

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2018) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

106TH Sitting

Monday, 10TH December, 2018

Assembly convened at 10.50 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave granted to Members

Hon. Members, leave has been granted, from today's sitting, for the Hon. Dr. Bheri Ramsaran to be absent.

Letter by Hon. Ms. Teixeira

Hon. Members, this morning I received a letter from the Hon. Ms. Gail Teixeira; a letter which raises a number of issues of major importance to the House as a whole. I could not reply to Ms. Teixeira's letter given the very short time in which it was sent to me, and, also, because the contents of the letter require more than just a very quick response. It is a letter to which I shall respond in due course, later on this week.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Reports were laid:

- (1) The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment of First Schedule) Regulations 2018 – No. 6 of 2018; and
- (2) The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations 2018 – No. 7 of 2018.
[Minister of Public Security].
- (3) The Excise Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2018 – No. 8 of 2018.
- (4) The Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule II) Order 2018 – No. 48 of 2018
[Minister of Finance].

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

For Written Replies.

BENEFITS GUYANA STANDS TO GAIN FROM OVERSEAS TRIPS UNDERTAKEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

Ms. Teixeira:

- (1) Number of trips the President has taken between May 16th, 2015 and October, 2018?
- (2) What are the costs associated with each overseas trip, including the size and members of the delegations, including spouses, undertaken by the President for the same period?
- (3) The immediate and medium-term benefits to Guyana associated with each of the overseas trips undertaken by the president and his delegations since taking office in May 16, 2015 to October 18, 2018.
- (4) What actual benefits has Guyana gained in 2018 from each of the overseas trips undertaken by the President and his delegations from time of taking office to October 18, 2018?

Minister of State [Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon]: The answers to questions 1 and 2 are as follows:

President David Granger completed thirty-seven (37) overseas trips between May 16, 2015 and November, 2018 as follows:

2015

During 2015, President Granger completed twelve (11) overseas trips at a total cost of MILLION G\$57,534300.00

2016

During 2016, President Granger completed eight (8) overseas trips at a total cost of MILLION G\$44373,029.00

2017

During 2017, President Granger completed eight (8) overseas trips at a total cost of MILLION G\$42,760,482.00

2018

During 2018, President Granger completed ten (10) overseas trips at a total cost of MILLION G\$64,431,261.00

Total cost MILLION G\$209,499223.00

TABLE WITH DETAILS OF TRIPS, COSTS AND DELEGATIONS ATTACHED.

| 2015 | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|--|
| # OF TRIPS | CP# | COUNTRY VISITED | DATE | US\$ | G\$ | TOTAL G\$ | # OF DELEGATION | MEMBERS OF DELEGATION |
| 1 | CP(2015)6:2:U | New York | June 12- 14 | 13,900.00 | 655,387.00 | | 2 | His Excellency David Granger and Mr. Shawn Austin |
| 2 | CP(2015)6:5:A | BARBADOS | JULY 2 - 4 | 23,758.00 | 1,728,624.00 | | 10 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, His Excellency Keith George, Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Mr. Neville Totaram, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Dwayne Carter, Ms. Sandra Prince, Ms. Jenelle Willabus |
| 3 | CP(2015)7:2:A | ETHIOPIA | JULY 13- 16 | 26,094.00 | 444,648.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, His Excellency George Talbot, Mr. Troy Torrington, Mr. William Cox |
| 4 | CP(2015)7:3:A | BRAZIL | JULY 17 - 17 | 11,925.00 | 4,529,988.00 | | 6 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, His Excellency Keith George, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Dwayne Carter |
| 5 | CP(2015)7:4:A | WASHINGTON, D.C. | JULY 23 - 25 | 5,500.00 | 160,000.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, Brigadier Mark Phillips, Mjr. Dwayne Carter, Mr. William Cox |
| 6 | CP(2015)8:1:A | T & T | JULY 31 - 31 | 5,500.00 | 160,000.00 | | 2 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox |
| 7 | CP(2015)8:2:A | PARAMARIBO | AUG 12 - 12 | 8,250.00 | 1,758,500.00 | | 7 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Dwayne Carter, Mr. Brian Smith, His Excellency Keith George |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|----|---|
| 8 | CP(2015)8:4:A | T & T | AUG 23 - 27 | 5,506.00 | 180,030.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mr. John Barker, Mrs. June Ann Liverpool |
| 9 | CP(2015)9:3:A | CANADA | SEPT. 11- 13 | 7,175.00 | 276,135.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mr. John Barker, Hon. Amna Ally |
| 10 | CP(2015)9:4:A | NEW YORK | SEPT. 23- 30 | 37,940.00 | 2,215,351.00 | | 10 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, His Excellency Keith George, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Dwayne Carter, Ms. Jenelle Carter, Mr. Neil Marks, Ms. Donnette Streete |
| 11 | CP(2015)11:3: A | MALTA | NOV. 27- 29 | 21,350.00 | 9,375,669.00 | | 9 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, His Excellency Keith George, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Dwayne Carter, Ms. Donnette Streete, Ms. Lloyd Garrett |
| | | SUB-TOTAL | | 166,898.00 | 21,484,332.00 | | | |

| # OF TRIPS | CP# | COUNTRY VISITED | DATE | US\$ | G\$ | TOTAL G\$ | # OF DELEGATION | MEMBERS OF DELEGATION |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|---|
| 2016 | | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | CP(2016)2:2:A | BELIZE | FEB 16- 17 | 12,312.00 | 4,457,992.00 | | 8 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Mr. Neville Totaram, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Dwayne Carter, Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Ms. Donnette Streete |
| 2 | CP(2016)4:1:T | TRINIDAD | APRIL 8 - 8 | 1,375.00 | 163,841.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Mr. Javon |
| 3 | CP(2016)4:2:G | NEW YORK | APR 22 - 22 | 5,900.00 | 861,250.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Mr. Collin |
| 4 | CP(2016)4:4:C | WASHINGTON | MAY 3 - 4 | 8,595.00 | 1,501,330.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Mr. John Barker |
| 5 | CP(2016)6:1:A | CUBA | JUNE 2 -4 | 13,625.00 | 530,540.00 | | 6 | His Excellency David Granger, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Mr. William Cox, Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Ms. Malvie Talbot, Mr. Javon Hamer |
| 6 | CP(2016)9:2:A | UN. NY | SEPT 20 - 26 | 42,994.00 | 2,338,640.00 | | 12 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Sir Shridatt Ramphal, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Her Excellency Cheryl Miles, Ms. Donnette Streete, Mr. Jason Fields, Mr. William Cox, Ms. Lloyd Garrett, Mjr. Mark St. Claire, Mr. John Barker |

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|---|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | CP(2016)11:2:H | MOROCCO | NOV 7 - 18 | 23,700.00 | 6,379,460.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Mr. Javon Hamer, Ms. Loyda Garrett |
| 8 | CP(2016)11:7:A | BARBADOS | NOV 29 - 30 | 11,735.00 | 2,569,000.00 | | 8 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mr. Mark Archer, Mr. Charlene Phoenix, Ms. Malvie Talbot, Ms. Loyda Garrett, Mjr. Mark St. Claire, Mr. John Barker, Mr. Latchman Singh |
| | | SUB-TOTAL | | 120,236.00 | 18,802,053.00 | 44,773,029.00 | | |

| # OF TRIPS | CP# | COUNTRY VISITED | DATE | US\$ | | TOTAL G\$ | # OF DELEGATION | MEMBERS OF DELEGATION |
|------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|---|
| | | | | | | | | 2017 |
| 1 | CP(2017)5 1:5:A | BELGIUM | JUNE 7 - 8 | 16,522.00 | 8,264,660.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 2 | CP(2017)6 2:4:A | GRENADA | JULY 4 - 6 | 15,620.00 | 2,277,500.00 | | 12 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Hon. Dawn Hastings-Williams, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Ms. Choo An Yin, Col. Francis Abraham, Mr. William Cox, Ms. Lloyd Garrett, Mjr. Mark St. Claire, Mr. John Barker, Mr. Latchman Singh |
| 3 | CP(2017)8 3:2:A | T & T | AUG 13 - 15 | 3,675.00 | 360,323.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mr. John Barker |
| 4 | CP(2017)9 4:2:A | NEW YORK | SEPT 18 - 25 | 51,785.00 | 3,524,323.00 | | 9 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Hon. Dawn Hastings-Williams, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Mr. Troy Torrington, Mr. William Cox, Ms. Lloyd Garrett, Mjr. Mark St. Claire, |
| 5 | CP(2017)1 5:0:3:A | BELIZE | OCTOBER 25 - 25 | 7,700.00 | 2,386,172.00 | | 4 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|--------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 6 | CP(2017)1 1:1:B | T & T | NOVEM 8-10 | 3,310.00 | 356,312.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 7 | CP(2017)1 1:4:1 | KENYA | DEC 5- 6 | 7,250.00 | 300,000.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 8 | CP(2017)1 2:1:PP | BRAZIL | DEC. 21 - 22 | 9,375.00 | 400,000.00 | | 9 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Hon. Raphael Trotman, Hon. David Patterson, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Ms. Sondra Cheong, Mr. William Cox, Ms. Lloyd Garrett, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| SUB-TOTAL | | | | 115,237.00 | 17,869,290.00 | 42,760,482.00 | | |

| # OF TRIPS | CP# | COUNTRY VISITED | DATE | US\$ | G\$ | TOTAL G\$ | # OF DELEGATION | MEMBERS OF DELEGATION |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|--|
| 2018 | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | CP(2018)2:3:A | HAITI | FEB 26 - 27 | 10,110.00 | 2,817,395.00 | | 7 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Ms. Keishanna Sullivan, Mr. William Cox, Ms. Lloyd Garrett, Col. Paul Arthur |
| 2 | CP(2018)3:1:A | INDIA | MARCH 10 - 11 | 9,875.00 | 7,338,792.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Col. Paul Arthur |
| 3 | CP(2018)3:3:A | BRAZIL | MARCH 19 - 19 | 10,200.00 | 5,062,175.00 | | 8 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Raphael Trotman, Hon. Ronald Bulkan, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Ms. Ndibi Ceres-Schwiers Mr. William Cox, Ms. Lloyd Garrett, Col. Paul Arthur |
| 4 | CP(2018)4:2:A | LONDON, UK | APRIL 16 -20 | 26,850.00 | 12,566,944.00 | | 7 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Mr. Troy Torrington, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 5 | CP(2018)5:3:A | T & T | MAY 20 - 24 | 5,875.00 | 391,464.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 6 | CP(2018)6:4:A | VIETNAM | JUNE 25 - 30 | 27,325.00 | 200,000.00 | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 7 | CP(2018)7:1:A | JAMAICA | JULY 4- 6 | 23,340.00 | 3,326,816.00 | | 7 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Ambassador Audrey Waddell, Her Excellency Charlene Phoenix, Ms. Keisha Sullivan, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |

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|------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 8 | CP(2018)9:1:A | BARBADOS | SEPT 5-5 | 7,488.00 | 770,259.00 | | 6 | His Excellency David Granger, Hon. Carl Greenidge, Her Excellency Charlene Phoenix, Mr. Sherwin Naughton, Mr. William Cox, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 9 | CP(2018)10:4:B | T & T | OCTOBER 21 - 23 | 7,007.00 | | | 3 | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| 10 | CP(2018)10:5:A | CUBA | OCT 30 - NOV 10 | 19,881.70 | | | | His Excellency David Granger, First Lady Sandra Granger, Mjr. Mark St. Claire |
| SUB-TOTAL | | | | 147,951.70 | 32,473,845.00 | 64,431,412.20 | | |
| 37 | GRAND | | | 550,322.70 | 90,629,520.00 | 209,499,223.20 | | |

(3) Since taking office H.E President David Granger has attended several regional and international conferences as part of the Government overall policy of advancing Guyana's foreign policy objectives in respect of multilateral and specific bilateral issues at the highest level. Among these were the MERCOSUR Summits; the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meetings; the Conferences of CARICOM Heads of Government; the Meetings of the Heads of State and Government of the Association of Caribbean States; UNASUR Summits; Summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States; United Nations General Assembly Meetings; Meetings of the Members of the International Solar Alliance; among others.

The President also responded positively to the invitations by our close friends and partners to undertake official and state visits.

This has led to increased and heightened collaboration in several areas between Guyana and those countries, and organizations.

(4) The attendance at the international conferences and meetings listed, provided His Excellency and delegations with an opportunity to bring to the attention of the global community, issues of concern to Guyana. Our interests were also taken into account in the outcome documents, especially those relating to the preservation of our sovereignty and territorial integrity, climate change, the 2030 development agenda among others. The President's engagements with the United Nations Secretary General contributed also to the decision to refer the longstanding border controversy with Venezuela to the International Court of Justice for final settlement.

Participation in the high-level encounters provided the President with the opportunity to meet world leaders and to discuss ways to elevate our bilateral cooperation programmes. As a consequence of these engagements Guyana has received additional support for its Green State Development Strategy through funding for renewable energy projects. Several offers were also received in the area of capacity building for Guyana's emerging oil and gas sector from various countries.

In 2018, Guyana became a founding member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and will be benefitting from expertise, training and equipment as a result of its membership. This is in keeping with government's focus on developing alternative sources of energy.

Other overseas trips were made to the World Water Forum in Brasilia, as well as the Global Environment Facility Assembly in Vietnam.

Issues pertaining to Guyana as it relates to these two key issues were advanced.

It must be recognized that Guyana, as a small member of the International Community must ensure that it is represented, and its voice heard, if it is to be respected and taken seriously.”

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND FIRST READING

The following Bills were presented and read for the first time:

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 16/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act.” *[Minister of Public Security]*

PROPERTY TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 17/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Property Tax Act.”

CAPITAL GAINS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 18/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Capital Gains Tax Act.”

TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 19/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Tax Act.”

INTOXICATING LIQUOR LICENSING (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 -Bill No. 20/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Act.”

THE CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 21/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Customs Act.”

VALUE-ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 22/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Value-Added Tax Act.”

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 23/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Income Tax Act.”

INCOME TAX (IN AID OF INDUSTRY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 24/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Income Tax (In Aid of Industry) Act.”

CORPORATION TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018 – Bill No. 25/2018

A BILL intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Corporation Tax Act.”

[Minister of Finance]

Ms. Teixeira: We do not have copies of some of these Bills that the Minister is presenting. Can we be promised that we will get them by the end of today?

Mr. Speaker: I apologise to the Assembly, because I should have informed the Assembly that the Bills which are not available, I think two of them have been circulated, will be made available before or during the sitting today. I thank you.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2019

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for any financial year should be laid before the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2018 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2018-11-26.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2019, of a total sum of two hundred and seventy seven billion, four hundred and thirty one million, nine hundred and sixty eight thousand dollars (**\$277,431,968,000**), **excluding twenty three billion, two hundred and eighty seven million, and forty three thousand dollars (\$23,287,043,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.

[Minister of Finance]

Mr. Speaker: I think, Hon. Members, before we proceed, you will observe that we are starting much later than the list provided for. It is not a consolation to tell you that the delay was unavoidable, but that was so.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman:

We are now in Committee of Supply and we will proceed in accordance with the schedule of the Business Sub-Committee. Members will take Volume 1 of their Estimates and turn to pages 36 and 37. The intention is to deal with current estimates, and after that is put then we will deal with capital estimates with respect to the same agency. When we are through with that then we will move to the second. We hope that this might prove a little more convenient for us, we are not sure, but we will decide and determine, at the end of our consideration of the Estimates, whether this is a better practice than the one we have embraced hitherto.

Agency 05: Ministry of Presidency

Current Expenditure

Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration - \$2,088,288,000

11.05 a.m.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister tell the House what are the designations and salaries of the four new contracted employees?

Minister of State [Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon]: Mr. Chairman, there has been no increase. In fact, there is a variance of minus 14%, because staff were actually moved in the line. There are no new employees here to be dealt with.

Bishop Edghill: In 2018, the table regarding staffing details, there were 213 contracted employees, in 2019 there are 217 contracted employees, which shows an increase of four contracted employees. We are asking the Hon. Minister, could he explain to the House what the designations and the salaries of the four new contracted employees are?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There are no new employees here. In fact, the figures would show a reduction. In fact, rather than 217 contracted employees, there are 202 contracted employees, because 15 of these staff actually moved from this Ministry to the Department of the Environment.

Ms. Teixeira: I am asking the Hon. Member, that based on his submission just now, whether, the hon. Member is saying that the table that we have in front of us in the document for Programme 051 incorrect, because it states 2014 to 2017?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes. In fact, it is a typographical error.

Ms. Teixeira: I think it is more than a typographical error.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is a typographical error.

Mr. Chairman: Have you answered the question which was put?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Minister tell the House if his Ministry is in compliance with the Public Service Commission Circular No. 1 of 2017, dated 7th February, 2017, as it relates to these contracted employees? Could he indicate how many of these contracted employees are over the age of 45?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I can say to you that we are in compliance and the contracted employees there is really no stipulation with respect to age. There are stipulations with persons who are joining the fixed establishment, but the contracted employees are persons who provides a particular skill that we are looking for, therefore that requirement of being under the age of 45 is not necessarily so.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I referred to the Public Service Commission's circular and I am seeking to establish that the Ministry of the Presidency is complying with the policy direction, that no matter what the skill is, once the persons to be employed are in keeping with this policy direction that they are placed on the fixed establishment. At the Ministry of the Presidency there is 200 contracted employees, but the Hon. Minister just indicated two, because there is a mistake in the book and it is not 217 contracted employees that is on the contracted list. Could he say exactly

why they have not been transferred to the fixed establishment and why they are still contracted employees?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is an ongoing process and as the works of the Department of the Public Service and the Public Service Commission are trying to get that done. Certainly, as I said, they have a requirement for this service in the state for contracted employees. In fact, the circular did not specifically state that you cannot employ contracted employees and that they must be below the age of 45.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: The revised 2018 is \$795,205,000 and for 2019, it is proposed or projected to be \$686,464,000. Could the Hon. Member advise us when was the cut-off date so that we would be able to know what the revised expenditure was for 2018? It is 10th November and not the end of the year. The books are not closed. Could you advise this House how was this figure placed in the book, because obviously it was from sources which had to be from the Government? How are you able to project that the revised budget was \$795,205,000 when the year has not yet ended?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is a question I believe the Minister of Finance would probably be better equipped to answer, but certainly that is not one which I will be able to answer, Hon. Member.

Ms. Teixeira: Earlier an error was pointed out by the Hon. Member. Could the Hon. Member and the Minister of Finance please check, because there seems to be another error in the document that is before us.

In the right column on page 36, the sum for Budget 2019 is \$2,088,288,000. On page 37 on the right-hand column, the same column that states Budget 2019 there is a sum of \$2,112,351,000. It is an error, because when you go to the earlier documents in the summaries that are presented for each year the figure is correct in the original on page 36 and not on page 37.

In other words, the House may be asked, I am not prejudging, to approve a budget which is not what is in the books here. What the House is being asked to approve is \$2,088,288,000 and not \$2,112,351,000. That figure belongs to 2018 according to the figures that are before us.

Minister of Finance [Mr. Winston Jordan]: Mr. Chairman, I cannot follow the Hon. Member. If you look at Budget 2019, the figure of \$2,088,288,000 plus \$24,063,000 gives you the figure on page 37 of \$2,112,35,000 and that column states, “Grand Total (Appropriated Current & Statutory)”.

Mr. Chairman: Is there more you wish to say, Hon. Member?

Mr. Jordan: No, Sir. I would only unless the Hon. Member has another clarification.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, Sir. Then maybe the book is wrong in all the other areas because if you check randomly, any programme detail, the last right-hand column of the budget marked “Budget 2019” under “Total Appropriated Current Expenditure” has a figure. When you turn to the next page of the same programme and “Grand Total (Appropriated Current & Statutory)”, you come up to the same figure. Based on what the Minister is saying to us is that the Minister may be obtuse, but I am trying to point out...

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

...what is an error and I would hope that the Minister would listen carefully. Mr. Chairman, could I start over to be clearer? Could I help the Minister out? Would you mind? He is having difficulty understanding.

Mr. Chairman: I thought you were asking questions.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, I am.

Mr. Chairman: Well, please go ahead and ask your question.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, if you go to page 36, the total appropriated...

