.I.S. They are refused work by the estate authority. Their services are not counted. I spoke to the hon. Minister of Labour pertaining to this. In this House we had a resolution which was passed unanimously in 1963 calling for severance pay. The hon. Minister tells us that the papers are with the law offices. I am saying that the Ministry is big enough to have a legal adviser. *[Interruption.]*

I was saying that I have confronted the hon. Minister of Labour requesting that the severance pay motion be made law. When will the motion be made law? The Minister said that the papers are with the law officers but I want to tell the House that while the grass is growing the horse is starving. I hope when the severance pay bill comes before this House payment will be retroactive for ten years or from the time the Motion was passed, because this is normal labour code.

I am asking that this Government in voting money for the International Sugar Agreement, should take into consideration the implications of sugar. What will be the position of sugar after the next three or four years? What preparation is the Government making pertaining to our market? What preparation is the Government making to diversify the sugar industry? As I said, there could be many subsidiary industries through the sugar industry – Stockfeed, a cattle industry, poultry – as obtains in Cuba. *[Interruption.]* I am speaking on the head International Sugar Agreement. If you do not understand let the Chairman tell you.

I am just showing, Your Honour, that the workers in the sugar industry are badly off because when the estates are not grinding nearly ten or eleven thousand people are out of employment. My organization and the Minister of Labour are now having dialogue with respect

to getting a minimum take-home pay packet after the non-grinding season. I do hope that the Minister will hasten the legislation so that we can make this a reality.

I drew these things to the attention of the Government because I want the Government not to be *au fait* with what is happening outside of the country but with what is happening inside the country. This is like a powder in the bag and one day it will blow up and you will not be able to control it. I am warning this Government. It is our duty to advise this Government. It might not be the advice this Government wants, but it is the advice it needs. We hope that the Government accepts our advice.

**Dr. Jagan:** I do not want to be long on the subject; my colleague has amused our comrades on the opposite side. I wish to raise this matter on a more serious note with respect to the recent conference in London and the so-called “assurances” given to the Caribbean Commonwealth producers of sugar. We have not been able, reading in the Press, to see that there has been any difference in the position that existed before the Ministers and the delegations went to London. We have not been able to see that there were more specific assurances given.

I am told outside that it was said at the meeting with Mr. Rippon that Britain will be going into the E.C.C. with the existing quotas. But nowhere was this mentioned in any communiqué, no one has read this in any newspaper. If that is so then the Government must tell this House. I think a statement should be issued to the country on what specifically was told to them so that all will know what the position is. My hon. Colleague is quite right – there is a great deal of apprehension about this. If certain assurances were given that Britain will be going into the Common Market with the existing quotas we want to know for how long? Is it only for the period up to 1974 which is the tenure of the existing Commonwealth Agreement. Or is it for a longer period? If not, what is the Government going to do about it? We would like to know all these things. I believe the Government has a duty to this House and to the country, having gone to this International Conference, to come back and initiate a debate so that the House and the country can know what is happening on this very important subject and so that the views of

the Opposition can be expressed so far as this commodity is concerned. The future of this country would be assured so far as it concerns this important item which looms so large in the economy of the country and the welfare of the lives of so many.

5.50 p.m.

**The Minister of Trade**(Mr. Ramsaroop): Briefly, the International Sugar Agreement is an agreement designed to make provision for the sale of Guyana's residual supply of sugar on the world market. As many of us know, Guyana's sugar is sold under three instruments and to one country outside of those instruments. The Commonwealth Sugar Agreement takes care of a large allocation of our tonnage under the negotiated price quota as part of the West Indian quota. Secondly, the United States Sugar Quota Act makes provision for another allocation as part of the West Indian quota, and the last instrument, that is, this agreement, the International Sugar Agreement, which was refashioned in 1968, takes care of whatever remains of the sugar which has not been disposed of via those two sources, in addition to Canada.

It is therefore, in fine, a residual instrument, a very important instrument, because we find last year that sugar was sold through the council, which is the secretariat of the Agreement, and I think it is possible, too, that this year sugar will be sold through that channel.

The question raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is a very relevant question. The communiqué which had been issued subsequent to the meeting with Mr. Geoffrey Rippon, the U.K. Government's Chief Common Market Negotiator has been made public and that communiqué sets out explicitly and clearly, that the United Kingdom has made a moral and specific commitment to preserve the essentials of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement which expires – the Leader of the Opposition correctly says – in December of 1974.

The three essentials of that Agreement are, quantities, price and the last essential, duration, because the Agreement lasts only up to December, 1974, and there is grave anxiety in

the Caribbean today with respect to the destiny of sugar after 1974. It is proposed that in 1975 when the Yaouandé Convention will be re-negotiated, that simultaneous with such re-negotiations, the Agreement will be re-fashioned to make provision for the continuance of the market arrangements under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. Great Britain holds out, by way of her Government and by way of her negotiator, that by that time she would be a full-fledged member and signatory to the Rome Treaty and, therefore, exercising the power of veto, she will have greater powers to ensure a debt and these markets which are now provided for under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement are accommodated.

The position, therefore, in brief, is that those specific and, I say, moral commitments have been made and it is now a question of history proving whether these commitments will be honoured.

**Dr. Jagan:** May I say, since we are not likely to have a debate on this subject, that we cannot depend on the British with their moral commitments. Secondly, Britain today is under pressure, not only from West Indian peoples and Governments but also from the sugar planters in these areas who are British. By 1974 it is quite possible that Tate and Lyle and the other big producers will scuttle their interests in the Caribbean. They are doing so in Jamaica. They have done so in Trinidad where Caroni Ltd. has been sold out to the Government, and by that time the country will find itself not with the allies it has at the moment, the British capitalists, and thus its bargaining position then will be very negligible, not as strong as it is today.

It is a question of what the Government is planning to do in this interval. This is what the Government must come to us with, something concrete to meet this sell out which is bound to come because the British by that time would have been in the Common Market, they would have achieved what they want, and the British sugar planters would have made other arrangements, buying beet sugar interests in Europe.

I heard one person say that by then we may be in a better position because we will get all the quotas in the West Indies because all the West Indian territories are dropping in sugar production. Let me point out that if that is so and we are beginning to put all our eggs in this basket, including getting farmers to drop out from food production and going into cane, we may find then that we are really a one-crop economy and we have neither the British capitalists, the sugar planters, to bargain for us nor the West Indian Governments. Our political position then will be even more desperate than it is at the moment, because we will then be one voice, so to speak, arguing in the wilderness. This requires intelligent planning for the future, and the Government is in the commanding position to plan. We are merely sounding a warning so it will take heed.

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**Mr. Ram Karran:** Items 67 and 68.

**The Chairman:** I should like hon. Members to restrict their comments to the items in the Paper. I myself have been permitting them to wander off the subject matter. I have permitted a certain amount of latitude but I would ask them to confine their remarks to the items under the subject. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Sir, we have a fairly thick part left but if you go through it, you will notice we are approaching that second part of the reserved estimates. There will be really no debate on the items: they are just transfers from one head to another and I think there are only a few items on which members on this side will wish to speak.

Under item 67, sir, you will notice that a number of posts in the Ministry of Communications have been changed back and forth; salary scales have been readjusted. I see the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte) is not in his seat but I wonder whether he is in a position to tell us whether this part of the job evaluation exercise is being done in bits and

pieces. The Government has been in office for six years and it has not made up its mind as to how many Ministries it will have, and the frequent changes that are taking place show up in this part of the estimates, to which I refer as the reserved estimates.

The hon. Minister of Communications might be able to tell us what is the reason for all this reorganization with respect to posts in the Post Office Department.

**6 p.m.**

Moving on to the other part on page 21, item 68, Net Deficit on Transport Services, we are providing \$1 for the inclusion of a post of Supernumerary Assistant Accountant. I wish to sound a note of warning to the Government that the situation is likely to recur where a retired Accountant has got to be brought back into the Transport Services because of the Government's ill-advised policy of not training people to take over.

While on the subject, I should like to enquire what is the policy with respect to promotion at the Transport and Harbours Department. I recall only recently there was a vacancy in one of the workshop offices. The policy of the Transport and Harbours Department, as I know it, is promotion strictly by seniority. I wish to call the names of the people concerned. In the office the principle of promotion by seniority adheres, but we find that when Mr. Owen Camacho the most senior on the list was to be promoted to this post – and I have it in good authority that the hon. Minister of Labour was involved in this dirty trick – the argument was that Mr. Edwards was there already and must be appointed. Mr. Camacho the most senior of the officers was deprived of promotion.

Another vacancy occurred in the Head Office of the Transport and Harbours Department but we heard another argument. It is now political discrimination I do not want to call the names of the officers in this case. What has happened? They say that seniority is the criterion. In the case of Mr. Camacho and Mr. Edwards seniority was not the criterion. Today we are

hearing that the President of the Union, Mr. Langry – “langry” in Hindi means lame –  
*[Interruption.]*

I wish to warn the Government about the situation in the Accounts Section of the Transport and Harbours Department. I have often told the hon. Minister of Communications and other Ministers that when it comes to the Transport and Harbours Department one can be proud of the way the accounts were presented; they are not allowing that to continue. They are allowing a situation where political patronage and racial consideration are going to affect the work of the Department. I can only sound that as a word of warning.

While on this I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Communications to tell us whether it is true that the Government proposes to remove the Head Office of the Transport and Harbours Department.

**The Chairman:** How is that relevant? This is the creation of an additional post of Supernumerary Assistant Accountant.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** The history of the debates on the net deficit on the Transport and Harbours Department is such that the item is merely shown in the general debate; I can refer you to the volume, just the deficit is shown and on that basis all the items are raised. In fact, this section “to provide for the creation”, for instance, is not one of the heads.