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we are going to get off course if we do it this way. The Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira is on the floor and is asking questions.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I believe that any other Member who wishes to ask questions, they can do so at an appropriate time. They can address the question to the Minister of Finance. Hon. Minister of Finance, Ms. Teixeira, is on the floor. Do you wish to add to what she has said?

Mr. Jordan: Yes, Sir. Mr. Chairman, if you can follow your book on page 36, there is a column which states “Total Appropriated Current Expenditure”. Do you follow? It is in bold print. The first column states, “Actual 2017” and that figure for total appropriated current expenditure is \$2,102,526,000. Just above that, there is a column called “Total Statutory Expenditure”.

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the Minister of Finance is seeking to answer a question and to offer explanations. Every one of us I hope would have a copy of the Estimates, Volume 1. I have been able to find it on page 36 of my book.

Mr. Jordan: Sir, can the individual just shut his mouth.

Mr. Chairman: I have been able to find it on page 36. No, Mr. Jordan.

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Jordan: Yes, Sir. If we go just above that figure staying on “Actual 2017” ...

Mr. Chairman: I will the Hon. Members not to venture beyond the finance. Let us not deal with the English, the descriptive words and uncomplimentary remarks. Let us stay and try to help one another here. Please proceed.

Mr. Jordan: If we stay on that column and just above, there is row marked “Total Statutory Expenditure” and the amount there is \$23,650,000. Now, if we add \$23,650,000 to \$2,102,526,000 we come to page 37 where right down to the bottom there is a total marked “Grand Total (Appropriated Current and Statutory)” and if you add those two numbers it will sum \$2,126,176,000. If you do that for every row and every column the numbers will be correct.

11.20 a.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Minister then clarify that the statutory which brings up the difference, which I was pointing out, relates to the salary of the President?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, yes it does.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6294 - Other: Sir, I would like to point out that in 2018 the actual and the budgeted is exactly the same and the budgeted for 2019 is also exactly the same. Could the Hon. Minister give us the breakdown of the expenditure under this line item as to how we could have arrived at these exact and precise numbers?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the actual sum is the same as in the previous year. This allocation basically remains the same as 2018 and some of the activities on this line are as follows; gifts and awards, receptions hosted in the interest of national development priorities, and any other purchases.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I think I asked the Hon. Minister, for the breakdown, because these numbers are precise, budgeted, expended and requested now. We would like to have the breakdown. How would this arrive at the precise number?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, if the Hon. Member requires that, I could provide him with that information at a later stage, but certainly not this morning.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284 - Other: Again, this problem of revised numbers when the year is not ended. The figure of 2018 Budgeted \$169,364,000 and the revised figures are exactly the same. There has been an increase to \$170 million, a small increase. Could the Minister please advise on what are the details regarding line item 6284 – Other?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, this allocation deals with the publishing of the official gazette, payment for advertisements, payment for sumptuary, other services such as the installation of signs and banners, *et cetera*.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to make a clarification.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, Minister. Please proceed.

Mr. Jordan: I guess this question, how did we get the 2018 numbers, is going to come up all the time. I just want to clarify it right now. The 2018 numbers are based on the very latest actions plus the projections for December.

If that changes it would be known in the Reconciliation Report that is laid in this House usually by the end of the first quarter. The numbers in employment cost would not include the increases in salaries this year, those would be met from the Ministry of Finance's vote.

However, for 2019 the agencies would have had to budget for the increases that were provided from the Ministry of Finances vote in 2018. They will have to provide for those amounts in 2019. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Teixeira: It may be useful for the Hon. Minister to advise, what was the cut-off date, because in order to prepare the books and the Budget one had to have a cut-off date?

Mr. Jordan: The cut-off date would most likely have been the end of October using our Ministry of Finance Integrated Financial Management System (IFMAS) computers that we have there. We have the salaries of virtually everybody in the public service that are paid from Ministry of Finance.

Ms. Teixeira: When the Minister says around the end of the month, it disturbs me. We are dealing with actual figures. This is not a political debate, it is a financial debate. Therefore, I would have thought the Minister would have said precisely 'x' date.

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Teixeira, are you finish?

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Minister provide the exact date? Thank you.

Mr. Jordan: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Actual numbers take place two years after the Auditor General would have audited. These numbers if you look under 2018, the column references revised. The actual numbers are in 2017. That is after the Auditor General would have audited 2017, the number would appear here. The year 2018 which is the year that we are in now, these are revised. This is our best estimate based on October 2018 of what the picture would be at the end of 2018.

If 10 months of the year is not sufficient to make a forecast of what the picture would be at the end of the year, I am not sure... short of waiting 31st December and even then, you do not even get an actual figure, because you still have shifting and movements and somebody might have resigned and so on.

This is the best estimate of the position of employment cost of what the position will be at the end of 2018. The Reconciliation Report that is presented to this House in 2019 will show what were the true figures at the end of 2018. Thank you, Sir.

Ms. Teixeira: The Hon. Minister has talked about reasonable estimate. Does that mean, Sir, that when you have columns such as, let me give an example, the one I just did at line item 6284 – Other: The revised figure and the budgeted figure for 2018 are the same. If you have a cut-off date sometime in October and the figure is the same as what you projected, does that mean that the subhead has been exhausted and therefore maybe a supplementary or may have been a need for a supplementary, or it would be virement from other heads? We are having difficulties with the figures based on this. I could accept your view that you estimated, and you projected, but the problem is when the figures are exactly the same and the year has not been finished. That poses new problems and questions. Could you enlighten us on this?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I think these initial exchanges basically set the tone for the remainder of the consideration of these estimates, because they are dealing with some issues that general in nature. The question that the Hon. Member asked, I could only say that the actual sums, the convergence of what is actual and what is projected is that this is our best estimate at this point in time.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6321- Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: the figure has increased by over \$100 million and when we turn to page 430, we noticed that although the figure has increase, three entities have either been removed and two received nothing. We have noted the Integrity Commission has been moved to another place. However, the Office of the Commission of Information is provided with \$0.00. Does that mean that the post has been abolished? Is it the case that we will no longer have an Office of the Commission of Information?

Secondly, we noticed the absence of the Civil Defence Commission (CDC). The Civil Defence Commission has been removed from this subhead. Could the Minister clarify?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The Civil Defence Commission has been moved to the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) and it is being catered for under the Guyana Defence Force allocations. The Commissioner of Information, I think the Prime Minister, when he comes about to answer will deal with the Commissioner of Information. We have made no allocation for that.

The Integrity Commission, the Prime Minister will deal with that as well. It is allocation made under his agency for that. The increases amount to about 36% of what was budgeted for in 2018. We are catering here for an increase as a result of the higher operational cost for the Gaming Authority for the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, in particular, and the Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: The Gaming Authority has had an allocation of an increase of \$19 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what are the activates the Gaming Authority would undertake in 2019 that would be different to 2018? Does the Gaming Authority have an increase of staff? If there is an increase of staff, what are the designations and the salaries of those persons who have been employed?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There are some very good questions by the Hon. Member. I wish to state that the Gaming Authority is now better equip. It is basically equipping it better to deal with compliance in this sector of gaming. This is a very wide sector. In fact, there is still quite a lot of looseness in the sector such as people who try to operate without licences. The intention, really, is to ensure that the compliance with the law is enforced.

In fact, there is going to be some new legislation which is now receiving the attention of the Attorney General which will regulate that sector in a better way. This is also intended to bring additional staff at the authority.

In fact, right now we have a very small staff and they are multitasking by doing two and three tasks. We believe that in a modern authority, state, sector, the tasks need to be separated which they are to perform. This is really why we see this increase. If the Hon. Member request, I could actually provide him with the information with respect to what we are going to pay them and their designations. I could give you that in writing today.

Bishop Edghill: I thank the Hon. Member for providing information, Mr. Chairman. I observed that he indicated that they will be hiring. Could the Minister indicate if the policy of budgeting for only what is in place has changed and are we now budgeting for prospective hiring?

11.35 a.m.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the allocation caters for current staff. In fact, there had to be a revision in the amount that was required. That will deal with the revision in the amount. As I said, I am prepared to provide all of the details on every item and every line to the Hon. Member, because we believe that it is important all understand what it is that we are doing and that there is nothing for us to hide. I am going to provide all of that information today.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6255- Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: The revised figures of 2018 is \$100,957,000, then we are budgeting a further \$29,300,000. Might I ask the Hon. Minister which project are these moneys being allocated to? Is it one project or several projects and the names of those projects? Why is there a huge margin from \$30 million the previous year, then to \$100 million in the next year, and apparently, it is still not completed. Then, \$30 million was budgeted where \$100 million spent and we are still spending another \$30 million. The project seems to be ongoing.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is not a new project. This is the work that will make the presidential complex better secured. It is work that will prevent the effects of flooding. In fact, when we came into Office in 2015, our first experience was flooding and a number of documents and so forth were lost on the bottom floor of these offices. This was because the revetment was poor, and the drainage system was poor. What we are doing here is on an incremental basis dealing with revetment. So that around the presidential complex, the revetment has taken place because of the flooding and so forth. The pavements were very uneven, and we are fixing all of that. We are trying to make the presidential complex look presidential.

Additionally, this project also covers Castellani House and Bidford House which is now Stephen Campbell House which houses the Department of Citizenship of the Ministry of the Presidency.

This particular exercise, because it is an outgoing exercise and because of the actual numbers of persons which you have to deal with on a daily basis in that facility requires us to review what we have done in the first place and to cater for the expansion.

In particular, there are some things which you do not cater for, initially. The situation with Venezuela, many persons actually came into that department looking for assistance in citizenship matters. The Stephen Campbell House, the Presidential Complex, and Castellani House are the projects that we are dealing with here.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I am a bit confused. The Castellani House is catered for under the Ministry of Social Cohesion, both current and capital expenditure. In fact, line item 6255-Maintenance of Other Infrastructure is a capital project appearing under current. That is one problem. Why are there capital projects totalling \$100 million under current expenditure, which as far as I know is not allowed?

The second issue is, the budgeted amount for 2018 is \$30,100,000, there was no supplementary financial paper brought in 2018, thus far, covering the increasing of \$70 million for anything regarding any of these issues that you have reported to the House this morning, Sir. Yes, there was a supplementary, but not for the issues that you are now detailing before the House. How was the money increased, by what means that you went \$70 million more than what was allocated in the 2018 budget? According to this it has been spent already.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is 'Maintenance of Other Infrastructure', and it deals primarily with the swimming pool at the Castellani House and the facilities around that. The separate sums there came out as a result of virement which took place. There are some matters which we are going to proceed with which was done so that allows for virement to take place in the lines itself.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6255- Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Which is what I have been speaking about and raising issues on. I think that all of us in this room heard you say that this was to deal with securing the Ministry of the Presidency, dealing with the drainage problem which you referred to the flooding, your first experience and the revetment. It is from then I questioned. You are now saying that this is to do with maintenance work at Castellani House. Sir, the issue is that \$70 million above what was appropriated under this head or under this programme was expended on capital projects. Could you please explain to this House why and how this happened? Where did the money come from?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: As I said, these are maintenance projects and the moneys came from other lines within the Ministry. There were virements that took place from other line items within the Ministry to deal with those matters.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Minister, you mentioned the maintenance of buildings, we know what is going on there because we pass there every day. I noticed that you omitted to speak of the fence, but I presume that the fence is covered under this expenditure. What I want to ask and what I would like

for you to pride us with: is there a contract? How was this contract awarded? What were the details of the contract? I assume that there is a contract in writing with how many millions to be allocated, the contract description, when it first started, the name of the contractor, and what is the scope of work because this seem to be a never-ending project? You seem to be adding more as we go along. You threw in the Castellani pool at the end, Venezuela dispute arose, you threw in Didco House. We do not know whether it is ongoing or if this project will last until 2020. We would like to know and get a copy of the contract, so that we can understand it, the scope of work, how it was awarded and to whom it was awarded, and of course the duration when it first started.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The question of the fence is a capital project. It was a contract, it was advertised, and it was awarded through the normal procurement process by National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB). If in fact the Hon. Member is asking for a copy of that contract, we are happy to provide a copy of the contract to you.

Mr. Nandlall: Now it is becoming clear that the fence is not part of this project. I believe that is implied from what the Minister said. That is a capital project. As my colleague pointed out, we are dealing with current expenditures. The fence is not here and we are also asking for the fence contract. Apparently, this is the drain, pool, and so forth. I presume that those works would have been allocated in accordance with the Procurement Act, so we are asking for the information that I just asked for.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I thought the Hon. Member wanted to know about the fence, because he seems to be very preoccupied about this fence.

Mr. Nandlall: I just want to understand.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: You will get it. As I said, there are two. The fence is a capital project. The other issues that I raised and spoke about are of maintenance nature and that is what is dealt with under the line item 6255. Hon. Member, you will get what you asked for. If you asked for the contract for the fence, yes, we can provide that to you. If there is anything else that you require, please state so that it can be recorded, and I will provide that as well.

Mr. Nandlall: I am asking, in addition to the contract for defence, the contract in relation to these works, the name of the contractor, a copy of the contract and the scope.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Sir, the contract will have all of that.

Ms. Teixeira: Just to conclude my line of questioning. Could the Hon. Member state, in the \$13 million allocated for 2018 and the revised \$100,907.000, was this virement? If it was a virement that increased by \$70 million, which head did it come from within the budget?

Secondly, did this result this ability to virement? Was it a result of savings under that head that you were moving money from or was it that that particular programme or activity may have been suspended as a result? Very important, I want to know where the virement took place or which heads or sub heads it came from to the total of \$70 million?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The virement came from line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): there is a sum there of \$95,923,000. Some of the activities basically had to do with climate change and we have suspended some of those activities to allow for this to take place.

Bishop Edghill: I am just asking the Minister to clarify for the House. I know that my colleagues have requested certain documents and we are looking forward for it. Maintenance of Buildings and Maintenance of other Infrastructure are the routine things that has to be done. If a pipe is broken, a bridge collapses, a step treader is removed, not capital works. Could you tell us, what emergency occurred that caused you to move your budgetary routine maintenance of other infrastructure from \$30 million to \$100 million? Tell us where the emergency was. Is it that a pump blew or a tank fell? What emergency had occurred that caused this humongous increase? That is the issue that we need to get addressed.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I think that I provided this honourable House with that answer already and I do not know what else. Why do I have to describe an emergency? I have described it with the situation of flooding. I have described the situation of the Venezuelan migrants' situation. There are other smaller matters that I mentioned, because of the condition of the driveways around the Ministry of the Presidency that needed to be dealt with. I do not know if there is anything more that I can add to what the Hon. Member is asking. That is all I can say.

Ms. Teixeira: Hopefully, this is my last question. Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Minister, you stated that the virement of money was for the line item 6255 - (Maintenance of Other Infrastructure) came from line item 6302 – Training (including

Scholarships), which had allocated \$95,923,000. Could the Hon. Minister state what happened to the training programme of the Ministry? Was it scanned, was it panned completely, and was anyone trained? If anyone was trained, could we be enlightened to the number and the type of training?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I cannot provide the Hon. Member with the details of this. In fact, I can provide you with that information at a later stage, because these were deliberate decisions, which we had to take. We had to look at what each line, the activities that were taking place there and a decision was made with respect to what sums can be moved from where.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Nandlall: One last question, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: I see that there is an increase from \$28.499 million to \$50 million. Could I ask, which buildings are being supplied with electricity and why has there been such a huge upsurge in electricity consumption, or at least a budgetary allocation towards that?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These sums were previously paid by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministries are now required to pay their own electricity charges. That is why this has occurred.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, line item 6302.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Hamilton, the Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamlall has the floor.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning.

Hon. Minister, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could you indicate whether the staff of the Department of Energy are catered for here?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: No. They are not catered for there.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could I be pointed to where the staff of the Department of Energy are catered for?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is under Programme 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Hamilton, you have the floor.

Mr. Hamilton: Thank you very much, Sir. The Minister indicated that the sum that was discussed earlier was increased by \$70 million and that the money was vired from line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships). We looked at line item 6302 and there is \$95.923 million. The revised speaks to \$5.066 million. But earlier, the virement that we were discussing was \$70 million. Could he indicate what has happened to the \$20 million from line item 6302?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with training. The additional sum was assigned to the Department of Public Service which has to do with training. That is where the additional sum went.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I thought I was finished, but having heard the Hon. Minister, I am now forced to rise.

The Minister is reporting to this House that not only did he vire from one subhead to another, but that he vired from one programme to another, which is totally prohibited. So, I think that the Minister needs to be a little better prepared because one cannot vire from one programme to another; it is prohibited. One can vire within a programme under certain conditions. I believe the Minister is getting confused or maybe he did not get a chance to prepare as well as he should have. But clearly, one cannot. Therefore, could the Minister please clarify, did he vire from one programme to another?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am not confused, and I am properly prepared. Probably, the question the Member is asking needs more clarity. The point is that the \$20 million was vired from training. In fact, training vired to the Department of Public Service which is within the Ministry of the Presidency, and to deal with training as well.

Ms. Chandarpal: Mr. Chairman, there are 176 contracted employees for six agencies under the Ministry of Social Protection and the total sum of \$389.23 million is voted for employees. I want to ask...

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Chandarpal, Members can proceed in this way if that is the wish. We have been talking for 51 minutes. I was going to propose to Members that we move to consideration of the other matters, itemising them as we go down. But if you wish to speak about Ministry of the Presidency what is it under? It is the Ministry of Social Cohesion?

Ms. Chandarpal: It is under contracted employees. Okay, I will wait on the appropriate time.

Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – \$2,088,288,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration – \$451,251,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 2405200 – Land Transport: There is a budgeted sum of \$52 million for the purchase of vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister indicate how many vehicles he proposes to buy? What is the current size of the fleet that exists? In the retiring of the older vehicle which you spoke about last year, how advanced are you in that? How much money were we able to generate as it relates to the sale and disposal of those vehicles?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Of the vehicles that we are purchasing this year, there is one vehicle for the President's very important persons (VIP) fleet. There are four other vehicles to replace aged vehicles in the Ministry's fleet and there is one off-road vehicle for the Office of Climate Change. That amounts to the sum of \$52 million.

With respect to the disposal of vehicles, first of all, last year I provided a list of the fleet. Therefore, I do not know if you want me to just add those which were added to the fleet this year and those which were taken out. Or do you want the complete list again? You can have whichever you want.

Secondly, with respect to vehicles that are aged and to be disposed of, there is a process in the Government and we are following that process. Whatever sums are acquired from it will go directly to the Ministry of Finance. Actually, the Ministry of Finance supervises that.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, under Purchase of Equipment...

Mr. Chairman: What is the project code?

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2507900 – Purchase of Equipment: There is a provision for equipment – furniture *et cetera* – for a number of departments of the Office of the President, one such being the Guyana Gaming Authority. Could the Minister provide to this House what specifically is being

provided to the Guyana Gaming Authority? Are there any pieces of equipment or it is furniture that is being provided to the Guyana Gaming Authority?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum of \$1 million allocated to the Guyana Gaming Authority is for the purchase of computers, office chairs, a projector and a printer.

Mr. Nandlall: Project code 1214100 – Office and Residence of the President: We are providing \$57.750 million and we are told in the legend that that is for provisions of buildings, security hut, lights, ceiling and windows. Just now, we were told, under current expenditure, we were doing massive ground work, and now we are fixing windows under capital expenditure. Notwithstanding that strange description, might I ask for the details of the breakdown of what work we are doing and where we are doing this work, under capital expenditure? Fixing windows, to me, sounds like current expenditure.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are sums to be expended at the Office and Residence of the President – that is State House complex. And I can provide the Hon. Member with the details that he is asking for before the end of today.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, project code 1701700 – Minor Works - \$95 million: The legend says provision for developmental, humanitarian and other activities. Could the Minister indicate to us, specifically, what are the items that this \$95 million caters for?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is a sum that is spent at the discretion of His Excellency, the President. The sum is used primarily for educational developmental projects and people making special pleas to His Excellency, the President for help. He has given to science labs, senior citizens and so on. This is a sum that is completely at the discretion of the President. It has been so from, I can say, maybe, time immemorial. This sum of \$95 million has not changed since we came into office.

12.05 p.m.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, project code 3301100 – Lands and Surveys – \$163 million: Could I ask the Minister, because I am sure some time ago the Minister indicated that the intention of the upgrading and development of the lands and surveys was to allow for it to be in a position to fetch its own burdens and not be funded out of the State's budget. Could the Minister indicate whether

this \$163,000,000 is the final sum of money to be transferred to the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GL&SC)? As we speak, is the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission in a position to carry its own burdens based on its own rates and fees it would normally garner through the year *via* leases and so?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, again, this is a work in progress with the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. The sums that were allocated from the State will go down. This year it is less and next year it is going to be less because we believe that the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission is under better management. What is happening is that in the first case there is some \$30,000,000 allocated for electrical work at the Head Office. Because of the changes that have taken place over the years, we have had to take a decision to rewire the entire building, because the quality of equipment which are going in there now are subjected to all sorts of voltage fluctuation and so on. They are going to spend \$30,000,000 to do that since no upgrade was done in this regard for over 40 years. This is something that we must deal with.

Secondly, we are expanding something called the Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS) Network. This is an important aspect of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission's work. They received \$100,000,000 in 2018 which went to the operationalisation of eight sets of stations. We expect that the additional stations to be established around the country will enhance geospatial infrastructure for mapping, improve the geodetic capabilities and the quality of geographic data in the department. It would also help to support land use planning, the constructing of civil works for disaster preparedness and risk management.

I wish to say that all these things are taking place and the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, recognising the important role it has to play in the development of a green state, is working assiduously to get all these things done in the face of escalating costs.

At the level of this state we have held back applications for increases in fees. While we are looking at helping them with developing their capacities and enhancing their capabilities, this is taking place in an environment in which the expenses in relation to the management of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission is increasing. That is why I said we have better management and it is utilising the resources which are available to the Commission to give a better-quality work for the people of this country.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 4504500 - Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST): There is a provision for \$16,501,000. I wonder if the Minister could tell the House what is this \$16,501,000 for in terms of equipment. What equipment are we talking about? What is this equipment to be used for? Could the Hon. Minister lay over in the House an inventory of what the IAST has really been doing, let us say for over the past three years?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I will be happy to do that. In fact, there is a booklet which the IAST has provided me with. It is what I call a story of success. The IAST has gone from just being science-based into producing, in conjunction with entities such as the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. You would recall that Vice-President, Mr. Allicock laid out some of these products that are produced in conformity and in conjunction with the IAST.

I could provide the list of equipment that the Hon. Member is asking for. It is already here: pre-crushes, grinding systems, vibrant sieving systems, screw conveyors, double-axis blenders, packaging systems, shipping, and installation. This is the opportunity for... [Inaudible] the green processing techniques, Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous development and poverty alleviation. This is a cooperative approach to business development and food production. This type of equipment enables that process and marries the modern science to the production of food in our remote Indigenous communities. It provides the products and services for local, regional, and international markets and creates value-added agricultural products while promoting green development. It develops crops and strengthens existing relationship with hinterland farmers while creating jobs for new farmers. Thank you.

Programme 051 – Policy Development and Administration - \$451,251,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have completed an hour and eight minutes. I think that we are doing quite well. I hope that we will continue to do that.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 052 - Defence and National Security - \$108,426,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: According to the staffing details, there is a significant reduction from 2018 to 2019, from 28 employees to 4. Could the Hon. Minister give us

a detailed explanation as to what is the reason for this significant reduction in the number of contracted employees in this sector?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, I will be happy to do that. Under line item 6116, the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) was catered for. We have moved the Civil Defence Commission to the Guyana Defence Force (GDF). There are 20 employees who have moved as a result of that decision. This is where the difference has taken place.

Mr. Rohee: Am I to understand, at least from what is printed here, that there are four employees earning \$20,924,000.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, in fact these are the salaries, allowances and gratuities for these four employees.

Mr. Rohee: I thank the Minister for that very brief answer, but could he be kind enough to provide us with the designation of these individuals. Do they have ranks? I would also like their qualifications as well.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I could provide the Hon. Member with the designation of these officers. They are the System Administrator, the Closed-Circuit Television Technician, Head of the National Intelligence Centre (NIC) and the Word Processing Officer. These are the four officers.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister give us the salary for each of those officers? We would like to have a comparative breakdown of the salaries of the office holders in respect to this \$20,924,000.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The basic salaries of these officers are as follows: System Administrator - \$212,119; Closed-Circuit Television Technician - \$153,119; Head of the NIC - \$646,529; and the Word Processing Officer - \$101,109. Those are the basic salaries.

Mr. Gill: Programme 052: In his Budget 2019 presentation on page 67 the Hon. Minister of Finance stated that the GDF has been given an increase in allocations, but I am looking at a decrease from the 2018 allocations. It is from \$108,226,000...

Mr. Chairman: Did you provide the code to which you refer Hon. Member?

Mr. Gill: Yes, Programme 052.

Mr. Chairman: You must say the item.

Mr. Gill: This is the total expenditure for the GDF.

Mr. Chairman: Could you assist Hon. Members by saying where this can be found?

Mr. Gill: I apologise, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. You no longer wish to ask that question. Thank you.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, could you advise us, there has been a reduction in the staffing here, where is the National Anti-Narcotics Agency (NANA)? It was here the last time, where is it now? Is it under here still or has it gone somewhere else? Where have you parked it now?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am sure that the Hon. Member would not expect an agency such as that to have four persons. It is under the Ministry of Public Security, where it was since last year, please.

12.20 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: I noted there are significant reductions in the allocations under Programme 052 - Defence and National Security, line item 6281 - Security Services: It is down to zero. Is there an explanation as to why security services are no longer required?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the NIC benefits from the facility of colocation with the Presidential complex and, therefore, there is no requirement for a private security operation here anymore. It is being dealt with by the Presidential Guard Service.

Programme: 052 - Defence and Security - \$108,426,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 052 – Defence and National Security - \$23,000,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code - 2405200 - Land Transport: There is provision here for a vehicle to be purchased to the cost of \$10,500,000. Could the Minister tell us what is the type of vehicle to be

purchased, what is it to be used for and what specifications would this vehicle have? Also, would this vehicle be purchased locally or is it to be imported?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, this is for the purchase of a brand-new minibus, for the purposes of conducting Global Strategic Management Investigation (GSMI) operations. And I sure the Hon. Member would be familiar with that terminology since he headed the Ministry of Home Affairs at that time and had some responsibility for intelligence work. It is a new Toyota minibus.

Mr. Rohee: Project code - 25079000 - Purchase of Equipment: To the tune of \$12,5000,000. Would the equipment be procured locally or internationally? If it is to be procured internationally could the Hon. Minister tell us which company they are contemplating to procure this equipment from and what is it to be used for? *[Interruption]* I thought we wanted to conduct the proceedings in an orderly manner, but some people seem to be getting a little restless.

Mr. Chairman: I know that the Hon. Member would wish to complete his question.

Mr. Rohee: If the Hon. Minister could provide the answers to those questions it perhaps could provide some silence to the House and I would be grateful.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member would appreciate that there are some security features to the information which is being provided. I could give you the equipment and what it is used for but the name of the company, I could provide you with a copy. I am not going to repeating that on a public system.

Basically, we are buying equipment to create an offline backup system for the storage of critical data for the closed-circuit television sites. As you are aware, there are several of these sites around the country and the information is stored in a command centre. The problem we have is that the storage capacity of the system is not enough to allow for them to go back in a certain way. It only provides a certain number of hours of storage. To provide the length of storage that the system requires there would have to be additional equipment to provide the additional storage.

So that is really what we are talking about - expanding the sites, creating a backup system. As I have said this is an offline backup system, so if something were to happen at the NIC there would be at another site information that is stored, that would not be damaged irreparably if a fire or something were to occur at the site of the NIC.

The sum would also allow for the purchasing of some other equipment which can facilitate air reconnaissance throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. We are going to be buying equipment in order for that to happen as well as cater for the expansion of the CCTV sites. There are several pieces equipment, new cameras and axels for the cameras and so on. So, this \$12,500,000 is basically to improve the capacity of the NIC to store information and to provide better coverage for the national intelligence and security system.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, the command centre that the Hon. Minister is referring to, is it the same command centre that the Hon. Minister Ms. Hughes has been referring to during last week?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, as I said, the Hon. Member is aware because I am sure he has visited the National Intelligence Centre and the facilities which are there. The sum is for the expansion of that command centre and is primarily for the use of an intelligence and security apparatus. What Minister Hughes was speaking about is something different. This here is about intelligence.

Programme: 052- Defence and National Security - \$23,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 053 - Public Service Management - \$1,957,558,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Persaud.

Mr. Persaud: Thank you Chairman. Could I wait for the Minister to be seated?

Mr. Chairman: The Minister is here. Very good of you. Thank you.

Mr. Persaud: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Sir, the number of employees increased by three. The allocation increased by 39.5% under that line item. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to explain the increase and lay over a list of the designations and emoluments for each of the 44 employees listed under this line item?

Minister of the Public Service [Dr. Roopnaraine]: The designations of the persons are Coordinator of International Conferences, Handyman and Student Affairs Officer. The salaries are respectively, \$721,211, \$60,000 and \$183,703.

Mr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I get it that the Hon. Minister would be laying the list of the 44 employees at a later stage.

Line item 6241 - Rental of Buildings - \$16,608,000 allocated under this head. Would the Hon. Minister explain where is this building located, what mechanism are in place for the rental of this building and why do we need to rent this building?

Dr. Roopnarine: It is the St. Paul's Hostel located at Vryheid's Lust and it is to house 20 students from the staff college.

12.35 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line items 6271, 6272, and 6273 - Telephone and Internet Charges, Electricity charges and Water Charges: If I could take these three items together. There has been a 41% increase in telephone and internet charges, 26.6% in electricity charge and 46.4% increase in water charges. My question to the Hon. Minister is this: what would have resulted in these increases and if the individuals are provided with telephone services, electricity charges and water charges, who are these individuals and what are their designations?

Dr. Roopnarine: The increase is due to additional phone lines which have been installed at the Public Service Staff College building at GuySuCo Estate. This includes internet service which has been installed at the GuySuCo Estate, Ogle, which resulted in an increase in the monthly internet charges.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6294 – Other: The allocation for 2018 was \$44,321,000. The revised Budget 2018 is suggesting \$140,35,000, which is an increase of \$96 million. Would the Hon. Minister explain why this increase; where the additional funds came from and which other programme, if any, suffered because of this rearrangement?

Dr. Roopnaraine: The Public Service Department requested that supplementary provision, through the Ministry of Finance. This was to off-set expenses for the hosting of two conferences;

the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Conference which was held in October and the Ministerial Conference.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): There is an increase of approximately \$431 million under this head. Could the Hon. Minister provide a list of the persons who benefitted from the allocation in 2018, the duration of the programme, and, for the allocation for 2019, could he say who are the intended beneficiaries and what are the programmes?

Dr. Roopnaraine: The fields of study were soil mechanics, counselling studies for the MSC: Masters of Science in Psychology, Master of Science in Mathematics, Master of Science in Criminology, Master of Science in Integrated Petroleum Geo-Science, Master of Science in Computer Forensics, Master of Science in Cyber Security, Master of Science in Big Data Analytics, Museum Studies, History of Art, Oil and Gas Management, Master of Science in Animal Breathing and Genetics and Cyber Security and Management. There is also a Master of Science in Environmental Sustainability and Green Technology and a Master of Science in International Business.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): The Budget 2018 appropriated \$910 million and the revised has \$1,079,000,000, an increase in the figure. We cannot recall any Supplementary Financial Paper increasing the allocation for this Head in 2018. In addition to that, you may recall that, earlier, in questioning Minister Harmon, he advised the House that had given \$25 million, from one of the Heads under the Ministry of Presidency to training in the Department of the Public Service.

Could you say if the \$25 million was received by the Department of the Public Service from line item 6302 from the Ministry of Presidency? Just to make myself clear, could you say where the additional funds come from for the revised Budget 2018 without going to Supplementary?

Dr. Roopnaraine: I am advised that this was from Programme: 051 – Ministry of the Presidency. As advised by the Director of Budget, the sum was vired.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, did I understand you correctly when you said the increase in the allocation came from Programme 1? You are aware that you cannot vire from one programme to another. You could vire within heads in a programme, but you cannot take money from one

programme and give it to another programme. This is why we questioned Minister Harmon and we are now questioning you. It was money vired from Programme 051: Policy Development and Administration, under line item 6302 in Programme 053, which is Public Service Management.

You are admitting that money was vired from one Programme to another and that is why the increase and you clarified that. When you said that you vired, where did you vire from? Is that what you are referring to; taking from Programme 051 to Programme 053? You have vired from one Programme to another.

Dr. Roopnaraine: We did vire from Programme 051 to Programme 053 and we acted on the advice of the Director of Budget.

Ms. Teixeira: We were very pleased to hear about all the scholarships being offered. Could you explain why was there need for an increase in the Budget when \$910 million was already allocated? This is a revised figure of \$1,79,000,000 and the year is not over. Could you advise what precipitated a request for additional funds?

Dr. Roopnaraine: These were new scholarships that were not catered for in 2018.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Minister advise whether these scholarships were advertised? Was the recruitment of the potential candidates or applicants done by a panel of selectors or was it done by the Public Service Commission (PSC)? Could you clarify that?

Dr. Roopnaraine: The answer to the Hon. Member is yes. It was advertised and was done according to the application of algorism and a scientific method, I am told.

Programme: 053 – Public Service Management - \$1,957,558,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 053 – Public Service Management - \$18,943,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 2405200 – Land Transport: Would the Hon. Minister provide us with a list of the number of vehicles under this Programme and say who is this vehicle being purchased for?

Dr. Roopnaraine: There are 15 vehicles involved. I would be very happy to provide the Hon. Member with a list should he need it.

Programme: 053 – Public Service Management - \$18,943,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will try to complete this Agency and then we will suspend for lunch. I hope that your energies will keep up.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services - \$748,329,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the Hon. Minister, Ms Hastings-Williams will answer the questions under this Head. The Hon. Member, Mr. Felix is out of the jurisdiction, as I understand.

Hon. Minister, are you settled?

Minister of Public Affairs [Ms. Hastings-Williams]: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, the Minister and her staff are settled.

Bishop Edghill: I will begin under line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials. In 2018, we spent \$29 million out of a budgeted \$38 million. In *Budget 2019*, we are asking for an additional \$200 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what is responsible for this \$200 million increase and could he itemise it?

12.50 p.m.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you for that question Hon. Member. This increase caters for the acquisition of the 64-pages passports with new security features, also for birth certificates with additional security features.

Bishop Edghill: Under this line item, passports and birth certificates were always procured, so could the Hon. Minister tell us how much these 64-page passports and how many additional birth certificates she anticipate to procure that is causing a \$200 million increase?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: This caters for approximately 200,000 passports and 150,000 birth certificates.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House how many passports and how many birth certificates were procured last year?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am advised that we did not buy any passports last year, but we are now going to purchase for this year.

Mr. Rohee: With respect to the same line item for the procurement of 200,000 64-page passports, has the Ministry done a survey to estimate how many persons would be able to purchase the new 64-pages passport having ordered 200,000 of such passports?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am advised that not all persons would be using the 64-page passport. If you had listen to Hon. Minister of Public Security's speech you would heard that some persons would still be continuing the 30-page passport that we are using presently.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform us, graciously, whether these passports are going to be procured from the Canadian Bank Note or from Da La Rue and if neither of the two, which company do they intend to give the contract to and when?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The passports will be procured from the Canadian Bank Note.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials, could the Hon. Minister tell this House, in the absence of procuring passports last year, what was the \$29 million spent on because, last year, this amount was for passports and birth certificates?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The \$29 million was used to purchase only 150,000 birth certificates and for regular printing in the Ministry.

Mr. Rohee: These new 64 pages passports are going to be priced at \$10,000 each as distinct from the normal passport for \$6,000. The Hon. Minister said that they have ordered of 200,000 of such passport at \$10,000 each. I understood the Hon. Minister to have said... I am hearing some heckling in that corner [*inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Rohee, please ask the question.

Mr. Rohee: Yes, I understood that the Hon. Minister to have said that, of the 64-page passports, 200,000 were ordered. Now, if 200,000 of the 64-page passports have been ordered at \$10,000 each, could the Hon. Minister tell us, because I do not want to suggest a figure, how much do they intend to recoup from that 200,000 passports at \$10,000 each?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I would repeat, not all the passports would have 64 pages. We are still going to maintain some of the 32-page passports. Hence, that is sum does not cater for the 64-page passports alone. We also have our regular printing and other things to do under that line item.

Bishop Edghill: I go to line item 6284, Others, last year we were told that this is where one of the items under this is the digitisation of the General Registrar's Office (GRO) records. The sum of \$218 million was budgeted but only \$118 million was expended, could the Hon. Minister tell us why the underperformance?

Secondly, could he tell us how long more would this special programme continue because this is not a project that would last forever, it was only supposed to be for a certain amount of years as explained?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Firstly, I would like to mention that this project would come to an end in August 2019 and this budget caters for everything to do with the ongoing computerisation project at the General Registrar's Office (GRO) which includes payment of 87 data entry clerks and eight in-house supervisors.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The staffing details state that there are 38 contracted employees, which is a reduction of two, from 2018. This speaks to about 26% of the staff of the Immigration and Citizenship Department being contracted employees. I would like to repeat what my Colleague Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon had pointed, that there is a public service circular to the effect that persons over the age of 45 ought to be transferred to the fix pensionable establishment. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, first of all, for the 38 contracted employees, what specific areas within the Ministry are they employed, what are the salary scales, what is the position of each one and how many of them are under the 45 years of age?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: There are 13 persons over 45 years old, and to answer your second question, we are going to lay over that information.

Mr. Chairman: I will allow two questions more under this head.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Minister tell us, for 2018, how the progress of the digitisation of the records to the GRO had advanced, how many were done and what is the balance? We are told that the project is to be concluded by August of 2019, which we are happy about, but could we get a progress report and how the work has been progressing especially in the light of the underperformance of the allocation. We have spent about \$100 million less, what is responsible for that?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: About the computerisation project, at present or to present, we are approximately 80% completed.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: It has moved from zero to \$4.2 million, could the Hon. Minister tell us which building, or buildings, are being maintained to the tune of \$4.2 million?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: You will know that, previously, the Department of Citizenship was housed in the Department of the Public Service building and these overheads were observed by that department. However, at present, provision is now being made for the routine maintenance of the Stephen Campbell house, which is the new building where this department is housed. It also caters for the GRO.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Rohee, you seem to wish to be heard again.

Mr. Rohee: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I wish you to crave my indulgence. I understand the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is vested with the responsibility to deal with public buildings or offices occupied by the State and Government, how is it that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is not assuming the responsibility in this particular instance?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: This is a routine maintenance for every building that falls under a department of a ministry or an agency.

Programme 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$748,329,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$802,093,000

1.05 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Bishop Edghill, do you wish to ask a question?

Bishop Edghill: Yes, Sir. Project code - 2509900 – Furniture and Equipment: \$713,593,000 is being requested. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what equipment are to be procured and the sums, item by item?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you for your question, Hon. Member. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I have a list of the equipment to be procured and where they are to be placed, for example in Lethem, and other new offices. I do not know if you want me to read them out or if you would prefer me to have it laid to the House.

Bishop Edghill: If I could assist, we could hear of the bulky equipment now and the others could be laid over, because there are several hundreds of millions, so there must be some specialised, expensive equipment that is being purchased that could be identified now.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Of the 13 equipment, and out of the total of \$713,593,000, I am going to list some of the ones that have bulky weight, according to the Hon. Member.

Automated Passport Control (APC) – we are purchasing 10 at a cost of \$6.6 million each, and that will give a total cost of \$66.4 million.

Passport issuing control system workstations – which will be in Regions 2, 4, 7 and 9. We are purchasing 33 of such equipment at a cost of \$10 million each, which will give you a total sum of \$330 million.

Border Management Systems (BMS) and warm standby sites – we are procuring 36 of such at a unit cost of \$7 million, which will give you a total cost of \$252 million.

Printers for certificates – we are procuring six of such at \$2.5 million each, which will give you \$15 million total.

And then there is a microfilm reader. We are purchasing one at a cost of \$2 million.

I will lay over the rest of the equipment, as you wished.

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services - \$802,093,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion - \$391,524,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line Item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I see that they have ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let me just interrupt you. Are you dealing with pages 44 and 45?

Mr. Neendkumar: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Very good. Thank you, please proceed.

Mr. Neendkumar: In 2018 it was 68, and now I see that they have gone to 46. Can the Hon. Minister tell us why this drop from 68 to 46?