But I wish to ask the hon. Minister a short question because I can raise it under other heads under Finance. I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is true that the Government proposes to remove the Transport and Harbours Department Head Office to the Steamer Stelling. I raise it because in the Transport Services a Transport and Harbours Stelling has been set up for the accommodation of passengers and if Your Honour were to go there at the peak hours you would find that there is hardly any accommodation for the travelling public. If it is true and the hon. Minister of Finance who is not in his seat does not deny that it is proposed to

remove the Ministry of Finance to the Transport and Harbours Department Head Office and to push that huge office, its staff and equipment, to the Steamer Stelling I warn the Government that it is going to create chaos in this country particularly in respect of the public, the poor people who have to travel.

**The Minister of Communications** (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Chairman, we all appreciate the cheap entertainment we got from the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran especially knowing now that he is becoming somewhat senile and he tends to forget sometimes when he is being educated.

These are posts which were approved by the Public Service Ministry and the Public Service Commission. It is just regularizing some of these posts and creating new ones. We are building two new post offices and we have to create posts for two new postmasters.

He also wanted to know about the system for promotion at the Transport and Harbours Department. I can assure him that there is a Committee which goes into all the details – efficiency, competence and seniority.

With respect to item 34, this is to accommodate an officer who was seconded to the Mariners Club who was overlooked for promotion during the time he was not there.

**The Chairman:** Page 22.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Item 69.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Persaud the subhead we are dealing with is Personal Emoluments.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Yes, sir. I wish to make some observations on item 69 the regarding on the Fixed Establishment with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1970 inclusive of the post of

Co-ordinator of Surveys from the F13 to the F12 salary scale. I am terribly suspicious of these coordinators especially when they are employed in the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. Most of these coordinators instead of doing work in regard to their employment tend to do a lot of political work; in other words, Government funds are being used to do P.N.C. work. I think the time has come when the Government should stop employing these people especially in the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply because they are not doing anything beneficial to the country.

6.10 p.m.

**Mr. Green:** I have said in this House, and I repeat for the benefit of members of the Opposition, that I am available so that they may enquire instead of arriving here to make themselves look so ridiculous and raise absurd questions. The speaker is talking about a co-ordinator as being a political appointee.

I came to this House some time ago and did not apologise with respect to coordinators and their functions within the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. This is a post for a co-ordinator of surveys. In a large Ministry such as the one under reference, where we have surveyors who operate within the Roads Division, the Hydraulics Division, in hydrometeorology and general surveys, we found in the past that there was no one person who could be considered the top surveyor so that there was duplication of effort and a waste of government funds.

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We often found, for example, that there would be a survey by the Ministry of Agriculture or the Roads Division for a particular project, say on the Essequibo Coast, and in another year or two the hydraulics people would be conducting a survey in a similar geographic area. There was never before proper coordinating services. We asked and we have got permission for the creation of such a post and a senior and a competent officer was recommended and is now functioning in this post.

**Page 24**

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 74.

**Dr. Jagan:** Item 73.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr. Jagan:** Item 73, Grant, University of Guyana. We note that an additional sum of \$800,000 is to be allocated to the University of Guyana. The Government did not say here what is the necessity for this extra amount, whether this is in keeping with the decision announced some time ago that the university will be converted from a night institution to a day institution, from the coming school year beginning September. I wonder if this is what this amount is for, or is it for some other purpose.

Perhaps the Minister will tell us precisely why this amount is listed here or whether it is not for the conversion from night to a day university, whether it is due to the added cost of running the university, in terms perhaps of more staff, more students. I should like to hear from the Minister what this is all about and whether the Government intends to continue in what it has stated, to convert the university, as we have said already, from a night institution to a day institution.

We note, too, from the press that a team of advisers came here and was having consultations with the university about the setting up of a medical faculty. I know the Minister of Health is very keen on this question and we are glad to see that some steps are being taken in this direction. I wonder whether she can tell us how soon it is intended to move in this direction and if this is going to be done very soon.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I merely wish to ask the hon. Minister of Information, to tell us, if she can, what is the position with respect to the Technical Institute, Georgetown, which was given the status and the facility to train Guyanese to the standard of the Ordinary National Certificate? Some time ago, representatives of the Institutes came here and allowed - -

**The Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, we are dealing with subhead 1, Personal Emoluments, and the legend speaks of the creation of additional posts of lecturer.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Yes. Additional posts of lecturer. One would assume that lecturers have to do with examinations and examinations have to do with standards, and that is why I would have to raise it under this Head. I can find another convenient Head, if Your Honour so rules.

**The Chairman:** I shall not further encourage Members to speak on matters irrelevant to the Head.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I thought very carefully and in my own mind it is very clear that this is the Head under which I can raise it because it has to do with lecturers. I want to know whether lecturers of that quality are being employed or will be employed by the Technical Institute in order to train students to the standard not only of the Ordinary National Certificate but to the Higher National Certificate because we want to train engineers, we want the school to develop.

I think I have said enough to give the hon. Minister an opportunity to tell us something, because her predecessor had given us the assurance that in a very short time the Technical Institute would be so geared as to train many of our engineers in this country. The Ordinary National Certificate does not bring you to the level of an engineer and I would like to know if the Government is thinking in this direction. Maybe the hon. Minister has jettisoned the programme and policy of her predecessor.