Minister of Social Cohesion with responsibility for Culture, Youth and Sport [Dr. Norton]:

This is so because 11 staff members were transferred to the Ministry of Education, Programme 401, during a transition period to the Ministry of Presidency and 11 contracted employees were reassigned as follows: two to line item 6111, Administrative, six to line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, and three to line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled.

Mr. Neendkumar: I noticed on the same line item 6116, Contracted Employees, that, in 2018, \$111,736,000 was spent but in 2019, only there is \$114,081,000. Could the Minister tell us why this change?

Dr. Norton: This is because the contracted employees are now under the fixed establishment; 11 of the contracted employees, so we no longer have to cater for gratuities.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, could the Hon. Minister tell us about the five highest paid employees and what their designations are? Secondly, under Staffing Details, for the purpose of saving time, could the Hon. Minister lay over to the House the entire staffing list designations and salaries, and, more specifically, the locations of where these officers

are located? We do not know of any buildings that says, “Ministry of Social Cohesion” that houses 100 people, so I suspect that they are in the Regions and the rest of it, so could he tell us about the locations of these members of staff?

Dr. Norton: There is no doubt that I have it here; the salaries of each of these employees, but with regard to the highest paid and the next in line and so on, we have no problem at all in laying over. We have it here with us, but it will take some time to ...

Bishop Edghill: I asked for the top five.

Dr. Norton: We have: Project Officer - \$250,750; Programme Coordinator -\$441,000; and three technical officers - \$280,900 each. Those are the highest five.

Mr. Bharrat: Minister, at line item 6114, there is an increase of \$5 million; however, the Staffing Details would show that there was no increase in staff members. Can you kindly account for the \$5 million increase?

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much for the question. This caters for the recent increase in salaries across the board.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item, 6114, the increase that was offered to which the Minister just referred is a 7% to the highest. Even if you do 10%, it would only be responsible for \$1.7 million, but it states here \$5 million. Could he give us a breakdown of how we arrived at \$5 million?

Dr. Norton: The list of the salaries varies, but this information can be laid over.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: In this section, there is a reduction by 22 employees, but what we noticed is that the cost for employment has gone up. Can the Minister explain this discrepancy?

Dr. Norton: This is in keeping with the recent salary increases across the board.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6272 - Electricity Charges: I noticed you had budgeted \$28.3 million in 2018, you spent \$21 million, and you are now asking for \$25 million. Can you give us a lay down of these buildings you will be paying electricity for and say why this increase?

Dr. Norton: We are catering for electricity charges for the Head Office, the Carifesta Sports Complex and the Umana Yana.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Can the Minister explain for what he is going to use \$29,000,000?

1.20 p.m.

Dr. Norton: The allocation in 2019 will cater for the Ministry's participation in the Mashramani Float Parade, the hosting of Harmony Village, Social Cohesion Week and Inter Religious Conferences.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister please give us a breakdown of how much would be used for what?

Dr. Norton: Participation in the Mashramani Float Parade will be \$16 million, Hosting of Harmony Village will be \$7.5 million, Social Cohesion Week will be \$3 million, and the Inter Religious Conference will be \$3 million.

Mr. Chairman: This is the final question, Mr. Neendkumar. Please go ahead.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6302 –Training (including Scholarships): I noticed that \$30,078,000 million was allocated and \$31,363,000 was spent. I would like to know, what fields were these scholarships offered and the training? Could we have a breakdown of the spending?

Dr. Norton: They were not scholarships. They were social cohesion training for Regions 1 to 10.

Mr. Neendkumar: The Estimates have here scholarships and training. He is said that there were no scholarships. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown in every region how much and where the money was spent for the training for social cohesion?

Dr. Norton: The details of the training can be laid over. We can however give you an idea of the areas and the places where the training took place, but we can lay it over.

Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion - \$391,524,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion - \$444,601,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1214400 – Buildings: I noticed at the cost of \$50 million there will be construction of bond and offices. Could we get an idea where this will be done, what would be the cost for the bond, and what will be the cost for the offices?

Dr. Norton: This project entails the construction of a two-storey concrete building. The building will provide additional office spaces and will be outfitted with washroom facilities. It will house between 20 to 25 offices from the Technical Service Unit, Public Relations and Procurement Unit.

Additionally, the building will house a large bond which will be compartmentalised. It will be used to store materials for plumbing, electricity and carpentry works undertaken by the Technical Service Unit.

Additionally, production material and costumes utilised by the Department of Culture will be properly stored. Space has been allocated for central stores for bulk purchases.

Bishop Edghill: Project code 1904000 – Jubilee Republic Programme: There is \$350 million provision for Jubilee Republic Initiatives. Sir, I sought to get some clarity from Volume 3 for the description of this Programme, but there is nothing. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House how he proposes to spend this \$350 million on the Jubilee Republic Initiatives?

Dr. Norton: The Jubilee Republic Initiatives of \$350 million would be for the upgrading of venues for the hosting of the jubilee republic events in the 10 Administrative Regions. We have on an average of \$35 million for each Region. Some of the areas will also include a plaque of recognition in the particular area that we are using for this celebration. For instance in Region 1 while this can change, we have earmarked places such as Mabaruma, Port Kaituma and Moruca; in Region 2, Anna Regina and Queenstown; in Region 3, Dem Amstel and Wakenaam; in Region 4, Mahaica and St. Cuthbert's Mission; in Region 5, Paradise and Ithaca; in Region 6, New Amsterdam, Rose Hall and No. 63 Village; in Region 7, Imbaimadai, Jawalla and Bartica; in Region 8, Mahdia, Chenapau, Kato and Phillipai; in Region 9, Karasabai, St. Ignatius and Aishalton and in Region 10, Kwakwani, One mile and Muritaro.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what criteria was used in the selection of these sites in the various regions?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, over the years the Ministry of Social Cohesion had a hands-on approach in the different regions and communities of the regions and the Ministry is in a position of choosing and deciding where it would be more convenient.

Dr. Anthony: Is the Minister telling us that there are no criteria that available and that at his own discretion he decides how \$350 million is going to be spent? We would like to hear what criteria is being used for these projects and what are the projects, because what we heard is some places being listed, but we did not hear exactly what is going to be done in any of these venues.

Dr. Norton: The question has been asked and the question has been answered.

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: No. Would the Hon. Member repeat the question he wishes to be answered? Please proceed.

Dr. Anthony: I simply asked the Minister, what criteria was used in the selection of the various venues for this \$350 million expenditure? We have not gotten an explanation. That was the first question. The second one was, we heard some names of places in various regions, we would like to know, even with these names, what exactly would be done in these places, what is the disaggregated cost, and how much money would be spent on each site?

Dr. Norton: Once again, as I have said before, the Ministry of Social Cohesion has over the years been very familiar with all the regions from Region 1 to Region 10 by the different programmes it had in the different communities. For that reason, we are in a position of having on-site authority and information to decide which is more convenient and suitable. That is the criteria we have been using.

I also did say that along with the actual activity that we will be having, plaques of recognitions will be unveiled at these different sites or grounds wherever we use. Of course, it must be noted that, all the regions and more than one locations was mentioned in the following programmes.

Dr. Anthony: Since the Ministry of Social Cohesion possess this knowledge, could I ask the Minister why is it, for example, Enmore, Betsy Ground in Berbice, Port Mourant, Industry, Eccles, Vreed en Hoop and Anna Catherina was not listed? Perhaps the Minister could explain why these places were excluded.

Dr. Norton: It is for that same reason that Kanapang, Itabac, Kato and Kamana were not chosen.

Dr. Anthony: The Minister's answer just now was exactly my point. Why is it that they were not chosen? Is it that the criteria that the Minister is using is discriminatory? That is why only certain communities were included and others were not?

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Could the Minister please lay over what criteria was used and if there was a selection committee in place to make these decisions or is it that the Minister arbitrarily decided that these are the places?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the question would suffice. I cannot tell a Member how he must ask his question, but it will be a nice thing if we just focus on the question and leave the frills, sometimes.

Dr. Norton: This is the Ministry of Social Cohesion; it is not the Minister of Social Cohesion. We have a Ministry, Technical Officers and persons who have all been involved in these different communities. As a result of that, we think that we are in a very well-informed position to make those decisions.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I thought the question that was addressed was could you provide some form of information. I do not know if I am mistaken, but I thought that that was the question. I am trying to avoid the necessity for a Member to return to a question, which he might consider as 'not been fully answered'. If the answer to that question is "yes, I will lay it over" then that suffices and then we can move on. It would be the Minister who must say that.

Dr. Norton: This Jubilee Republic Initiative is going to take place in 2019. We are in the preparatory stages. We have got so much more to discuss about this...

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

...the form that it will take, where it is going to be taken place, and everything about this programme is in its infancy stage.

In the future, I would be able to provide the Hon. Member with a list of criteria if that is necessary.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister in answering his questions said that part of these proceeds would be to prepare facilities, then he listed the venues where the facilities will be prepared. They have gone beyond preparation here.

1.35 p.m.

Mr. Ali: They have gone beyond preparation here. Could I ask the Hon. Minister, he mentioned they had great technical competence and skills in the Ministry, give to this honourable House the budgetary provision, how they came up with the revision \$350 million and outline as to how they came up with the requirement of \$350 million? That is what we need. Could the Hon. Minister lay over to this House the outline of how this \$350 million will be spent?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, after some amount of discussion within the Ministry we actually asked for more, but with the discretion of the Minister of Finance, this is the amount we got.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister layover what he presented to the Hon. Minister and the adjusted programme for this \$350 million? This is not a no or yes, this is not your money, this is the people's money; this is the tax payer's money. Could the Hon. Minister in the interest of transparency and accountability, layover the plan as to how this \$350 million of Guyanese taxpayers' money will be spent?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ali, I thank you. I hope that what we are discussing all the time is Guyanese tax payer's money. I was somewhat troubled when you mentioned that; I wondered. Hon. Minister, please.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, that plan would be laid over.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say when?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member would wish to have an indication as to when it could be laid over.

Dr. Norton: It would be laid over within a week.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your kind discretion. Mr. Chairman, project code 1904000 – Jubilee Republic Programme: The Minister told us about plagues to be laid in various places, \$350 million. Could the Minister say is there any other initiative apart from the laying of plaques or is the laying of plaques the only initiative?

Dr. Norton: It certainly is not the only activity that would be taking place and we would be laying it over.

Mr. Chairman: This would be the last question on this issue. Hon. Mr. Rohee, you have the Floor.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2405200 – Land Transport: Provision is made for a vehicle of \$7 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what type of vehicle is the Ministry considering procuring and for what purpose? Is this one of the vehicles that would be used to transport the Venezuelans from the border to the city?

Dr. Norton: It certainly will not be to transport any Venezuelans from the border to Guyana. For the Hon. Member's information, this would include three brand new vehicles, one Toyota Landcruiser would be purchased for the Hon. Minister of Social Cohesion, one 15 seater mini-bus, and one 4x4 pick up will be acquired to enhance the current fleet. These vehicles will be assigned to the general administration and will aid staff members of the procurement, supplies department and the Office of the Department of Social Cohesion.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. This is the last question, Hon. Members. Mr. Rohee you have that privilege.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister tell us what type of vehicle he intends to procure and the cost for this vehicle for the Minister of Social Cohesion?

Dr. Norton: The type of vehicle would be one Toyota Landcruiser. The total selling price would be \$17,680,650.

Programme: 056 – Social Cohesion - \$444,601,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, could I crave your indulgence to mention this matter a break? It is because we are going all the way through and we need to be replenished or refreshed. I think it is not just me, but there are staff here who have been here all morning working and I believe that we really should have a break before we continue, because it is quite a number of matters that are to be dealt with before the scheduled break which should have been at 12noon. I really would like to ask, could we take our break here then proceed after that?

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister for his call to compassion. I wonder if other Members feel the same way. If they do then we can take the suspension now and return in 40 minutes. I understand it is 2.25 p.m. we will resume. I would ask Members to try to be guided by that time. Thank you.

Assembly resumed

Sitting suspended at 1.44 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 2.43 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Current Expenditure

Programme: 057 – Environmental Management and Compliance - \$1,316,886,000

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Member advise us if the new Director of Environment is included in this programme? Is this the new department of environment within the Ministry of the Presidency?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the head of the Department of Environment is in fact in that department. I do not know if you are talking about the new Head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that is a separate matter.

Ms. Teixeira: No. Sir.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Okay.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say if this is an accommodation for the new programme in the Department of Environment? Is this some other buildings that have to be rented? Could you say where is it located?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is the building that houses the Department of Environment. It is located on High Street next to the Red House. You will recognise that as a good reference point.

Ms. Teixeira: That is where broadcasting was.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes.

Programme: 057- Environmental Management and Compliance - \$1,316,886,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital expenditure

Programme: 057 Environmental Management and Compliance - \$263,009,000

Ms. Teixeira: Project code 4403600 – Guyana Protected Areas System: One hundred and fifty million has been provided and seems to be funded by Germany. Could the Hon. Minister advise us, the Volume 3 states:

“The project entails improvement of infrastructure and supply of equipment to enhance the management and conservation and biodiversity in three (3) protected area: Shell Beach, Kaieteur National Park and Kanuku Mountains.”

Could the Minister please give us a breakdown in terms of each of the areas in what way will the \$150 million be used and for what purposes?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, this is in fact a project that has already started, and I am prepared to layover that document to the Hon. Member which stipulates what it is that will be done, how much money is being spent and everything. I could do that before the end of today.

Programme: 057 – Environmental Management and Compliance - \$263,009,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.48 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 058 –Cultural Preservation & Conservation - \$955,566,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you ready now?

Dr. Norton: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I have noticed in 2018 we had 28 and in 2019 there is 42 with an extra 14. I also saw that you budgeted \$90 million for 2018 and only \$62 million was spent, you have \$84 million, could we have an explanation to this?

Mr. Chairman: I hope that the Minister and the staff has been able to hear you. I am bound to say that the Chairman did have to listen keenly.

Dr. Norton: The 14 staff members were transitioned from the Ministry of Education Programme 406 to the Ministry of the Presidency Programme 058. The increase would be because of salary increases across the board.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Sir, we saw in the table, 6321 on page 430 some modest increases to Castellani House, a very prestigious institution. The National Trust remains the same, Theatre Guild of Guyana remains the same, but there is a \$32 million increase for the Decades of Peoples of African Descent. Could the Minister tell the House how the revised for 2018 of \$68,438,000 was spent? What is the projection for the \$100 million that is being sought in 2019?

Dr. Norton: From the month of late June to December, there was a robust outreach programme to provide for information about the decades and conferences to inform African Guyanese Business people, farmers, and food vendors about the Government and other programmes and services available to them.

The Secretariat also conducted programmes on African Guyanese History and culture across the country for the general public, students, and teachers.

There was hands-on training work shop on organisational development, resume writing, project design, and proposal writing. In the process, information was gathered about the needs on

communities, potential community development projects, and sources of funding and training needs.

Bishop Edghill: If I may just to help with the time, could the Hon. Minister simply name the activities and the cost rather than having a narrative? We want to know how the \$68 million was spent, conference, employment, and other charges rather than having a narrative.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, a suggestion is being made by the Hon. Member as to what he will see as being a satisfactory answer. If you can assist, it will make things better.

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, History lecturers conducted in places such as New Amsterdam, Linden, Anna Regina, Essequibo, Murray House, Number 53 Village, and Georgetown. Outreaches and conferences for small farmers, small and micro businesses and Food Vendors were conducted in the following communities across the country, Calcutta Mahaicony, Queenstown, Charity, Henrietta, Courtland...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I understood the question to have required numbers and places and in the same interest of saving time, I just remind you that that is what the Member was seeking.

Dr. Norton: Sir, we can lay over the document.

Mr. Chairman: That would be most grateful.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House, is there a secretariat that oversees this particular project? What are the designated officers and their emoluments?

Dr. Norton: There is a secretariat and designated officers with emoluments that we can lay over.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled: In 2018 they were six persons and in 2019 they is 16. Could the Hon. Minister tell us the designation and the emoluments for the 10 extra persons?

Dr. Norton: The 10 staff members were transitioned from the Ministry of Education Programme: 406 and the Ministry of the Presidency Programme: 058. The designations would be Light Operator I, Light Operator II, Sound Room Operator, House Electrician, Anthropologist Assistant 2,3,4,5 and Cultural Youth Officer.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6321- Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisation: Could the Minister say how much money is allocated under this head for the Guyana Prize for literature?

Dr. Norton: That is not under our remit, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister advise us as to where we could find it, under whose remit?

Dr. Norton: I repeat, it is not under our remit. I do not know which remit it is under.

Dr. Anthony: Follow-up: Could the Minister advise us whether the Guyana Visual Arts Exhibition and Competition is under this head?

Dr. Norton: The Castellani House received \$70 million. The increase is to support the hosting of the Visual Arts Competition and Exhibition.

Dr. Anthony: Of the \$70 million, could the Minister disaggregate it? Also, could the Minister tell us, how much money has been set aside for art acquisition for Castellani House?

Dr. Norton: The work plan for the acquisition of arts can be laid over to the House.

Dr. Anthony: Under the same line item, could the Minister say how much money has been set aside to operationalise the cultural policy and when would it be operationalised?

Dr. Norton: This would not be under this line item. Line item 6284 – Other, would be more suitable for that.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6284 - Other: Could the Minister give us a breakdown on what would be spent under this line item?

Dr. Norton: In 2019, the allocation would be used for the creation of a national data base for the creative industries, payment for the digitalisation and data base maintenance of the national archives, creation of new exhibits for museums, rental of services to facilitate museum expeditions; such as guides and payment of part time lecturers attached to the National School of Music, the National School of Dance, National School of Theatre Arts and Drama. And E.R Burrows School of Art.

Dr. Anthony: I had asked that the Minister lay over the disaggregation and under this heading, how much money would be spent on the operationalisation of the Cultural Policy.

Dr. Norton: I have been informed that \$5 million has been allocated for the operationalisation of the Cultural Policy.

3.03 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284 – Other: to go back to that, \$18 million was budgeted but \$40.810 million was spent. Could the Hon. Minister say where the additional money came from? There was no supplementary financial paper to allocate the additional \$12 million to that subhead. It is line item 6284 – Other.

Dr. Norton: It was an inter-programme virement. The revised sum in 2018 catered for part-time payment for lecturers from the Institute of Creative Arts.

Ms. Teixeira: If the Minister could please advise me where the money was vired from – which head and programme.

Dr. Norton: I was informed that this was vired from Programme 05A.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I noticed a sober \$17.5 million was allocated. The same sober \$17.5 million was spent. And now, I see that the same sober \$17.5 million is allocated for 2019. Could the Hon. Minister tell us which are the buildings and infrastructure and how much was spent on each?

Dr. Norton: I was informed that the allocation will be used for weeding and maintenance of the nine compounds under the department.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister say how much money is budgeted here for the National Trust and give us a breakdown on what that sum would be spent on?

Dr. Norton: The National Trust will have an allocation of \$100 million. We will layover the breakdown.

Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$955,566,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$133,672,000

Dr. Persaud: Project code 1218200 – Building – Culture Centre: I noted the provision is for roof, sound room and theatre chairs. Hon. Minister during the last Budget there was also provision for roof, fence, lights and rewiring of building. I noticed that the provision for roof recurs. I also noted that no new lights have been there for the National Cultural Centre. Could the Minister explain, please?

Dr. Norton: I was informed that, in 2018, we had Phase One of the roof of the National Cultural Centre completed. In 2019, Phase Two will be done.

Dr. Persaud: Would the Minister clarify what is the position with the lights and the rewiring? And the theatre chairs mentioned, is it going to be that all the chairs are going to be replaced since most or many of them are broken?

Dr. Norton: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the lights are presently being installed and the chairs will be done in a phased manner.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under the same project code 1218200 – Building – Culture Centre: Of this \$53 million that is allocated, I would like the Minister to tell us, since this is a rollover programme, how much will be spent out of next year's Budget on the completion of the roof? How much will be spent for the theatre chairs? How much will be spent again for the rewiring of the building? How many equipment for the sound room and what are the equipment?

Dr. Norton: Phase One was not a rollover item. It was completed in 2018. The second phase will be tendered in 2019.

Dr. Anthony: Project code - 1218900 – National Trust: There is an allocation of \$42.793 million. Could the Minister give us the breakdown of how much money will be spent for retention, the provision of monuments, the St. George's Cathedral and the Providence Hindu Temple?

And of the provision allocated for monuments, could the Minister tell us how much would be spent on the 1823 Memorial, the Chinese Arrival Monument, the Portuguese Arrival Monument and the Ruimveldt Massacre Monument?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, the retention for the rehabilitation of St. Peter's Church roof would be \$903,000; retention for the rehabilitation of the eastern wall of Fort Zeelandia will be \$753,000; the restoration of a section of St. George's Cathedral, \$1,138,000; the Portuguese Arrival Monument, \$8 million; the Chinese Arrival Monument, \$8 million; the 1823 Memorial at the Parade Ground will be \$8 million; And the Ruimveldt Massacre Monument will be \$8 million. The restoration of a section of the roof of St. George's Cathedral will be \$5 million, and rehabilitation of the historic Providence Hindu Temple will be \$3 million.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us where the Chinese Arrival Monument, the Portuguese Arrival Monument, and also the Ruimveldt Massacre Monument would be located?

Dr. Norton: I was informed that this information will be laid over to the House.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask the Hon. Member a question under the same head, National Trust, project code 1218900? The project includes payment of retention. Could you say to whom you are paying the retention and for what?

And secondly, as you are on the floor, could you say how the Ministry or department came up with four equal allocations for four different monuments. Has there been any consultation with any of the constituencies? Is there any design already available? Are you going to be going to public advertisement to invite people to send in designs? You seem to be *putting the cart before the horse*, in that you have a figure but you really do not know what it is going to be like. Has there been any consultation with any of the communities about these monuments?

Dr. Norton: Actually, there was a competition. It was advertised in the local newspapers and we invited persons to make submissions for those monuments.

Ms. Teixeira: When?

Dr. Norton: It was earlier in this year that that was done.

Dr. Persaud: Project code 1218200 – Building – Culture Centre: Could the Hon. Minister layover to this House exactly what will be done for the sound room with regard to the budgeted sum for this year? Also, could the Minister say when the installation of the lights will be completed? What is the scope with regards to the lighting of the National Culture Centre? Would it be modern and complete lighting that would be installed?

Dr. Norton: We promise the Hon. Member that that information will be laid over.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, I am going back to the monuments. Could the Minister layover for us the following: the date when this was advertised; how many entries were there; who was the evaluation panel; who had the winning design and whether these designs could be available so that the public could see what they look like? What would it cost to build such a monument and where is the location it is proposed to be built?

Dr. Norton: I can assure you that this was done, and enough thought was given to answer all the questions. The Hon. Member is asking for it to be laid over and it will be so done.

Programme: 058 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$133,672,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

3.18 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I beg...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you wish some time to have your troops in position?

Dr. Norton: Thank you very much, Sir. I would like some time to have my troops in position.

Mr. Chairman: You have that, Sir.

Current Expenditure

Programme 059 - Youth - \$809,192,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we must try to be, as I would say, off the mark and ready to go.

Ms. Teixeira: I did stand before. I am very good at that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: That is why I did not expect that you wanted to...

Ms. Teixeira: I know you were not looking at me; I get it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Minister, I noticed under Programme 059, the staff has increased from 35 to 135. That is an enormous increase of 100 staff. Under Contracted Employees, there is an increase from 18 to 56. Could the Hon. Minister please explain what has contributed to this sizable increase in staff under Programme 059 - Youth?

Dr. Norton: The entire increase in staff members came from the transition from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Department of Culture, Youth and Sports.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I then follow up, Minister? Again, line item 6116, Contracted Employees, in 2018, \$154,435,000 was allocated; the revised figure for 2018 has it at \$98,497,000. How is it possible that you budgeted \$154,435,000 and spent \$98,497,000, with a figure of 35 staff? The 2019 figure is what has gone from 35 contracted employees to 135 employees. In 2018, when you spent \$98,497,000, there were only 35 persons there. This is according to the table that you shared with us.

Dr. Norton: No.

Ms. Teixeira: In 2019, you are going to spend \$110,602,000, for 135 people. These figures are very confusing in terms of expenditures. Maybe you can clarify that, Sir.

Dr. Norton: The 38 staff members were transitioned from the Ministry of Education, Programme 406, to the Ministry of the Presidency, line item 6116. The increase is due to the increase in salaries for the 56 employees.

Ms. Teixeira: I think that the Minister may not be getting it. The \$154,435,000 was budgeted for in 2018, which I assume was anticipated for easy transfer. However, only 35 people worked in 2018, but the Ministry used \$98,497,000. In 2019 - this is just for contracted employees - you are now going to \$110,602,000. How many people were you paying in 2018 to reach \$98,497,000? In 2019 you have 56 people, but in 2018 you did not have that, you had less. How is it only a matter of a difference of one point something million, when you have tripled the amount of people that you are paying?

Dr. Norton: The transition period started in the last quarter of 2017 and was completed in 2018.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I, therefore, ask the Minister if the table that we are seeing before us is incorrect? It is the table on page 51 that states Staffing Details. It states that the staff of 2018 is 35, and the staff of 2019 will be projected to 135.

Dr. Norton: Under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, it moved from 18 to 56.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will have to end questioning on this. I will allow three other questions and then we will move on. You have the first question, Dr. Anthony.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6284, Other, could the Minister say whether this \$3,300,000 is the only amount of money available for the operationalisation of the National Youth Policy?

Dr. Norton: The operationalisation of the National Youth Policy is catered for under line item 6294. Line item 6284, Other, is an allocated sum which caters for payment for Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service, bank charges for wire transfers and installation of meters for water and light at the new training centres at Kuru-Kuru Training Centre (KKTC), Coldingen, Madewini and Den Amstel.

Ms. Chandarpal: Could the Minister provide the information on the salary range for the 10 highest paid contracted employees and what are the responsibilities of those persons, please?

Dr. Norton: The designations of the highest paid officers would be Project Officer, the Executive Officer at President Youth Award Republic of Guyana (PYARG), the Culture and Youth Officer...

Ms. Chandarpal: How much?

Dr. Norton: For the Project Officer, the salary is \$132,427; Executive Officer at PYARG, \$330,450; Assistant Director of Education, \$197,232; and the Assistant Director of Education and Training, \$197,232.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. This is the last question.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6294, Other, the Minister told us that moneys have been set aside here for the National Youth Policy. Could the Minister tell us exactly how much money has been set aside and what parts of the National Youth Policy would be operationalised?

Dr. Norton: The allocation is \$4 million. It is the part that deals with the education of the National Youth Policy from Regions 1 to 10.

Programme 059 – Youth - \$809,192,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 059 - Youth - \$ 236,997,000

Programme 059 - Youth - \$236,997,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: We are now at pages 52 and 53.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I beg to get my troops in order.

Mr. Chairman: Very Good.

Current Expenditure

Programme 05A - Sport - \$ 570,393,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that in 2018 you had 14 employees and in 2019 you will be having the same. Where the salary is concerned, in 2018, you were allocated \$46,051,000 and you only spent \$ 32,865,000. Here for 2019, there is \$33,615,000 being allocated. Could the Minister give us an explanation for this?

Dr. Norton: The increase, is as a result of the increases in salaries for 2019.

3.33 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6272 - Electricity Charges: I noticed that the budgeted amount was \$65,600,000. However, the Minister earlier referred to the fact that money had been transferred from Electricity Charges - \$12,000,000 *et cetera* - to Other, line item 6284 under Cultural Preservation. First of all, this is a transfer between programmes which is again a problem. But Minister, there is a second problem, \$65 million was budgeted, \$19 million was spent outside of what appears to be the more than \$12 million that was sent to Cultural Preservation. Why is it, if you underspent on Electricity Charges, you have put back \$65,600,000 in 2019?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, in 2018, we acquired a generator for the National Stadium and in 2019 we would be catering for the D'Urban Park's electricity charges.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6115 - Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled. In 2018, we did not have any but in 2019 nine are being budgeted for. However, I see under emoluments, \$6,794,000 was spent but for what? Then you are asking for \$8 million. Could the Minister tell us what he spent this money for in 2018?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, nine staff members were transitioned from the Ministry of Education, Programme 409, to the Ministry of the Presidency, Programme 05A, and that caters for the increase.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister say how much money under this line item is allocated to the various national sport organisations like football, cricket, athletics, swimming and so forth. I think there are about 30 different national associations. Could the Minister tell us how much is allocated?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under grants \$220 million has been allocated to the National Sports Commission.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, of the \$220 million that has been allocated to the National Sports Commission, could the Minister say how that would be disaggregated and how much each national organisation would get?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to inform the Hon. Member, the \$20 million was only for grants. Actually, it was \$225 million that was given to the National Sports Commission. But the amount that would be given to each association that makes a request would depend on the different criteria that we have established, which we could layover if you so desire.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, under the same line item. The Minister just said that \$225 million was given for 2018, and I said no it was \$220 million according to the record here. And in 2019, \$225 million is allocated. My question to the Minister is how the \$220 million was broken down or was disaggregated for the National Sports Commission.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the National Sports Commission is a subvention agency and it was a lumpsum that was given to the National Sports Commission for 2019.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like the Minister to tell us, if \$220 million was allocated as a lumpsum to the National Sports Commission, how did they spend this money? How much for salary? How much did they give out? For example, why was there no Inter-Guiana Games in 2018?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member could certainly get a breakdown should he go to Appendix ‘T’ which is available.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 5321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say if the National Sports Commission’s board is in place? Has it been appointed? When was it appointed and when will it expire?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the board was appointed in October, 2017 and it will expire in October, 2019.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, under line item 6272 - Electricity Charges: You indicated that you are covering the electricity charges of D’Urban Park. Could you indicate whether you are in full control of D’Urban Park or is the cost management of the D’Urban Park to be split?

Dr. Norton: Thank you for the question. Yes, we are now in charge of the D’Urban Park.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I noticed in 2018 that \$21,400,000 was budgeted and soberly the \$21,400,000 was spent. I noticed a little more liquidity in 2019, \$22,000,000 to be spent. Could the Minister give the House a breakdown of how much is to be spent on each particular infrastructure and the place?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I am just allowing one other question.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, works to be undertaken in 2019 include weeding of the compound, car park areas, playing field and fences at the Guyana National Stadium and the upgrading of on-field specialised sprinkler system for a football area at the National Track and Field Centre.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6282 - Equipment Maintenance: I noticed in 2018 that \$9,500,000 was allocated and it was spent. And I noted in 2019 that \$9,600,000 was allocated. I would like to

ask the Minister if the stop clock that has gone missing from the Lenora Track and Field Centre would be replaced?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I take it that this is equipment maintenance and not capital.

Programme: 05A - Sport - \$570,393,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 05A – Sport – 659,400,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, project code 4506300: I see a sum total of \$659,400,000 which is a provision for sports facilities. I notice the Legend states it would be for the completion of stands at Bartica and synthetic tracks at Regions 6 and 10. In the press it was stated that these two places were to be completed in 2018. I would like to know how much money was spent on them in 2018 and how much will be spent in 2019 on each, respectively.

I would like to also know for the construction of the fence at the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall, how much money is allocated for that. Construction of tents and washroom at the National Gymnasium, again, I would like to know how much will be spent? I would like to know how much money will be spent for the construction of a security hut at D'Urban Park. What does “provision for ground enhancement programme” mean and how much money would be spent?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, for the new projects, we have construction of the fence at the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall and at the Gymnasium; construction of washroom at the Gymnasium with \$10 million; construction of security hut at D'Urban Park for \$1 million; and ground enhancement with a total of \$36,400,000.

With regards to ground enhancement, while we do have areas earmarked across the country with what we are planning to do in the different regions, I must say that the possibilities of having to review the distribution or the location of these grounds is possible and might change before the final decision is made.

Mr. Chairman: This is to be the last question.

Dr. Anthony: Under this same project code, there is a provision here for synthetic tracks at Regions 6 and 10. Could the Minister say how much money was already expended on these tracks and how much he intends to spend this year on the track in Region 6 and Region 10? Could he also tell us where these tracks are to be located and when he intends to complete them? Because we are not certain when these facilities would be completed.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to inform the Hon. Member, 15% as mobilisation was paid on each of the tracks and the contracts were signed in November. The locations are the Burnham Park in Region 6, New Amsterdam, and at the Bayroc Community Centre Ground in Wismar, Linden. The duration of the Programme is six months. The Summary in Region 6 is \$141,865,865 and in Region 10 it is \$178,938,675.

3.48 p.m.

Programme: 05A – Sport – \$659,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management – \$90,902,000

Bishop Edghill: We welcome this new department. As we prepare for first oil the country would be benefitting. Could the Hon. Minister tell us the designations of the three staff in this department?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Thank you very much and thanks to the Hon. Member for the question. The designations of the three staff are Deputy Coordinator, Petroleum Geologist and Legal Officer.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6281, Security Services, we have budgeted a sum of \$30,320,000. Could the Hon. Minister confirm which building or buildings we should be providing security for in relation to this very small modest department?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This sum caters for the security that would be required for the new building which we would be constructing for the Department of Energy. As you know, this is a department that was established on 1st August, 2018 and we intend to build a state-of-the-art building to house that department. This sum of money is to cater for the security for that building.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say when he anticipates that the construction of this building would commence?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: A sum of \$100 million has been allocated and we anticipate that, in the first half of 2019, the construction will start.

Mr. Ali: If the construction of the building would commence in the first half of 2019, then the Hon. Minister would agree that next year you would not need this elaborate provision for security because, definitely, the building would not take six months to be completed. You would not have a state-of-the-art building in 2019 and so you would not need security services for that building. Could the Hon. Minister explain this, please?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: We would not need all of that. Under this Head, we cater, also, for the security of the residence of the Director of that Department.

Mr. Ali: I thank the Hon. Minister for his clarification. Could the Hon. Minister say what is the salary and the cost of the non-salary benefits of the highest paid employee and the lowest paid employee in this department. It is just three employees, so it should be relatively easy to pick up.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There are three sums; the highest being \$530,000 and the lowest \$320,000.

Mr. Ali: *Budget 2019* provides for payment of wages and salaries. If you check the total of the amount just stated by the Hon. Minister, it would not amount to \$20,597,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain this? What is the value of the non-salary benefits?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is the sum is the correct amount. The breakdown has to do with the actual salary, telephone allowance, vacation allowance, gratuity and National Insurance Scheme (NIS).

Mr. Ali: This amount is budgeted under “Wages and Salaries”. If you look at the expenditures catered for under “Wages and Salaries”, you will see Administrative, Senior Technical, Other Technical and Craft Skills, Clerical and Office Support, Semi-skilled Operators and Unskilled, Contracted Employees and Temporary Employees. Telephone Allowances, Security and these other charges are not under this category of expenditure, so it cannot be part of the \$20 million.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: In fact, the matters that I addressed earlier are there.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say what is the total non-salary benefits to the employees?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: As far as I am aware, there is no non-salary benefits catered for here.

Ms. Teixeira: Why not? Do they not have to pay NIS?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I listed those already.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister alluded to security services, telephone allowance and housing; these are all expenses that must have a value. If the Director, for example, would be benefitting from these facilities then there must be a value; a budgeted amount that allows you to arrive at a final package. The Director is already employed. He has a salary and he is getting a number of allowances. What is the value of that package?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum is \$20,591,000. It deals with salary, gratuity, vacation allowances and the other items that I have spoken about. I did not speak about house allowance and so on here. These are salary benefits.

Mr. Ali: If there are other allowances, for example, line item 6271, Telephone and Internet Charges, would the Director be benefitting from any allocation under this head and what is the value of that which the Director would be benefitting from, as part of his allowance?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These sums are allocations for the office of the Director. Therefore, if you consider that to be a benefit, as far as I am concerned, that is an operational expense. These are things that are connected to the work that the Director has to do. Therefore, these are sums allocated for that purpose.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, we are not...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we would have your question and then two others. We must move on. We cannot spend the afternoon here.

Mr. Ali: What we are trying to arrive at here is the package that the Director is receiving. We are looking at the budget here and there are a number of blank items. It is not about whether he is entitled to or whether it would help him in the operations of his duties. We do not have a problem

with that. We just want to understand the package that the Director is receiving. The Minister alluded to...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will not be able to answer the question. The Minister would be able to.

Mr. Ali: I know.

Mr. Chairman: Please address the question.

Mr. Ali: The Minister alluded to security services at the Director's residence. That is a cost and there must be a value assigned to all of this.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I think the Hon. Member wants to ask a specific question about the Director's salary and benefits. You asked about the staff and I gave you that information. The Director is paid under a World Bank facility which, basically, is a US\$20 million facility. The Director's salary, is as I understand, is about US\$8,000. That is the package, as I understand, has been worked out with the Bank.

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much. We are moving closer to the information. The Director's salary is approximately US\$8,000. Is there any other benefit that the Director is receiving from the Government of Guyana that would add to a value that is derived as a functionary in the position?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The security at the residence of the Director.

Mr. Chairman: This is the last question, Hon. Member.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you, Sir. Under line item 6302, Training and Scholarships, I am sure this is capacity building, so could the Hon. Minister tell us in what areas and who will be benefitting from this allocation?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The allocation is to facilitate training and capacity building for a better understanding and participation in the sector for stakeholders and the citizenry at the community level.

Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management - \$90,902,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management - \$333,273,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 2509900 – Furniture and Equipment: The Minister indicated to us that they are now in the process of getting a building. Where would they put these furniture and equipment that would be purchased? I suspect that this department is operating out of the Ministry of Presidency. Is there a building that is earmarked for rental or for use while the building is being built?

4.03 p.m.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The Hon. Member is correct. The department is operating out of the Ministry of the Presidency and it would operate there until the building is completed, so, we would not be renting any building for the department. The vehicle...

Bishop Edghill: I did not ask about vehicle.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Okay, you did not ask about vehicle, sorry.

Bishop Edghill: Just to follow-up; since we are assured that the department is in the complex of the Ministry of the Presidency, could you tell us what you are proposed to buy with \$5 million in terms of office furniture.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I could give you a list, Hon. Member, but if you want me to read it out, I could read it out.

Bishop Edghill: You could lay it over. I am working with Chairman's timing.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Okay, I understand that the time is very short, but what I would say is that these are items that are for the office operation of the department; laptop computers, projectors and items of that nature. As I said, I could lay it over to the Hon. Member because we would have the exact price for every item listed here.

Programme: 05B – Petroleum and Energy Management – \$333,273,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimates. (4.05 p.m.)

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, please, could I have at least two minutes from now for the real troops to take their positions.

Agency 53: Guyana Defence Force (4.06 p.m.)

Current Expenditure

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support – \$12,977,028,000

Ms Teixeira: As we have no staffing details, I have to ask a question in a general way and that is, when we look at the list of staff from line items 6111 – Administrative, 6112 – Senior Technical, 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled, 6114 – Clerical and Office Support, 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, 6116 – Contracted Employees and 6117 – Temporary Employees; the figures here do they include the salaries of the Civil Defence Commission (CDC), provision for the Guyana People's Militia and for the Cadet Programme, also, which you started in a number of secondary schools? Are these included, in terms of the cost for the running of these programmes? I am speaking about the CDC in terms of employment, the People's Militia in terms of the persons who run the programmes as well as whatever benefits and stipends they get; and the Cadet Programme in terms of teachers and lecturers who are Guyana Defence Force's (GDF's) Officers in the school.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, in fact, the sum includes the CDC, which I indicated earlier had moved from the Ministry of the Presidency and is now under the Guyana Defence Force. The sum caters, in fact, for all of those categories of persons that the Hon. Member spoke about. Here I have a completed list of those persons with the actual sums of money allocated to them and I am prepared to lay this list over, as well, to the Hon. Member within a short space of time; today.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 –Contracted Employees: There is a sum to the amount of \$34,407,000, but in the staffing details, mark contracted employees, there are no numbers there in terms of the number of contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister explain this discrepancy where there is a sum allocated for contracted employees, but in the staffing details there is no number with respect to the number of staff under contractual arrangements?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is the shift that I spoke about earlier of the 20 staff members from the CDC who had gone over now to the Guyana Defence Force. I have, also, a list of those persons and their emoluments, which I could provide to the Hon. Member if he so desires.