**The Minister of Education** (Miss Field-Ridley): As regards the grant to the University, last year we granted \$1.5 million. This year the sum of \$1.8 million is needed for normal running costs. As regards the training of engineers, it is not the proper function of the Technical Institute to train engineers now that we have a university.

**Dr. Jagan:** The hon. Minister has not replied to my question as to whether the Government intends to continue with what was proposed some time ago, that is, the conversion from night to day.

**Miss Field-Ridley:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition asked the purpose for granting \$1.8 million to the university. It is to meet normal running costs for this year for the university. Last year it was \$1.5 million, this year they need \$1.8 million for normal running costs.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** The hon. Minister is not very serious about my original question. The question about the type of training at the Technical Institute to the Higher National Certificate level is a different type of engineer to the engineers trained at the University of Guyana, and even at the University of Guyana engineers who can take their associate membership are not being trained. And if, sir, you were to look through the list of employees at the Demerara Bauxite Company, at the Guyana Electricity Corporation, you will notice that the majority of engineers there are people, not with the B.Sc. in engineering but with the Higher National Certificate, which training goes by the way of apprenticeship.

The hon. Minister is probably not very serious in offering an answer to the question, because the Technical Institute, if it is going to play a part in the development of this country, will have to, whether the Minister wants it or not, train engineers of a different type.

**Miss Field-Ridley:** Mr. Chairman, if the hon. Member would use proper terms then one would understand what he is trying to say. An engineer by no stretch of imagination can be trained at the Technical Institute. We train technicians and technologists there. If they are in the field of engineering that is another matter. They do not become qualified as a result of these certificates. This is why we established the University of Guyana to take them one step further. Even at that level they are trained sub-professionals but they are still not professional engineers. I do not see that any of those questions are relevant to any of these Heads under here and I will answer no further irrelevant question

**The Chairman:** Page 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Item 81 and 82.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 81.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** On item 81 I merely wish to refer to (e) of the notes where the legend speaks of 22 posts of staff nurse. Their salaries are being increased from B11 salary scale to B4a. I take it that all of these other regarding have to do with the recent increases which were made to certain categories of the staff including nurses. I wish to ask the hon. Minister, in view of the fact that although some increases have been made, some categories of the nursing staff still appear to be dissatisfied or disgruntled, whether the Ministry or the Government has regarded these increases as final for the time being; or whether the Government is continuing to give consideration to the expressed disgruntlement by certain categories such as this one, staff nurses and student nurses, according to the reports we see in the Press.

Since it is necessary for the health services that the nursing sector which is a key sector of the medical services be satisfied to some extent we would urge the hon. Minister to give further consideration to their points. I should like to know what the present position with respect to these complaints is.

Against item 82, a new item, Training of Technologists, the sum of \$24,000 is provided. All I wish to ask here is how many technologists are being trained now and whether the present complement of trainees would meet our needs. In other words, are we training sufficient numbers of medical technologists so that we can be self-sufficient more or less, bearing in mind not only our present needs, but our needs in future years, taking into account the losses and wastages and that sort of thing.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** The inclusion of a post of Obstetrician on this page gives me the opportunity to ask the hon. Minister of Health if she can give us some information on what is the Government's policy in view of what the hon. Prime Minister said some time ago that all those medical practitioners who had returned to Guyana who had trained on their own and had come to work with us would be given back a part of their training, or their salaries would be reflected in the fact that they were trained at their own expense. He also said that those who had taken loans would have a part of it refunded.

In addition to that, I understand that the hon. Minister allegedly has made a promise that a \$200 a month house allowance would be given to specialists in lieu of some allowance that they get at the moment. May be I have it garbled. I wish the hon. Minister would tell us what amount was promised and when it is going to be made available to these people. They are three, sir: (1) reflection in their salaries the fact that they were trained by themselves without Government scholarship, (2) loans, and (3) consultation fees or allowance or some such arrangement being contemplated by the Government.

**The Minister of Health** (Dr. Talbot): Mr. Chairman, in reply to the question about the permanent nature of the increase in salaries for nurses I would reiterate what was said both publicly and to the nurses that the salary increase was an interim measure and will not affect the results of the job evaluation study. I am not officially informed about any dissatisfaction among the staff nurses. I have, like the hon. Member, read it in the newspapers.

In reply to the question concerning the plan for providing a sufficient number of medical technologists to staff the hospital I should like to say that the whole purpose of the health planning exercise is to provide us with the knowledge of our needs and with the information needed to provide for those needs. We have already a training programme to meet those needs. At the moment there are twenty persons in training in medical technology, all of whom are stationed at the Central Medical Laboratory. It is intended that these technicians will be made available to all of the district hospitals and it is intended that the programme will continue.

In response to the questions raised about Government's policy in terms of the reimbursement for training, I think the appropriate Ministry will have to be informed about those persons who have returned and who have spent for their training. After this has been done then the Prime Minister's promise would be fulfilled.