Mr. Gill: I am pleased to see an increase in salaries of \$601.5 million over the 2018 Budget, could the Hon. Minister say whether this amount includes the 20% salary increase that was promised to our Joint Services by the A Partnership For National Unity and Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) during the 2015 election campaign? I am referring to line item 6111 – Administrative, 6112 – Senior Technical, 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled, 6114 – Clerical and Office Support and 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives.

Mr. Chairman: I am bound to say let us try to hold whatever atmosphere exist and let us not try to get it different.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This sum caters to an increase in the number of personnel within the Guyana Defence Force.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Gill, do you have a follow-up question?

Mr. Gill: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, please go ahead.

Mr. Gill: Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister say whether this includes the one-month tax free bonus that the Government discontinued?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I think I need to answer as the Hon. Minister of Finance did, and that is to say that there is no allocation here for no one month. There is an allocation here that would take care of the Discipline Services as well as all other Public Servants in relation to a bonus for an entire year, tax free, starting from January, so they would benefit from that.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There is an amount of \$685 million, could the Hon. Minister give a guarantee to the House that this sum would not suffer the same situation that previous amounts suffered with respect to the leakage of fuel to sources that are unauthorised?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I think we might need to have a translation for that because the Hon. Member is suggesting that there was some leakage. I do not know whether, in fact, the fuel leaked or if there were some amount of pilfering taking place. But, what I could say to the Hon. Member is that this sum of money is being allocated for fuel to take care of the needs of the Army. This has to do with training, field, tactical exercises, patrols and surveillance of the air, land and sea space.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, just to crave your indulgence and to further clarify or to expand on the subject. We understand that there is an average consumption of fuel per month by the Guyana Defence Force, but this average consumption is not usually the adhered to. Therefore, what I am seeking is whether, in this particular case, where such huge amount of resources are allocated for fuel consumption, the average consumption, as indicated by the Attorney General, for example, will be adhered to and that there would not be any further leakages of fuel by persons unauthorised?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes, I think I could give the Hon. Member the assurance to the extent that the GDF has in place, and will continue to put in place, arrangements for the proper utilisation of resources that are provided to them by the State.

With respect to fuel, the allocation per vehicle, this is the set allocation per vehicle; is at three gallons of fuel per day for each vehicle and not exceeding 90 gallons per month for these vehicles. It may varies depending on serviceability of these vehicles or the tasking, but, generally speaking, that the guide by which the GDF works.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6292 – Dietary: There is a slight decrease in the allocation for dietary for 2019. With the increase of the cost of living, could the Hon. Minister explain this decrease? Is there a reduction in personnel or are we now putting our men and women uniform on a diet?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Actually, there is an increase. For the sum for 2018, there was an [*inaudible*] to take care of the final figures for 2018, but when you compare 2018 with 2019 there is an increase. Additionally, I need to speak to something about dietary in the GDF and that is that, we are, actually, internalising a lot of these processes. We are now, rather than buying these tin stuffs from all across the world, we are utilising local produce. So, there is a part of the GDF that deals with how we could sustain our soldiers out in the fields utilising packages of local food.

4.18 p.m.

So, the cost that we would find, overtime, is going to be reduced significantly because our soldiers are now using local food rather than spam and all of these sardines, and so on, that come from overseas. This is a sort of realignment to the readjusting of our Army, just as we are doing in the rest of the country insofar as our dietary requirements are concerned.

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support - \$12,977,028,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support – 1,042,500,000

Mr. Rohee: Under Marine Development, project code 1200300, there is a sum of \$69 million that is allocated for provision of quarters, facilities, trailers and a boat house. Could the Hon. Minister give the House an indication of the progress that has been made, vis-à-vis the budget of what was proposed last year as compared to this year, in respect of these quarters, facilities, trailers and boat house?

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: These are new projects that are contemplated for this sum, and they are: the rehabilitation of the female accommodation at the Headquarters of the Coastguard; there is the rehabilitation of the base at Morawhanna, which is a coastguard base that takes care of a lot of the smuggling of fuel that takes place in that region; trailers for the metal shark patrol boats – these are boats that can be launched at very short notice for patrol, and we need to purchase some trailers to move them around; rehabilitation of the wharf and Fort Island; and the boat house at Eteringbang. These are the sums that we are going to be using for those purposes.

Ms. Teixeira: Project code 2404600 – Air, Land and Water Transport: in 2018, it was \$73,437,000, and with a supplementary financial paper it went up to \$700 million. This year I see it is \$300 million. However, the increase that was granted in a supplementary earlier this year was for the purchase of four aircrafts for the Guyana Defence Force (GDF). However, there was a report in the newspapers saying that two of the four – they did not mention the other two – were still being checked for air worthiness since August this year. And so, we want to see that, in this case, you are buying vehicles, boats, engines and trucks. In terms of the aircrafts, what is happening with them? In one of the papers, you are quoted, Minister, as saying that, while the aircraft were

checked, the engineers at the Air Corps wanted to take the engine aircraft apart, and that they are still doing that. This is a report from the *News Room Guyana* on 30th November, 2018. Could you advise us on the status of the aircraft, on which a lot of money was spent?

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I would like to use this opportunity to give some more clarity to that situation. There are four aircraft which we said we were going to be buying in 2019. Two of those aircraft, the two Islanders, have been delivered and the two Sky vans will be delivered by the end of January because there is need for some checks. The two that have been delivered... in fact, when they come I will just do a report here that the 1,000-hour maintenance inspection is a civil aviation requirement whereby the manufacturer prescribed maintenance procedures are carried out. This inspection guides maintenance personnel to completely disassemble the aircraft, removing, inspecting, replacing and/or repairing, as serviceable, all components. This work has commenced with the disassembly of the aircraft, identification of parts which need to be replaced and the ordering of new spares. These spares have arrived, and work is continuing in accordance with the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority's (GCAA) requirement. My understanding is that by 31st January, 2019, the aircraft will be ready for flying. The cost was US \$300,000.

Mr. Rohee: From what the Hon. Minister said, apparently no careful assessment was made on the aircraft before it was purchased. It came, it appears, as if thought it was a *hunk of chunk*. What the Minister mentioned just now; that figure, is that the total cost of disassembling and reassembling of the aircraft as compared to the actual cost of the aircraft? What was the actual cost of the aircraft, compared to the cost of disassembling and reassembling the aircraft?

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: As I said, and I think I had to comment on this matter before when some person said that we are buying old aircraft, the Islanders are the work horses of this industry. The two types of aircraft that we are buying, the Islanders and the Sky Vans, are the workhorses in the industry. When they were saying that we were buying old aircraft, somebody, I believe, that made a statement like that had decided to go online to check to see whether they can find an aircraft like that, of comparable price. Then they recognised that these islanders are aircraft that people all around world, when they have it they do not lose it. The fact of the matter is that we have spent US\$300,000 on each of these aircraft and that the rest of the work that is required to bring them up to flying is US\$14,000.

Ms. Teixeira: Minister, when the supplementary financial paper came here, there were a number of questions to do with the actual aircraft and the proposal on this side was the Sky Van and the Twin Otters. The question was not to do with Islanders; it was whether it would not have been better to purchase de Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otters, which are considered the workhorses of interior locations like us, Australia, and other places.

The second issue that came up then was the age of the aircraft and their serviceability, and those questions were not answered. The reason why this has come up is because we spent, according to the supplementary financial paper, over \$400 million in supplementary, but the GDF had also vired, or moved, \$200 plus million in advance to put in the order for these aircraft. So, the figure of \$700,149,000, which is here, I believe, is understated. That is my personal view from my own memory, which could be wrong. However, my concern is that the Islanders came and the Sky Vans have not. I am sorry, but I do not quite buy what you are saying. The aircraft came in here, they should have had their airworthiness, they should have certain things ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Ms. Teixeira, is there a question?

Ms. Teixeira: So that in the Budget ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Ms. Teixeira, would you please ask the question.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. The question is why are two aircraft sitting here since August and cannot fly one foot off the ground? That should be a concern because it cost the taxpayers \$700 million and it is going to cost more. Could you repeat for me, in case I missed it, how much it is anticipated that the expenditure, now, for servicing these two aircraft – we are not dealing with the Sky Vans yet because they have not arrived – will continue to cost? What is anticipated from the Budget this year, because in fact, your Budget is finished, so where are you going to get money to service these aircraft and put them up in the sky?

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I said these aircraft cost US\$300,000 each and not \$700 million. It is US\$300,000 each, which is US\$600,000. And, as I said, that the maintenance will be US\$14,000. It is important to note that these aircraft did not come here on a boat. They were flown from the Federative Republic of Brazil into Guyana. It is not that we are buying aircraft that could not fly. They were flown for almost two days from where it was to get to Guyana. It was the GCAA's

requirement that these aircraft be stripped down and checked before they certify it for flying here. I just want to give the Hon. Member the assurance that whenever you have a flight on that aircraft, you will be safe.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Mr. Rohee, and there will be one other question after Mr. Rohee.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 280200 – Agriculture Development: The sum of \$54,000,000 between 2018 and 2019, has been allocated for agriculture development. I assume that this has to do with the Guyana Defence Force's Land of Canaan farm. The public would like to know what they are actually producing because nothing is seen coming out from this farm. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what produce, apart from the preparation of pens, chickens ... I do not know what is happening there, but could you explain to the House what is being cultivated at this farm, because I know at the Defence Board meetings, we usually would have reports as to how many eggs, how many poultry, how many of this and how many of that? Is the GDF becoming self-sufficient?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, have you asked a question? I thank you.

Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon: I am thankful for the question and I want to state that the GDF is self-sufficient in the production of pork. It is self-sufficient in the production of eggs. It is, right now, 20% sufficient in the production of poultry. But, the reason I said, earlier, that we are looking at dietary is because, at that farm, we are going to be producing the food for the GDF. You will find the dietary expenses will go down further next year, because we are going to be spending that money there, so that when people pass and they see what is happening, they can see it. We took a deliberate decision to not put an opaque fence there. It is so that people can actually see what is taking place and they can see how the money is being spent.

4.33 p.m.

I think that very, very soon maybe we will be able to even feed the Parliament with the request to its needs. What we are also doing there is that we are providing a sort of facility that is also a teaching and learning facility in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, so that school children on their school tours can actually go there and see how a farm is done. They will also have this understanding that agriculture is the future of this country and the way to go and that is where they would get the examples.

Mr. Chairman: This is the last question, Hon. Members.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 5100200 – Equipment: Eighty million dollars has been allocated for equipment. I would wish to know from the Hon. Minister, was the ultra-atomic cleaning machine found before he gave any approval for this amount of money? The machine that was missing.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am advised that there is an ongoing investigation with respect to that equipment and as soon as the investigation is completed, if it is necessary, I will make that information available.

Under this project code as well, we are investing in drone technology. We are supplementing our aircraft fleet with drones that will actually provide us with near real time information on what is happening on our borders and our coasts.

It is important to understand and to note as well that the equipment that we are buying for the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) is going to assist in providing not only security for the State, but security which investors are required to know that their investments are safe, and that the equipment which we purchase will be able to provide that security for them in the work which they are doing.

A lot of that money is basically allocated to that and a lot of the personnel allocation to the GDF will be to the technical corps, namely: the air corps, engineering corps, the agriculture corps and to facilitate all of these things that we are talking about. [Ms. Teixeira: *inaudible*] No. These are military type drones and they fly for long hours and they give you wide coverage of the landscape.

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security - \$1,042,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. (4.37 p.m.)

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: I hope that the Officers who are departing will know that they cannot speak across the Chamber.

Agency 02: Office of the Prime Minister (4.38 p.m.)

Current Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$759,675,000

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: There is an increased allocation of over \$100 million. First of all, could the Hon. Prime Minister say to us even though there is an increase of \$100 million, why is there no provision for the Commissioner of Information?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is there a line item on that?

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: At page 430 the details are there of what the agencies are benefiting from.

First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: The allocation for the Commissioner of Information is not under line item 6321, but it is under line item 6284. A provision was made for that. I want to say that we had carried this Commissioner of Information who had rendered that office dysfunctional and had provided no report to this National Assembly.

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will not permit Hon. Members to conduct themselves other than they have been doing all along.

The Hon. Member, Mr. Ali, if you have a question you will ask your question. You do not dictate how any other Member should ask or answer the question. Let us have respect for one another in this House. Let us have it.

The Speaker does not want to intervene again, so I will know that Members will render that as not necessary.

Mr. Nagamootoo: There was no allocation for the Commissioner of Information. The Commissioner having been dismissed for rendering his office dysfunctional, had rendered no report, had provided no account of what he has done, and no provision has been made under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. We are re-examining the issue of the office of the Commissioner of Information under line item 6284 - Other.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you, Sir. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate to this honourable House the date that the Commissioner of Information ceased to occupy his office?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I have here by a letter dated 8th March, 2018, the services of the Commissioner has been terminated.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Prime Minister tell the National Assembly, under the same line item, what steps has his Government taken or will be taking to ensure that the statutory obligation of having a Commission of Information would be in place since there is no allocation of funds for that office?

Mr. Nagamootoo: We recognise that this is a statutory office and the contractual employment of the last Commissioner having been terminated, the Department of Governance and the Office of the Prime Minister would be looking at what measures would be taken to have the office resuscitated.

Bishop Edghill: I have a number of questions under the same line item 6321. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate to this House that since the Commissioner of Information ceased to occupy the office, according to the letter he just indicated, on March, 2018 and it has been seven months now since the nation has been without a Commissioner of Information based upon the Prime Minister's admission in the House, when can we expect to have this very important office of a Commissioner of Information in place as part of your governance framework?

Mr. Nagamootoo: We do recognise the need for a statutory office of the Commissioner of Information. At the moment, the former Commissioner of Information has engaged the Government of Guyana in a series of litigation still before the Court in relation to certain payments he has been demanding for various things. Our Office has paid him his salary in full and because of the issues...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, I do not know whether you enter into details which maybe engaging the Court. I guess...

Mr. Nagamootoo: Yes, Sir. I am not going into the details of what is engaged in the Court. I am saying that because of the issues raised, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Government of

Guyana would be reviewing the issue of the statutory provisions for the appointment of a Commissioner and would in fact be looking towards this in the new year.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Prime Minister tell this House and by way inform citizens of Guyana, that in the absence of a Commissioner of Information, how can citizens have redress under the law that exist as it relates to access to information? Is it considered to be outside of the realm of good governance not to have this Commissioner in place, because of the mandate of that Commissioner based upon the Act?

4.48 p.m.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Chairman, it is a speculative question, because the last Commissioner rendered no services to the people of Guyana.

I cannot anticipate how they have felt disappointed, but, I should suspect that as a politician that they all have felt disappointed. There is need for the resuscitation of this office and to put someone, we believe, after the procedures would be observed of fairness and transparency, of someone who is much more than a former functioning politician that has been partisan, someone who should be neutral, and fully qualified to hold the office as a Commissioner.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, before I move off from my questions on the Commission of Information, as a citizen I have accessed information from that office. I would like to do so continually. Now that I know that there is no Commissioner, I am concerned.

In 2016, there was no allocation made under this provision for the Commission of Information. Then, it was referred to that provision would have been made under line item 6284 – Other. I had asked the question at that time if it was the intention of the Government to scrap the office of the Commissioner of Information and we were assured no. Again, we have a Budget that is coming to us where there is zero allocation and we are told that the Commissioner has ceased to function. Would we have an office of the Commissioner of Information?

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Chairman, I have answered that question several times by saying that a review would be undertaken.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6321 - Subsides and Contributions to Local Organisations: The Commission of Information Budget of 2018 was \$22,864,000. You said, sir, that you had terminated the services of the Commissioner of Information in March 2018. It is now December. How is it in the records here \$22,864,000 has been expended in the absence of a Commissioner of Information, in the absence of any allocation for an office, and staff for that Commissioner when he was in place? Could you explain how this \$22 million has been spent when there was no Commissioner from March to now?

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Chairman, we have not, from the Office of the Prime Minister budgeted previously for the Commissioner of Information. When we assumed responsibility for the Governance portfolio from the Ministry of Governance, we provided funds for the salaries of the Commissioner from the Office of the Prime Minister. The \$22 million had been advanced as salaries to the Commissioner... [Ms. Teixeira: This is 2018 and not 2016.] It is 2018. ...and a part of 2018.

Our responsibility was, we did not fire the Commissioner, the Commissioner was hired by way of contract by and under the Ministry of the Presidency. The letter that was issued to him was from the Ministry of the Presidency and we carried out our part of the bargain to pay the salaries up to such point that he was retained.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Prime Minister, are you saying that a man that was terminated in March 2018 continued to be paid until December 2018, that all the money expired? How is that possible? It was terminated, budgetary allocation was made for his salary, yet all of this had been spent as of December 2018? How was the money spent when he was not in the employ of anybody; not you, not the Ministry of Presidency, not the Minister of Governance – whoever that was?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I am advised that the money that is recorded here to the amount of \$22,864,000 would not probably reflect the true figures. I understand from what transpired is I was out of the country and the transmission of the letter of termination might have been made to my office, but not recorded. I have a feeling that the Commissioner might have been paid additional moneys beyond the termination of his contract and the finance department will be looking into that to verify what figures he ought to have been paid. From my own knowledge afterward when I investigated, he had been paid additional money which is now being interrogated.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6284 - Other: There is a budgetary allocation of \$80 million. Could the Hon. Prime Minister explain to us how is this \$80 million will be spent, the programme, the item, a detailed breakdown? If we even have to hear about framing of photographs, it is not a problem.

Mr. Nagamootoo: We certainly would like to present guests of the people of Guyana with their photographs framed and Cabinet portraits as well as portraits of His Excellency, the Ministers, we present to the various schools and Government department neatly framed pictures.

Mr. Nandlall: What about former Presidents?

Mr. Nagamootoo: We have under that line item some of the items such as school tours that will be organised to cover 50 schools at a cost of \$3 million. We have repairs to furniture and a poster of sofas - \$600,000, e-mail domain \$1,080,000, website hosting and maintenance - \$2 million in 2019. We have not launched our website as yet. E-networks from \$250,000, purchase of power strips -\$40,000, purchase of cell phones - \$400,000, stipend for work-study students; we have quite a number of students being indicted into the Public Service, \$250,000, the Prime Minister's Community Outreach Programme - \$5 million, supervision consultancy for radio - \$16,400,000, provision of meals and stationary for trainees for radio broadcasting - \$2 million, that would be for a new set of trainees for radio Anna Regina scheduled for 2019, and also the ongoing training for trainee broadcasters in the six radio stations that have been commissioned, Constitutional Reform an allocation of \$38.6 million has been set aside which would be dependent on whether or not the Commission would be formed under the law that is now being reviewed by the Standing Committee for Constitutional Reform – the by partners and Committee of this House. I understand a meeting was held on Friday and all, but one Member of the Opposition turned up briefly. We are making some great advances in Constitutional Reform.

We have the Governance office being funded with \$2 million to retain technical experts where applicable to review treaty obligations on reports on the implementation of these treaties.

The inter-agency collaboration and consultation sessions- \$1 million regarding Governance initiative and training. The civil society consultation sessions are based on issues of human rights, concerns that are raised from time to time for \$2 million. The work on open Government partnership; we have a partial membership fees of \$2 million to pay. The universal periodic review

cover works and eight human rights treaties, which is \$3 million coming up to the sum of \$80 million under this head.

Last year we have had the allocation under this head, we are expected to return \$65 million to the treasury, because our work in Constitutional Reform has not progressed as anticipated, because of the failure of the Standing Committee to deliberate on the Bill that was referred as referred to the National Assembly to take further actions.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321 – Subsides and Contributions to Local Organisations: I would like to deal specifically with the Department of Public Information. Mr. Chairman, could the Prime Minister tell us how much money he spent on publications in 2018? How much is the budgeted sums for publications in 2019? What was the process used for the award of the contract since the person who is doing the publications is a person that is high ranking in the Party that he is a part of, if there was a process?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I am advised that for last year the sum of \$15,031,000 was spent for print and non-print materials. This includes printing of booklets, newspapers, brochures, filers for distribution. I am advised that the publication has been undertaken by the Guyana National Newspaper Limited which is wholly owned Government printing facility. I am not aware of what is being alleged.

5.03 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6284 - Other: The Hon. Minister said that the provision for Constitutional Reform was made under this head. He said, in 2018, because they did not do anything, the sum was returned. If you look at the Budget 2018, \$109,210,000 was budgeted line item other, the revised 2018 is \$107,060,000. Did the Hon. Minister misled the House when he said that sums were returned under this head in 2018?