I am not aware of any promises made by me personally to doctors about housing allowances. I am aware that we are in discussion on this, that the Government Medical Officers' Association has made a recommendation and that the Medical Staff Sub-Committee of the Hospital when I met them last Saturday also made a recommendation, both of which will have to be considered by Cabinet and will have to be taken into consideration in terms of the job evaluation study.

If the hon. Member has been informed that that Minister of Health made a promise, this is certainly misleading information that he has received.

**Pages 30 – 32**

**Mr. Sutton:** Item 84, page 31.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** I would like to speak on item 84, page 32.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER No. 9(2)**

**Mr. Ramsaroop:** Your Honour, before the speaker takes the Floor, I want, with your permission, to move the suspension of Standing Order 9 paragraph (2) relating to the hours of sitting, to enable the discussion to proceed beyond 6.30 p.m.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Standing Order suspended.*

**RESUMPTION OF PROCEEDINGS ON FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2 OF 1971**

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

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Against item 84, Personal Emoluments, on page 32, there is provision for one post of Tailor on the C3 salary scale. I merely wish to make a point that there has been always this recurring problem of the Ministry providing staff with uniforms and we have been told in the past that there are problems concerned with ordering of materials and that sort of thing. But it seems to me this problem is recurring too often and causing undue dissatisfaction among various categories of staff at our various institutions.

I certainly think this matter can be avoided. What is the problem? Is it a shortage of materials or not enough people to make them up? Why cannot we solve this problem and so avoid unnecessary disruptions in our medical institutions? It seems to be a simple problem if due attention is paid to this matter because too often we see in the press that staff at various institutions go on strike because the Ministry has not provided them with the adequate renewal of uniforms and boots, and that sort of thing.

**Mr. Sutton:** Under item 84, Personal Emoluments, page 31, I take the opportunity to ask, in view of the fact that it appears that an effort is being made to add to staff so as to ensure that all sections of the Ministry of Health are given proper attention, whether it has been brought to the attention of the Minister that at the moment there are rumours going around Georgetown that there are several cases of polio which do not appear to have had the attention of the Ministry of Health.

As a result of this, I wonder if the question of the incidence of polio is sufficiently important to the life of the community, that a special officer, if not a department, should be given the responsibility of investigation all these reports, and coordinating action so as to ensure that no case of polio goes unnoticed and everything possible is done to keep this scourge from getting a hold in our community.

**Dr. Talbot:** Mr. Chairman, I am very happy that the hon. Member qualified his statement by saying that rumours are going around. This is not unique in Guyana or anywhere else. We do not need a person especially designated to look for polio or to co-ordinate the work on polio. Polio is a preventable disease. We have taken all steps to prevent the disease in the community. At the moment, I know of no case of polio. We have had no case of polio since 1967. We have had no epidemic since 1962. We have had no deaths since 1962, and, therefore, I think this Government has been able to keep this particular disease under control.

At the moment we are intensifying our campaign against all preventable diseases, polio being one. Last year we immunized about 65 per cent of the community. This year, because we need to give a booster dose in the first year after the immunity has been acquired, we have instituted a campaign to give the booster dose to all those children who are susceptible. At the present time, sir, you will be aware that there is a campaign throughout the schools to give booster doses of polio vaccine to all school children and perhaps this is none of the reasons the rumour is going around.

It does not appear as if there is any need to make a response to the hon. Member, especially in view of our short time, in terms of the problem of uniforms. I suspect that the Ministry of Health or any organization as large as the Ministry of Health will have certain internal problems. It is not a simple problem as the hon. Member well knows, since it was, during his term of office, impossible for him to solve and it was also impossible for his Government in the eight years that they were in office to solve. Therefore, I do not think that he is being very accurate by assigning it a place of simplicity in the scheme of things.

### Page 33

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Item 86. I would like to ask for some explanation from the hon. Minister on the item described as a new item, Expenses, Central Housing and Planning Authority, to enable the payment of salaries, wages, travelling expenses, etc. This has not been shown specifically in the past in our estimates. I wonder whether this has to do with the payment of building inspectors or what staff expenses, will be involved under this subhead.

6.40 p.m.

**The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction**(Mr. David Singh): Mr. Chairman, this is not new staff, this is really to take care of staff that used to be paid out of funds that came to the Central Housing and Planning Authority from its buildings. As a result of the Housing Fund

legislation which was passed late last year, all of the funds from the Central Housing and Planning Authority have now been transferred to the Housing Fund. In fact, since then they receive no income. This is merely to take care of three administrative persons who used to operate in the Central Housing and Planning Authority on income which they got from the various rentals they collected. The source really has dried up as a result of the Housing Fund.

**The Chairman:** Page 34.

**Mr. Lall:** Item 89 is a new item, Supervision of Weighing of Canes on Sugar Estates and the sum of \$39,185 is being sought. We have made a request through the hon. Minister to have three persons assigned to each scale. We have eleven grinding estates in this country which will need thirty-three persons. I had a discussion with the hon. Minister and he actually agreed to implement the system of having thirty-three persons elected by the cane cutters and cane farmers.

This matter is of very great importance to the workers in the sugar industry and the cane farmers because through the weighing of cane several million dollars have been going into the pockets of the employers. If the Government wants to do something meaningful for the sugar workers and the cane farmers then three persons should be at each scale. It will only need about \$50,000. If there is to be industrial peace in this country then Government will see it fit to vote the proper amount to have the scale covered twenty-four hours per day. If you cover it twelve hours per day you are not doing anything at all. A little weight of 140 pounds can give you a difference of two tons. If you want to protect the rights of the workers we are asking that an additional amount be voted and three persons put at each estate to work twenty-four hours.

**The Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Carrington):** Mr. Chairman, the Government is fully conscious of the need for providing more scale checkers on the sugar estates. The unions in the sugar industry made several attempts to correct this situation which

has been causing quite a number of strikes in the sugar industry. But this Government made a positive move to correct the situation by the appointment of scale checkers. This House should know that it is this Government which is providing the funds at the present moment. The first attempt was that the workers should contribute. This did not prove successful. Management was then approached but the Government could not wait on the management to finalise this situation. The Government went ahead to provide the funds to pay the eleven scale checkers. It is our intention to increase this number but first we must have the arrangements finalized with the employers that the industry must pay for such persons since it is not only sugar cane workers involved in this exercise also there are the peasant cane farmers as well, whose interests we must also look into.

We hope to have representatives from the peasant cane farmers and we will have checkers elected from the workers in the field to represent themselves at the scales. But we must first get a final undertaking from the employers that they will foot the bill. At the present moment it is costing the Government \$39,000; we hope to recoup this. In future if we are to have thirty-three scale checkers it will then cost us about \$90,000. We look forward to the support of the unions when this is introduced and hope that there will be no more strikes in this respect, because they will be having their representatives on the spot. What has been happening in the past is that you only had to say that something was wrong with the scales and there was a strike without looking into the matter.

We are satisfied that since we have introduced this system of checkers the situation has improved. We hope to go further by having twenty-two more checkers. We look forward to the co-operation of the workers and the workers' representatives in this respect

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 91.

**Mr. Lall:** Item 91.

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

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I merely wish to ask the hon. Minister what are the functions of a social worker. I see here two posts are being created.

**Mr. Lall:** Item 91, Old age Pensions. The legend states:

“To provide with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1971, inclusive, for the payment of increased rates of Old Age Pension.”

I wonder if we can get some explanation. I do not know that the rates of old age pension have increased. I wonder if the hon. Minister can give us some information in this respect: when, and by how much, have the rates been increased; how much for the pensioner in the rural areas and how much for the pensioner in the urban area.

The other question I should like to raise is that time and time again I had called on the Government to look into the question of withdrawing the means test before old age pensions are granted. If the Government is unwilling to withdraw the means test I am asking that it takes into consideration increasing the amount from \$16 to \$40 because the cost of living has gone up tremendously and it is obvious that a person cannot be measured today on the scale of \$16 per month.

I am therefore appealing to the Government, first of all, to withdraw the means test. This is a progressive government, and any progressive Government, as long as it calls itself progressive, must prove it by deeds. I feel that the Government should withdraw the means test and let old age pension be paid as a reality. Pay old age pensions to old people. This is a Republic, we are not a colony. If the Government is unmindful of withdrawing the means test I am asking that it increase the pension rates.

I ask the same thing as regards the people who are receiving social assistance that some consideration be given and the amount be increased. I know the Government might not think of doing it this year, but if it cannot be raised this year, then the Government should do so next year. I hope the Government will take our plea into consideration and do its best to help the poor.

**Mr. Carrington:** Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran on the question of social worker, we are doing quite a lot of work throughout the Ministry not only in relation to labour but in relation to social security.

We are providing now at the Palms, a section specifically for the rehabilitation of the inmates. We hope to do this by employing persons who would try to rehabilitate them by way of teaching trades and other activities. These two social worker would be attached to the Palms specifically for this purpose.

On the question of an increase in the rates for old age pension, as you know, sir, since the introduction of the Marshal plan the city has been extended and we are considering the cases of certain persons in areas previously beyond Georgetown but which will now come within the Georgetown area. Persons in those areas will be entitled to a higher rate applicable to old age pensions in the Georgetown area.

**Page 44.**

**Mr. Ram Karran:** Item 119, Ministry of Public Corporations. The new Ministry of Public Corporations is being set up. The Government uses this House as a rubber stamp. The Prime Minister gets up, he makes a speech on the air, to the newspapers, or somewhere, and we see it reflected in the Estimates of this House, without any attempt to inform the nation through this appropriate body as to what is being done and the reasons for doing them.

I remember on one occasion when the integration of two departments into one Ministry was being done, a former Government went all the way out to prepare a White Paper so that Members of the Legislature would be fully informed of what was being done. This Government is treating this House in too cavalier a fashion. The Government does not put this House in its proper perspective. These are major policy decisions and I hope that in future when things of this kind are being done, the House will be consulted, I am not saying first, but in a far better way than in being presented with a *fait accompli*.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Chairman, there is no need to consult the House. This is a decision which inheres in the Prime Minister by virtue of the Constitution and, in any case, I announced it in this House on the 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1970. I set out quite clearly the reasons during the course of the Budget Debate.