Secondly, in 2019, the Hon. Minister said that under - Other, the Prime Minister Outreaches which includes travel, meals, and all expenditures it is being taken care of under that head. When you look at line item 6261 Local Travel and Subsistence, 6265 Other Transport, Travel and Postage, and 6293 Refreshment and Meals; the Hon. Prime Minister is spending another \$14.5 million. Is

this a duplication of expenditure or is this ever-increasing support that the budget has to make for the Prime Minister's Office?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I am instructed that this...

[**Mr. Ali:** You are what, instructed?]

Do you want me to spell the word 'instructed' or you do not understand it?

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not know what example we are giving to those who are looking at us from outside of this hall. I do not know what our school children are forming when we give the impression that we have no respect for any procedure in this House. Yet, we claim the protection of those procedures when it so pleases us. I do not know what we intend. Prime Minister, please proceed.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The Minister of Finance, explained this morning that these numbers here are indicative numbers. The numbers would be revised in relation to moneys that have been spent. Under line item 6284 - Other, I am told that sums of money have been vired to another head which is line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies and line item 6271 – Telephone and Internet Charges, it is not reflected here in this figure. There is no question of misappropriation of any sum of money. It had been legally...

[**Mr. Nandlall:** For instance, persons in this House are

charged for far less.] Yes, I know. Law books may not be expensive, but yet that is no excuse. The money from this side has been vired to some other areas, but fully accounted for.

Mr. Ali: I have another question in relation to the additional \$15.5 million.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you can ask any question as long as the question is in accordance with what we would expect here.

Mr. Ali: Under Line item 6284, Other, the Hon. Prime Minister said that there was a saving to the nation as a result of the expenditure not being made in 2018 in relation to Constitutional Reform. What the Hon. Prime Minister is saying now is very different from what he said earlier. He said that the money was vired to another head. If you look in the Budget, what the Hon. Minister said...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ali, if you insist on that road, I will assume that you have no question to ask. You must decide if you have a question to ask and then ask it.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, there is no corresponding increase under any other head to reflect the virement. The Hon. Minister needs to explain this to the people of this country, where is that reflected here? We are speaking about \$66 million.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Ali, is there a question that you asked?

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will do my best to ensure that we do not descend, but I will need your support to stay above. I hope that I will get it.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Under Line item 6284, Other, the figure of \$109,210,000 was moved downward to \$107,060,000, because from that amount the sum of money \$2 million was vired to line item 6271 – Telephone & Internet Charges and \$250,000 was moved to line item 6222 - Field Materials and Supplies, s, from \$100,000 to \$150,000 was moved into line item 6222 - Fields Materials& Supplies and the \$2 million to line item 6271 - Telephone & Internet Charges. That accounts to the difference between one and seven - It is not wrong. We were told that before the Estimates in the 2018 Budget, I was told that this \$109,210,000 was given to the Prime Minister in lumpsum for him to spend at his discretion and that bubble has now been burst. There is this interrogation of where \$109,210,000 has gone.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister we are dealing with question and answers. I would like us to remember that and to stay there.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6284 – Other: The Hon. Prime Minister informed this House that as a result of the non- implementation of the Constitutional Reform in 2018, there was a saving of \$65 million which was vired to another head. Can the Hon. Prime Minister point to the head that the \$65 million missing was vired to?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I have not said any single word of \$65 million being vired somewhere. I said that \$65 million would be returned to the Consolidated Fund at Ministry of Finance because it had not been spent, for the purpose for which it was allocated. That is reflected here in the revised numbers.

Mr. Ali: The Prime Minister is taking us into uncertainty.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you asking another question?

Mr. Ali: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Please, go ahead and ask it.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6284 - Other: The Hon. Prime Minister said...

Mr. Chairman: Is this the same line item you just asked on?

Mr. Ali: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, please.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Prime Minister said that the \$65 million was returned to the treasury...

Mr. Nagamootoo: It would be, would be! No, no, no. Grammar, please.

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Ali: The Minister's budget came at the end of October 2018. The revised estimate is up to that period and it is still reflecting here that the \$65 million was spent. The revised estimate for 2018 is saying, \$65 million was spent. It would have meant that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ali, no, no!

Mr. Ali: It would have meant that the money had to be released to the agency and the Hon. Minister needs to direct us...

Mr. Chairman: We have to understand that we are here to ask questions, to get answers, to follow-up questions, and to do many things. I would tell Hon. Members what our achievement today was.

We spent over four hours discussing the first item in this House. Maybe, it was very well spent, I do not know, but Members will know. All I am saying is: if you rise to ask a question, ask the question.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Prime Minister advise us that looking at the head \$109,210,000 and revise which according to the Minister of Finance had been spent,

\$107,060,000. Could you advise where the \$66 million that you said would be returned, where will it come from if you have spent it all?

Mr. Nagamootoo: The Hon. Minister of Finance was at pain this morning to explain that in the 2019 Budget, you would have when the Auditor General, would have done their adjustments and they would have done balancing of the figures then you would have the true reflection, even of the revised figure. The \$65 million, for those who do not understand what I am saying or would not understand, is within this figure of \$107,060,000.

[Ms. Teixeira: Which is expended.]

It has not been expended. It is included in \$109,210,000 at the end of October. This is up to December. It is there, \$107,060,000. The \$65 million is reflected in the \$107,060,000 and it cannot be considered as having been spent. It is there in this figure.

If it is not spent at the end of the year and I am saying that we have no reason to spend it, it will be returned to the Consolidated Fund. As I said last year and some previous years, this is the only Ministry that it has no valid reason to spend or to waste money on Commission of Information that does not work, then it would be returned to the people.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am going to allow two more questions and then we are going to proceed.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I would like to return to the allocation for the Department of Public Information (DPI). Could the Hon. Prime Minister tell this House, is there a layout artist in the employ of the DPI? If there is one, why was the layout work for the publications was outsourced and at what cost?

5.18 p.m.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I am advised that the Department of Public Information does not have a layout artist. It retained the services of a layout artist at \$90,000 per publication and there are seven different publications. So, there is no in-house graphic designer or artist.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Prime Minister confirm to this House that the person who was contracted to do the layout for publications is, in fact, the husband of the Deputy Editor-in-Chief or a high ranking official at DPI? And does this not constitute a conflict of interest?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I am not aware that the person who does the layout is the husband or spouse of a senior personnel at DPI. And in any case, the imputation is malicious that one cannot have one's spouse in employment in this country when that side is quarrelling about the lack of jobs and opportunities.

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Prime Minister detail for this House, the list of those who received overseas assignments? What were the criteria used for the selecting of those persons who went on overseas assignments and how much was spent? What was the size of the delegations, how much was spent and the names? In the absence of names, the designations of those persons.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Chairman, the DPI has a budget of \$5 million for overseas assignment and that is to cover the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads Meeting, the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) and other business overseas. If the Hon. Member would allow me, I could layover the names of those who went overseas and their gender and relationship with their spouses *et cetera*, if he so desires.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Rohee, this is the last question.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The Minister has 22 members of staff on contracts. In fact, the overwhelming majority of his staff are on contract. Could the Minister give us an indication as to who is the highest paid of the contracted workers or the five highest paid contracted workers, their salary and the positions that they hold within the Ministry?

Mr. Nagamootoo: The top five, 2008, the Advisor, Safety and Security and Information Technology... [**Mr. Ali:** Who is this Advisor?] Mr. Rohee understands what I am saying... to the Prime Minister, basic salary of \$431,215 with an allowance of \$80,000; Special Assistant, Public and Diaspora Affairs and Investigations – \$370,440 with an allowance of \$70,000; Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister – \$367,500 with an allowance of \$60,000; Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and Protocol Officer – \$248,593 with an allowance of \$18,000; Regional Representative, Regions 2, 3 and 6, \$232,147 with an allowance of \$42,500. Those are the top five and the figures for those.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, Mr. Rohee and Mr. Nandlall, I will put the question now.

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$759,675,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$149,125,000

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat – \$149,125,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: That brings us to the end of the consideration of the Office of the Prime Minister.

[*Agency completed at 5.26 p.m.*]

Agency 52: Ministry of Legal Affairs

[*Agency started at 5.28 p.m.*]

Current Expenditure

Programme: 521 – Main Office – \$315,189,000

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I see the sum of \$285 million being allocated. Could I ask the Hon. Minister to explain which local organisation that sum of money is being allocated to?

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]: If it pleases you, Mr. Chairman, this is an amount to the State Assets Recovery Agency (SARA).

Mr. Nandlall: As a follow-up, might I ask that the Hon. Minister to explain to us what exactly is SARA using this money for? SARA, as we know, has been in existence now for nearly two years.

Mr. Williams: What is the question?

Mr. Nandlall: I want to know what the \$285 million is being spent on. **[Mr. Patterson:**
Search for the lawbooks.] I have the lawbooks, they do not have to search for them.

Mr. Williams: The total amount is \$285 million. Ten million dollars will be spent on capital and the balance on recurrent expenditure.

Mr. Nandlall: Ten million dollars takes us to \$275 million of taxpayers' money under the rubric of Current Expenditure. With the greatest of respect to the Hon. Minister, we need a little more information in the Committee of Supply. I would like a breakdown of how we are spending \$275 million of the people's money and what we are using the \$10 million for in terms of capital.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we are discussing Current Expenditure.

Mr. Williams: Yes, Sir.

Two hundred and twenty-five million dollars of that will be spent on wages and salaries; \$59 million on other charges. As I indicated, the \$10 million capital will be for the employment of a forensic and legal consultant.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Chairman, your advice was lost on the Minister, that we are considering the current estimates. How does the employment of some expert be considered capital?

I hate to do this, but I have to ask again. We are told that \$225 million is going to be spent on salaries. It behoves me to request from the Minister a breakdown of the employees who are going to be paid \$225 million, the position each of them holds... [An Hon. Member: And their names.] Not their names; we know who they are.

5.33 p.m.

We want to know the positions that they hold, their remunerations and the total. Once we get the breakdown we will know because it is a relatively small staff from the Department of Public Information.

We are told that \$59,000,000 would be spent on Other Charges, that rubric again. This is the Committee of Supply, we are here to get greater details, Mr. Chairman. That is why we are here; to scrutinise the breakdown. Other Charges, does not satisfy my interrogation and I respectfully request a breakdown of what these Other Charges are.

Mr. Williams: The post of Director, the salary is \$4,700,000 per month - that is the total for salary and benefits; the Special Assistant's, \$3,300,000; the Executive Assistant, \$1,860,000; the Secretary, \$679,000; Deputy Director, \$3,300,000; Executive Assistant, \$688,000; Chief Administrative Officer, \$2,500,000; Executive Assistant and Administrative Officer, \$679,000;

Legal Advisor, \$3,000,000; Lawyer, \$1,400,000. Sir, this could take some time, but I have all the time in the world.

Mr. Nandlall: We have the time.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Williams, unfortunately our demands here do not allow us the time. We have much to conclude before we end today.

Mr. Williams: I can undertake to lay this over to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Chairman: I hope the Hon. Member, Mr. Nandlall, would find it convenient to accept it in that way.

Mr. Nandlall: We have not had enough oralised here and I would not object to a copy of that being given with promptitude, Sir.

Mr. Williams: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Nandlall: As a follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister confirm that those were monthly salaries and emoluments that he was referring to for each.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, that would be supplied to you.

Mr. Nandlall: It is to prepare me for my next question, Sir. For my clarity of thought, I was wondering whether he would assist me in clarifying whether those were monthly payments that were announced. Minister, would you care to assist me?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall, while the Attorney General is satisfying himself that all the information to which he referred and which he would send to you is of a particular category, would you ask the other question that you have?

Mr. Williams: If it pleases you, Mr. Chairman, the monthly take home for the Director would be the basic salary of \$1 million and the other amounts that were added to take it to \$4,700,000 includes gratuity, which is every six months, vacation, travelling and risk allowances and the light bill. That is what it is.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Nandlall, you said that you wish to ask another question.

Mr. Nandlall: No, Sir.

Programme: 521 - Main Office - \$315,189,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 521 – Main Office - \$206,810,000

Mr. Nandlall: Project code 1501500 - Justice Sector Programme: There is \$195,000,000.

“Provision for institutional strengthening, justice reform and purchase of equipment.”

Might I ask that the Hon. Minister give us some details in terms of the nature of the programme? For institutional strengthening, what are the justice reforms that we are going to be expending this money on and the equipment that are scheduled to be purchased?

Mr. Williams: If it pleases you, Mr. Chairman, there are six components of this programme. For Alternative Sentencing, which is in relation to legal aid, the provision here budgeted for is \$26,500,000. This is for the salaries of Legal Aid Officers. It provides for the recruitment of two Attorneys-at-Law and four paralegals to legal representation and request for alternative punishments for selected non-violent offenders on remand. The salaries for the Attorneys-at-Law are US\$3000 each per month, and for the paralegals it is US\$740 each per month. There is also capacity building, the sum allotted is \$5,200,000. This is allocated for executing a training programme to increase representation skills. The training was designed, and the first phase of works started in 2018.

We now go to the strengthening of Probation Services. The implementation of a Probation Development Action Plan is allocated \$19,300,000. This will be spent on the implementation of the action plan recommended in the assessment study of the Probation Department which was completed in 2018.

There is also a component for Capacity Development and we are allocating \$20,800,000 here. This involves the development of a training programme and executing the training of Probation Officers

countrywide so that they could execute their functions effectively. These Probation Officers must have the different specialities, not only for monitoring persons but to deal with persons who are sentenced to community work and mental and other health affected persons passing through the penal system. It is a comprehensive programme of training and developing of different facets of the Probation Officers.

There is the Design and Implementation of the Restorative Justice Programme for which \$10,400,000 is allocated. We have capacity development...

Mr. Nandlall: I did not ask for that, you have gone ahead.

Mr. Williams: No, you asked me about them.

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

I am trying to answer the question; I am not sure what is happening. We move to the component of the Design and Implementation of the Restorative Justice Programme. As I have said, we allocated \$10,400,000 here. This is to develop and execute a training programme which seeks to train the Judiciaries, Magistracies, Police Prosecutors, probation services and other stakeholders about Restorative Justice practices and how to use it in Guyana. It is estimated that almost 1,200 officers will be trained. This essentially involves bringing victims and perpetrators together to look at options other than the usual adversarial options that exists.

There is a Public Awareness Campaign and Sensitisation Programme for which \$12,400,000 has been allocated. There will be a Public Engagement Campaign which will be conducted to educate the people of Guyana about Restorative Justice practices and how this would benefit them. The office set up has been allocated \$8,300,000; Restorative Justice offices would be outfitted with furniture and equipment.

We have the implementation of a Case Management System for which \$12,500,000 has been allocated for the system design. This involves mapping of all stakeholder needs, designing a Case Management System and making recommendations for implementation. This would connect all the relevant agencies involved in bringing a matter to the court system; members of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and the Guyana Prison Service (GPS), Prosecutors, Judiciaries, and Magistracies. The system itself has been allocated \$45,700,000 for that purpose.

There is also the training of Judges and Magistrates and the use of alternatives to pre-trial liberty. Here we have \$13,100,000 and this is for capacity development for the Magistracy and Police Prosecutors. This Programme seeks to carry up various training activities to promote the effective use of alternative sentencing so that we would avoid the overcrowding in prisons and eschew recourse to custodial sentencing. In this connection, we have had a consultant who has been reviewing the Summary Jurisdiction (Procedure) Act to weed out archaic and other laws that have been there since the days of slavery. That would also deal with minor offences for which people are detained and have clogged up the prison system. In that connection, we also have to look at the question of the possession of marijuana which, as you know, makes up a large percentage of the prison population.

Support for the Law Reform Commission is allocated \$20,400,000. We have identified the need for training, addressing marijuana as a public policy issue, legislative reforms, and other pieces of legislation such as the Mental Health Act, the Bail Act, the Substance Abuse and Psychotropic Substances Act. These Acts relate to persons with mental health problems, as I said, coming through the penal system. There was no real distinction made in relation to such persons.

5.48 p.m.

They would have to be diverted from the conventional prison system and be specially treated. The question of a bail act is important, and it is to give guidance to the magistracy on important sentencing. And, of course, the substance abuse has to do with the special treatment of the courts. Since 1988 there was a provision in that Act that has never been operationalised and we are moving towards that at the present time. So, we have a grand total of a \$195 million for this purpose.

Mr. Nandlall: Minister, you have given us quite a lengthy excerpt from the IDB manual and appreciate that I will ask some finer details now. First of all, could you tell us who is administering this justice sector programme and from where is it being administered?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure about the question, but I would believe that it is being administered by the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

Mr. Nandlall: I know that the Ministry is administering as the agency. Is there an office setup to administer this programme and who is the Coordinator, Administrator or Chief Executive Officer?

Mr. Williams: Thank you for the question. There is a Project Manager and they are operating from an office in Hadfield Street.

Mr. Nandlall: Minister, you spoke about legal aid and I get the impression that legal aid is now being funded out of this programme. Could you confirm that and is it the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic that is housed in the Maraj Building, Georgetown, that you are referring to, or is it that we are administering legal aid through a different agency?

Mr. Williams: Thank you for that question. No. it is not the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic. This is a specially funded project. It is a pilot project being funded by the IDB and it intends to reach persons who have hitherto been unrepresented. Remember, in my budget presentation, I had indicated that 71% of the prison population had no legal representation.

What has happened is that the capital towns have been developed by President Granger and these capital towns now have enabled easier access to justice by aligning magisterial districts with the 10 regions. So, in each region, there is a capital town and there would be a magisterial district. This eases the hardship, particularly in the hinterland, for the people of the hinterland. If you were in Regions 8 and 9, you would have had to go to Region 2 to get bail and look after matters of that nature in the court system, and obviously that was onerous.

For example, in Region 9, we have set up Lethem as a magisterial district and whereas there were court sessions once in every three months now there are court sessions every day in the region. It means that more lawyers are required because it is hard for people to give service if they are not in those areas, for example Mabaruma in Region 1 and Mahdia in Region 8. So, citizens would be able to have greater access to legal aid and representation as a result of this project. This is really a watershed in the access to justice in Guyana.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, for the record there was always a Magistrate's court in Lethem, and under our administration Lethem was made a separate magisterial district. Sir, you would remember from your younger days that in Mahdia and Monkey Mountain there were Magistrate's courts there. But I would still want to pursue this matter.

This is a programme that will finance legal representation of litigants throughout the country. Would these officers have an office in these different regions out of which they are going to

operate? In my mind, I am trying to picture how the programme is going to unfold. Has the Ministry identified various offices close by to these magistrate's courts and would people be there to offer representation? Tell us how this will work.

Mr. Williams: I am not sure if I could thank you for the question, but I will answer it. This is a projection for our work in 2019; we are saying that we wish to do these things in 2019. Therefore, efforts would be made to ensure that we provide the legal representation as far as possible countrywide, including the hinterland. So, the question of identifying lawyers could not be dealt with now. Because we are saying to you that we would want to have two lawyers for example, in Region 4 and four paralegals; US\$3000 a month each for the lawyers. We would have to advertise and do the necessary things. We cannot handpick because we practice transparency and accountability. Then we have to advertise for buildings and so on.

Ms. Manickchand: A follow-up on the legal aid, Sir. Minister, at present there is a formal legal aid clinic that exists in the country, and it is called the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic. It has offices in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. I agree that even itinerant services in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 would not be enough. Do you anticipate that the new legal aid is going to be incorporated into the current, extant structure?

Minister, the problem becomes, or the problem I am foreseeing, is that if you pay select lawyers US\$3000 how do you explain that to our functioning legal aid lawyers who right now get nothing close to \$600,000 and more a month. Then, how are we procuring them? I know you said it will be through public advertisements, but would it not be more sensible to incorporate any legal aid programme into a formal structure. To me, this sounds very airy.

Mr. Williams: Unfortunately, speaking of the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic in that context when I just said that, despite their existence, 71% of the prison population was unrepresented. It really does not do much with the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic and that is why we have this pilot project to explore having a national framework for legal aid so that everyone could have access to legal representation in the system. This is an IDB project money and it was not contemplated, when it was designed, that it should incorporate or be encompassed in any existing legal aid scheme. I suppose, as we develop this pilot project we could, in all probability, examine how we could mesh this. But I think the existing legal aid... even in Linden I think there is an independent legal aid

centre. So, we will have to examine them. In fact, we paid a consultant to map all the legal aid clinics that exists in Guyana. So, at the end of the day, we could look at that to see at the end of the funding of the programme what we do with what we have created *vis-à-vis* the existing ones.