**Page 46**

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I have examined these items and they are transfers between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Mines and Forests. I would suggest that we go on to item 152.

**The Chairman:** I propose to take pages 46 to 56 inclusive. Are there any questions to be raised? [*Pause*] Hon. Member Mr. Persaud, please continue.

**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** I will deal with pages 56 and 57 at the same time as they are related. On page 56, against item 152, Ministry of Mines and Forests – Geological Surveys and Mines, we see under Fixed Establishment (a), one post of Commissioner of Geological Surveys and Mines on the F6 salary scale, and if we were to go further on to page 57 we would see that there is one post of Commissioner of Lands and Mines on the F8 salary scale. It appears that we have two Commissioners of Mines, but one is called Commissioner of Lands and Mines and the other

is called Commissioner of Surveys and Mines. I should like the hon. Minister to give an explanation so far as these two positions are concerned.

I feel there is no need for two positions, as far as my information goes. The second point I would wish to make is a general point based on the same Head, Mines. I pointed out to the Minister some time ago, that we do not have proper control of our six mining districts. I discovered that although a new Ministry of Mines has been more inspectors of mines, on supervisors of mines, or whatever the Government chooses to call them, have not been provided for in these Estimates, to control our natural resources adequately. This would lead to smuggling whereby the country would probably lose millions of dollars in revenue.

We can turn now to the page because all the remaining pages deal with transfers from one Ministry to another.

**7 p.m.**

The Minister of Mines and Forests (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, with regard to item 152, this is a temporary arrangement. It is necessary it have this post split. We will be having eventually a Commissioner of Lands and a Commissioner of Geological Surveys and Mines. This has not yet been done. We have at present a Commissioner of Lands and Mines. The first post is the post that is proposed and when we have established a Commissioner of Geological Surveys and Mines there will then be a Commissioner of Lands who will be dealing with lands alone.

**The Chandisingh:** Pages 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72.  
Section B. Pages: 1, 2, 3, 4.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Item 17.

**The Chairman:** Proceed.

**Mr. Chandisingh:** Mr. Chairman, on item 17 which deals with the Housing Fund we notice that the sum of \$205,690 is to provide for houses under this new Fund. I wonder if the hon. Minister would give us an explanation as to the type of housing envisaged, approximately how many houses will be built for this sum and whether this sum of \$205,690 is all that the Government has presently made available for Government housing. It seems to be a very small sum in view of the dire need for low income housing. We have made this point on several occasions; I do not want to take up unnecessary time on it. These are some of the questions we would like the hon. Minister to answer

**Mr. David Singh:** Mr. Chairman, this amount of money is really now coming into the Housing Fund and in fact the Housing Fund has been in operation since its creation by legislation. In other words, this is not the only money in the Housing Fund. **[Mr. Ram Karran:** "Where is the rest?"] If you will pay a visit with me, I shall show you where it is being spent. You would not like to go, because you would not like to see. This amount represents excess in collections over advances made from the Treasury pending the passing of the housing legislation. What used to happen before the legislation was passed is that the Treasury would advance the Ministry of Housing "X" dollars which was paid back by the Ministry out of collections made in the Ministry. This represents the excess over a two-year period which is now being put into the Housing Fund which is already in existence.

It is not right to say that this is all the money available for housing. Perhaps I should go a little further and say how the Housing Fund operates to answer what is insinuated in the question asked, that is, that when this money is finished we stop building houses. The question is: How many houses will this build? It is not a question that I can answer because the Housing Fund revolves. Houses are built and they are sold either to hire-purchase buyers or self-help people. Mortgages have been arranged by the Ministry, so the full cost of the house goes back into the Housing Fund and the Fund revolves and the building goes on continuously.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** Sir, I wish to crave your indulgence to speak on item 14. My papers got mixed up.

**The Chairman:** I will allow you but be very brief because we have passed that item.

**Mr. Balchand Persaud:** I am certain that the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply will no doubt appreciate some of the points which I wish to make on item 14. The question of water supply has always been a sore point in our country. I see here the sum of \$60,000 to meet expenditure on providing services at Linden. In other parts of the country there are many problems relating to pure water supply. I wish to draw to the hon. Minister's attention some of the areas that are badly affected and whether he could be in a position to see what can be done to ease this problem which is confronting the people of those areas. In the Cumberland/Sheet Anchor area there is this big problem of water supply. At Kiltern, Brighton and Eversham Villages on the Corentyne, at Black Bush Polder, people are still, in this enlightened age, taking muddy water from trenches to drink. All shallow trenches which were dug during the time when the scheme was prepared have up. As a result, people are suffering tremendously to get a supply of pure water.

On the East Bank of Berbice at Sisters Village there is a grave problem confronting the residents there for pure water supply. On many occasions people have to use their tractors and trailers to go miles down the Berbice River to get sweet water at certain point. There is also this problem at Sandvort in the West Canje area. At Belladrum and Cotton Tree on the West Coast Berbice the pumps are not functioning properly. On the east Bank of the Demerara River at Craig Village and from Eccles to Peter's Hall this grave water problems exists. At Garden of Eden there is this problem. There is a housing scheme but the people are not getting a supply of pure water. On the Essequibo Coast, at the Reliance Housing Scheme, there is this problem of pure water supply. People do not have proper water facilities. At Anna Regina, there is a pump but it is not working efficiently. At the Lima Land Development Scheme there is a water

problem. At Better Success, at Dartmouth Village, there is this water problem where residents have to come out and get trickles of water.

7.10 p.m.

I suppose that because of this grave problem in pure water supply, the hon. Minister has thought it best to set up a water authority. I hope that when setting up this water authority, the hon. Minister will give consideration to this proposal, that there be representation from the local authorities so that the Minister can be aware of all the problems confronting the people. I hope the hon. Minister will not think in terms of coordinating, because this would not solve the problem.

If the Minister is serious and he can be properly advised, I say there is urgent need for the Government to tackle the problem, not only concentrating on certain areas where there is need water, but also looking at other areas that are equally important. There should be a survey as quickly as possible so that pure water can be available at every person's home.

**Mr. Green:** The legend states, "To meet expenditure on providing services at Linden." We need this sum in addition to the initial sum in order to ensure that the existing system continues to work before the new scheme becomes a reality.

My friend across the Table seems willing to make cheap publicity and even if I were to indulge in the indiscipline of not dealing specifically with the subject out of his own lips came the truth on two occasions during his geographic excursion. He said that shallow wells were dug, and people are indeed suffering. Shallow wells were dug during the regime of the P.P.P. and this is indicative of destitute planning.

The P.P.P. Government was told that on the coastal belt, you cannot dig shallow wells. It persisted and had shallow wells dug in areas that it knew could not least more than a few

months. Funds were wasted in this direction. The present difficulty in the pure water supply is as a result of bad and destitute planning by the P.P.P. a few years ago. We attempted to solve this, and this is an expensive exercise, but we are going as quickly as humanly possible.

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**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Items 20 to 23. The United Nations carried out forest evaluation some two years ago and the report should be in the possession of the Minister. I notice there is a provision here for a continuation of work on the evaluation of the forests. Can the hon. Minister give us an explanation? There has been indiscriminate cutting down of our trees in the forests because of the lack of supervision on the part of the Ministry concerned. I am not blaming the present Minister. I merely want to refer to the position in 1969, because we have been pushing only two species of wood, greenheart and crabwood. The Report states: "Fortunately for the lumber industry, the demand from the local building industry continues to outstrip supply. With depressed exports, were it not for the building boom in Guyana, sawmillers would be in serious trouble."

The fact is, we are unable to supply our local sawmillers with adequate supplies of wood, although we have the potential in the country. We are talking about clay. The hon. Minister ought to look carefully at the forest industry and think of other species. In the Essequibo division, there was no production of silverballi and several other species of wood, but nobody can really explore and exploit them.

**Mr. Jack:** The provision of \$50,000 is to continue the investigation which has already started. With regard to the statement of the utilization of only certain species of wood and the necessity of enlarging the number of woods in use in Guyana, I am happy to be able to assure my

hon. Friend that what he is suggesting that the Ministry should do, we have already decided to do.

What we have learned is that it is necessary for greater emphasis to be placed on marketing, and our officers are investigation the feasibility of having agents for marketing our woods abroad. We also have in process an investigation of the Upper Demerara River area and we expect the United Nations team will be here shortly to look into the feasibility of establishing a timber complex in that area.

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**Mr. R.D. Persaud:** Would the hon. Minister enlighten us on the type of investigation going on in the bauxite industry? We are passing \$125,000 and we are entitled to ask.

7.20 p.m.

**Mr. Jack:** Mr. Chairman, we have investigations which will take place during the time of negotiations. We have also got investigations taking place into all aspects of the bauxite industry starting from production and ending at marketing. If we were to go into all these details it would carry us to midnight and would not be in the interest of the House at this stage.

**The Chairman:** Section "C". This Schedule is for the information of the National Assembly. Pages 1, 2, 3, 4. Hon. Members, this completes consideration of all the items.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Hoyte:** I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has come to a Resolution, and I now move that this Assembly do agree with the Committee in its Resolution.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**Mr. Ramsaroop:** Your Honour, there is another Motion tabled in the name of my colleague the hon. Minister of Finance. I wonder if we can implore you to dispose of this bit of business today.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** One cannot, by any stretch of imagination, regard the losses of cash and stores, most of which losses are under investigation by the Police, as a non-controversial matter. Nothing could go wrong if that Motion is taken along with the Financial Paper for \$6 million tomorrow. There will be enough time tomorrow.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the House would you move the Adjournment of the House? I think that hon. Members are tired.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Resolved,** That this National Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1971 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. [**The Minister of Trade (Leader of the House)**]

*Adjourned accordingly at 7.25 p.m.*

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