Mr. Nandlall: Minister, you made references to a number of pieces of legislation, the Bail Act, the Legalisation of Marijuana, an act dealing with Alternative Sentencing, and I keep hearing Restorative Justice and I presume that it will have a statutory basis. Could you give us some indication of when these bills are going to come to the National Assembly because, as the Hon. Former Minister of National Security is adverting, we have these things in the pipeline for a while. There is the Law Reform Commission which we have establish here by law two years ago, but you have not appointed a Commissioner to it in two years. Could you give us timeframes, during the course of 2019, of when the Bail Act and other legislations will come and when will the Law Reform Commission be appointed? Those are all part and parcel of this programme. So please assist us with some timeframes.

Mr. Williams: First of all, to clear up misapprehension and misconception: I have not said anything about legislation for marijuana. What I said that is they are going to explore the discussion of marijuana. So, my learned Friend should not misrepresent something that was not mentioned.

Mr. Nandlall: So, you are exploring the whole of 2019.

Mr. Williams: Do you wish an answer, or do you want to keep talking?

Mr. Nandlall: Yes.

Mr. Williams: In fact, this is a five-year programme and so we have a lot of time within which to decide when to onboard any of the relevant acts. Of course, we have a system where we do consultations on Bills, so it is not an overnight process. It is a process whereby we send to stakeholders, we have consultations and other engagements and then after the *to and fro* there is going to be a Bill that comes to this honourable House. So, at this stage, where we are spending \$195,000,000, we wish to say that we will execute this phase.

Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration -\$70,225,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration - \$900,000

Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration - \$900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 523 - Attorney General’s Chambers - \$447,732,000

6.03 p.m.

Mr. Nandlall: Sir, there is project code 2401100, Land Transport, purchase of vehicle: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what vehicle he is purchasing, because he purchased a Landcruiser last year?

Mr. Williams: This is a Nissan 4x4 X-Trail at a cost of \$6.7 million, and it is for the general transportation needs of the Law Reform Commission and the Commissioners.

The Commissioners have been identified and they have to be sworn in by His Excellency. You know the reason why they have not been sworn in as yet. We have already acquired a building for them, we already have staff in there for them and as soon as they are sworn in, the office would be up and running.

Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$447,732,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers – \$9,100,000

Programme: 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers - \$9,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$28,584,000

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The revised budget of 2018 states that \$1,843,000 was spent under this head. We are now budgeting \$16,251,000. My Maths is not that good but this is several thousands, if not million, percent in increase. Could the Hon. Minister assist us because, once again, he has blind-sided me with these figures like he did with the allocation for the State Assets Recovery Agency (SARA) in the other programme.

Mr. Williams: The increase is due to the appointment of one person who is Public Trustee Official Receiver and State Solicitor. That person's salary is \$900,000 and it has to be increased because the last person's salary was equivalent to that of a Judge's. Even now, with this amount, she is underpaid.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Chairman, kindly permit me half of a minute of a preamble. The State Solicitor and the Attorney General's operations are contained in the same Chambers. Yet, we have a duplicity of a whole host of expenses, for example, security. Why are we budgeting \$4 million for security under "Attorney General's Chambers" and then another \$4 million for security under "State Solicitor" when both are located in the same building? Could the Hon. Minister tell us about telephone, electricity and water charges since one office is located on the upper flat and the other on the lower flat of the same edifice,

Mr. Nandlall: I am sorry that my learned Friend is labouring under a misapprehension but there is no provision for security under this programme.

Mr. Nandlall: Your Honour, I am asking about telephone charges and so on.

Mr. Williams: You just said security.

Mr. Nandlall: I withdraw that question. It is not a problem.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Nandlall, do you have another question?

Mr. Nandlall: Yes, Sir. The question still applies to other expenditures, for example telephone and internet charges. The same internet service applies to the establishment.

Mr. Williams: Which line item are you looking at?

Mr. Nandlall: I am looking at line item 6271 – Telephone and Internet Charges.

Mr. Williams: I am not too sure what the question is but what I could say is that the State Solicitor has an independent department on the lower floor of the Ministry of Legal Affairs. They office has its own telephone systems and its own charges.

Mr. Nandlall: You are lying. Were you not there?

Mr. Williams: I am not sure, but it has not changed since the Hon. Member was there.

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor - \$28,584,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor - \$700,000

*Programme: 524 – State Solicitor - \$700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.
(6.12 p.m.)*

Mr. Chairman: I propose that we now take a suspension. Of course, if Hon. Members have a different preference for us to proceed, I will certainly encourage that. I hear no enthusiastic response. We will take the suspension now and we will return at 6.55 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 6.13 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 7.14 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Agency 04: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (7.14 p.m.)

Current Expenditure

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$2,451,629,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6284 – Other: I noticed that there is a large amount of money here being budgeted. I assume that the other goods and services to be purchased would be a lot; therefore, I wish to ask the Hon. Minister to provide, in writing, the list and cost attached to the other goods and service catered for. Also, if I could also ask the Hon. Minister, as I am standing, to provide, in writing, the other operating expenses being catered for in line item 6294. I would also like to also ask what is responsible for the more than \$19 million increase in budgetary provision?

Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mr. Greenidge]: I wish to thank our Hon. Colleague for the questions on line item 6284 and line item 6294. As regard line item 6284, the request was that the breakdown be provided by way of a document. What I could say to the Hon. Colleague is that this item covers the legal fees, by and large, for the work done in preparation for and in connection with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case.

As regard line item 6294, the increase is intended to cover the cost of the premium for the building owned by the Government and utilised by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat which, up to now, had not been covered for insurance. This is the insurance premium which is to be paid for the first time. This amount is to be met from Government's coffers. There is also an expectation that there will be an increased number of local conferences. These are the two items under line item 6294.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284 – Other: The original amount budgeted was \$300 million in 2018 and the Supplementary Financial Paper No. 2 in May increased it to \$788 million, to be taken out from the US\$18 million signature bonus. Could you say if the \$788 million, which was used from the signature bonus, went to the Consolidated Fund? I noticed, in the *Budget 2019*, you are requesting \$1,88,000,000. It is almost exactly the figure of 2018 revised. Could you say what this figure would be used for? I know it is for legal fees, but it seems extraordinary; \$1 billion in 2019. Could you give us a more detailed idea of the 2019 request and the use of the 2018 supplementary?

7.19 p.m.

Mr. Greenidge: The amount shown for 2018 was paid against submissions by the lawyers. In 2018, the legal team was supplemented compared to how the process started. So if we started with three firm of lawyers, by the time we got to the end, there was an additional major firm. This

amount spent in 2018 has in it, a supplementary provision which met the extra cost to the extent of \$788.049 million.

For 2019, the estimate has been put relatively close to 2018, primarily because, these are legal fees based upon the hours of work that the lawyers estimated that they would do. As you know, if you have five or six lawyers, there are Chambers, they have assistance and there are documents to be reproduce, so, it is actually difficult to make a reasonable estimate. I think, for the most part, you assumed that there would be similar hours. We do not, for example, know for certain, much about 2019, especially if, for example, the Venezuelans decide to participate or they suppose, for example, to submit a response to the memorial and if they do so, then the quantum of work that would be needed would be different from the quantum of work if they did not make the submission. So, this is really an educated guest.

Ms. Teixeira: It is a very large educated guest, a rather significant one, \$1 billion. Mr. Minister, does this amount include, in the lawyer's fees, not only their research and hours hourly rate, but when they have to travel? What I am asking is whether this include their traveling, hotel or is it kind of a retainer contract that you have that is all inclusive, or is it that, if they have to flight to Geneva or Vietnam or whichever part of the world, you are paying for that as well, separately and out of this \$1 billion?

Mr. Greenidge: Once more, the fees paid to the lawyers cover all of the expenses that they submit and that valid expenses. We reimburse them for all of those expenses, once they are valid and they could demonstrate that they are part of the arrangements for the preparation of documents. Sometimes, of course, depending on the expense, it may come a lot later than it was incurred depending upon when they receive invoices and bills and so forth. But, yes, all their expenses; travel, printing, additional advice, all of that is met from this sum.

I know that it is suggested that the amounts are large. I was in the process of trying to find the Ghana case where the Ghanaian Government retained, I hope that I have not given got this wrong, something like 20 legal firms to work on its case...

Mr. Chairman: What?

Mr. Greenidge: Firms and not individual lawyers. The cost of the exercise was relatively large, but, in the end, it won the case and the question is, the resources that it protected itself from were worth a multiple of the cost of the lawyer's fees and one has to bear that in mind. I believe that, in that case, even its neighbours were asking themselves whether they had been unwise in only retaining two firms.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6294 – Other: To follow-up on the original question of my Colleague Ms. Africo Selman, \$90 million was allocated for 2018, but only \$71.5 million was used. You stated, in answer to Ms. Selman, that the \$90 million, this year, was to pay the premium. What was \$90 million for 2018 to be used for which was underspent because only \$71.5 million out of \$90 million was spent. Could you say what was the reason for that underspending?

Mr. Greenidge: This sum was, indeed, budgeted for 2018. The intention was to spend on the Heads of Mission Conference. Because of the packed nature of our schedule, in the middle of the year and then, again, at the end of the year; exceptional numbers of meetings and so forth, we were unable to hold the Heads of Mission Conference and, indeed, we are now intending to try and hold it reasonably early in 2019.

Ms. Teixeira: If we would move to line item 6322, Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations, I think that is on page 436 to 437. I have a few questions there. I noticed under Culture Preservation and Conversation of the Ministry of Presidency that the CARICOM Reparations Commission was allocated \$10 million in 2018 and 2019 and when I look at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' programme one, CARICOM Reparations Commission also have an allocation of \$18.85 million for 2018 and \$4.504 million for 2019. Could you say how is it that we have two agencies within the Government contributing to the same body; one is \$10 million for Cultural Preservation and Conversation and one is Foreign Affairs - \$4.5 million, after having spent \$18.8 million. In fact, both agencies provided money in 2018? In fact, in 2018 it was \$28.85 million for the two agencies and in 2019 it would be \$14.5 million. Is there a reason for that?

Mr. Greenidge: Well, thank you very much. The amount and the exact uses for which it has been put by the Ministry of the Presidency would, I think, be best provided by the Ministry of the Presidency. But, we believe that there are two different contributions here. In the case that is shown here, there is, of course, arrears that the country owes the agency. This is the \$14.3 million paid in

2018 and the expenditure for 2019 under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head, which would be the assess contribution for \$4.5 million. I am not quite sure what are the specifics of the payment for the Ministry of the Presidency. Of course, I am sure that Ministry would be happy to answer at an appropriate point.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member also advise on the... I notice that the contributions to CARICOM Electoral Observer Missions has been increase from \$3.1 million in 2018 to \$18.397 million, which I am please about, but, is there a specific reason for the increase by six times? Sorry, my line was wrong. In fact, it is zero. Have I got it right?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes, correct.

Ms. Teixeira: So, why was our contributions as a country decreased from \$3.7 million to zero for the CARICOM Electoral Observer Missions?

Mr. Greenidge: Well, as my Colleague is aware, the participation in the Observer Mission is the function of two things. One, is the elections themselves that are been called and two, those for which CARICOM has agreed that it would participate. Now, in 2019, I believe that, and I do not remember exactly, at least one of the missions called for by CARICOM, at the level of the foreign ministers... CARICOM together could not agree in participation in that mission, so a limited number of countries participated. As regard the other elections, I think we were, perhaps, unable to provide the type of skills that were needed for that team. It is a function of those two things.

Ms. Teixeira: I am just trying to figure out why would we have zero for 2019. I mean Guyana has always participated in the CARICOM Electoral Observer Missions for CARICOM and I cannot have recalled, I could be wrong, but I cannot recall us ever having zero. I understand that, for 2018, there may have been issues, but why zero for 2019?

Mr. Greenidge: It is zero because we have a credit from 2018.

Ms. Teixeira: Do we have a credit?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes.

Ms. Teixeira: Guyana, actually, has a credit in CARICOM?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes, I know that you would find that a little surprising, but that is the new Guyana.

Ms. Teixeira: Could you say what the credit is, is it \$3 million?

Mr. Greenidge: It is US\$16,000 plus.

Ms. Teixeira: Okay. Could the Hon. Minister then go to the next page in terms of the United Nations (UN) Peace Keeping. These are quota fee as far as I know, so a number of the fees that are put into the budget are what we have to annually pay overtime and sometimes we owe. But the UN Peace Keeping was \$5.7 million for 2018 and \$13.2 million for 2019, are we, therefore, going to be playing a more active role as a country as peace keeping at the UN level by sending troops or soldiers to these war zones, because there is an increase? There must be a reason why we are increasing.

Mr. Greenidge: Very well madam, if that is your wish, you would be happy to know that the figure shown in this item for 2019 is neither a reflection of increase nor of lowered participation. It arises from a reconciliation of our obligations and the actual payments. It was found that we are in arrears to the tune of something like US\$32,762 and that is why the amount has been increase. It is arrears.

Mr. Rohee: I am following up on that question on the question of Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations which was raised by my Colleague, Member of Parliament (M.P) Ms. Teixeira. I noticed under the International Organisations for Migration (IOM), there is an increase from \$1.7 million to \$3 million, could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to elucidate on the role of the IOM in Guyana with respect to the issue pertaining to Venezuelans nationals. The fact that Guyana is not member of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the status of these individuals are not very clear, in respect, to migrants and refugees. So, could the Hon. Minister could explain where that stands in relation to our association with the IOM?

7.34 p.m.

Mr. Greenidge: I am afraid I might have to ask for clarification of the question but let me answer that part that I understand. As regards the contribution put for the Budget of 2019, the increase or the amount shown here of \$360,000 arises from the assessment of contributions. We have an

arrears of F577, and the assessed contribution, in 2019, has also been increased. So, the change in the figures attributed to that.

For the question asked about the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the bit that needs clarification is the reference to individuals. The IOM, at this point in time, is an agency with which we collaborate in order to fashion a policy on migrants, including our diaspora. I think, during the previous administration, there was a project to work with migrants in which this was documented, there was an agreement to work on websites and a number of other things which included trying to chase them and consult with them, with a view of fashioning policy. That is in train.

We have also been involved with the IOM in relation to trying to, apart from dealing with a diaspora, formulate a policy specifically in relation to the Venezuelan and Cuban migrants. Within that arrangement, they have offered advice and they have offered to see whether we need equipment and assistance. That work takes place with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, also, with the Ministry of Citizenship, the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) and the others. What I am trying to convey is that it is a fairly wide, comprehensive range of cooperation with them; dealing with our own nationals who are abroad, the challenges they have abroad, how we might communicate better with them and how we could take advantage of the skills and interests they have abroad, whether it is in terms of repatriation of incomes, remittances, and alike, as well as finding mechanisms that enable communication between ourselves and those Guyanese abroad. As part of that exercise, a number of countries and cities were covered.

In response to the first draft of their report, we then responded to a suggestion by them that they have a look at it again with a view to looking at an additional process of dialogue with the diaspora abroad. That was done, and the exercise expanded.

The part of the question I was not quite clear about was the question you posed about the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the fact that we are not a member of the UNHCR. We, in fact, have received, and get advice from the UNHCR in connection with the challenges arising from the movement of persons. The Regional Manager, I think that is the title, has visited on, at least, two occasions; I think at the end of 2017 and early 2018. It may have come subsequently and had discussions with the Ministry of Public Health and with the Ministry of Citizenship, or, at least, teams related to the UNHCR, with a view at looking at the challenges

posed by the irregular movement of persons across our borders and those of our neighbors: Brazil -Guyana and elsewhere. It has been quite, I would say, an extensive process of collaboration with them. We found them to be quite helpful and we have taken advantage of a lot of the advice they have provided.

Ms. Teixeira: The last one of the list is the World Trade Organisation (WTO). I noticed that the figure has dropped from \$6.3 million to \$1.6 million. Is there any particular reason for this or does Guyana have another credit there?

Whilst I am on my feet, could I also ask you to indicate to the House if there are international bodies that we should be contributing to but have been unable to, or are not at this point? I will just leave that for now. There are others not on this list who we owe or that we should be contributing to but have not done so in the 2019 Budget.

Mr. Greenidge: The answer to the first question is that we do have arrears owed to the WTO. Sorry, we do have a credit from the WTO amounting to CHF 22,000; something along those lines. That is the answer to that one.

As regard the other bodies, it may be that one of the agencies we did not pay is the CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC).

Ms. Teixeira: It is here.

Mr. Greenidge: Okay. The reconciliation was done and there are some arrears that have to be paid on that one. We will have to pay that in 2019. Just at the back of my mind, the CARICOM committee which looks at information communication technology (ICT), the name of which slips me just now – it is an agency that the CARICOM has decided to terminate - the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN), that is it, had assessed us for an amount that we found a little unorthodox given that we had not been a beneficiary of any of the services they had enjoyed. And you know that for a variety of reasons, that entity was closed. So, there was some discussion taking place, or there has been some discussion taking place on that.

You had asked whether there was any entity that we might not have paid but have owed. That is one that we do not really acknowledge a debt to, for the reasons I have explained. You will see, under the CKLN, no amount budgeted for 2019.

Mr. Rohee: Under the same line item of Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations, has the Ministry of Foreign Affairs done a cost-benefit analysis of all of these international organisations for which Government is partaking and paying these huge subsidies and contributions? Has Government done a cost-benefit analysis to determine how our country is benefitting or losing, and in what areas, with respect to the roles being played by these organisations?

Mr. Greenidge: The answer to this is that we have not done a quantitative cost-benefit analysis, in the technical sense. When I say, “the technical sense,” one of the first jobs I did as a researcher was to employ the technique of cost-benefit analysis. I tell you this only so that you will understand that an exercise involving so many agencies – you can see the number of agencies here – which provide such a wide variety of services, does not leave us with the possibility of getting a sensible cost-benefit ratio, having looked at it. What we can say to you is that, in each of the cases, as you indeed would have found when you were in office, the benefits of being a member of the organisation varies from year to year. It is particularly important in a small country, where, for things, whether it is the migration rules that people are trying to put in place or in relation to finding a single instrument by which you deal with ICTs and where you are looking for a common approach, you are protected from more burdensome costs by being a member of these institutions.

We are, for example, in the case of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), just to give you a competent example, unable to find moneys to attend all of the meetings of the UNASUR or the people. When UNASUR meets and is looking at whether the road infrastructure or something else, the big countries send 10 or 12 persons, each of whom is a specialist in some area. You are unable to match them and you are often unable to even send one person, but, given its political import, you may do so. In recognition of this challenge that the smaller countries face, Guyana and Suriname, which are members of this grouping, have been treated to the special privilege of the other countries subsidising, sometimes totally, attendance at these meetings.

The point I am trying to make is that being small in size, the cost of attendance and participation in all aspects of these meetings is certainly too burdensome. And if you were not to be within a particular group and you have to pay as the need arises, it will become even more onerous. So, I am satisfied that, overall, one gets more than one puts into these groups, although you cannot say

that every single year for every single entity. But overall, taken in the round, as it were; yes, the cost-benefit ratio is greater than one.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: I was surprised to see that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was spending quite a bit on local travel, when I know that you usually spend quite a bit on overseas travel. I thought it was rather strange. I see the sum of \$35 million was budgeted for 2018, you spent \$29 million only, and you are putting back \$29 million for 2019. Could you say what kind of local travel and subsistence is going on in your Ministry? Are these chartered flights to the interior or anything like that or is it for the drones?

Mr. Greenidge: Happily, we are not yet in a mode whereby we can move our equipment and diplomats, either by drone or by substitutes. In fact, this item pertains to the cost of staff postings. It concerns staff postings and re-postings, from Missions abroad to the Head Office and from Mission to Mission, from Toronto to New Yorkers' postings, and administrative visits by the headquarters' staff to check and to oversee the work of the persons in the Mission. In those movements, there are transport costs, hotel accommodation, meals, excess baggage and the like. It is relatively heavy because, at some time, there are fairly significant movements.

Ms. Teixeira: I am coming to the end of my questions. Under line item 6241, Rental of Buildings, I know this is not overseas. The sum of \$32,090,000 is allocated and it was the same in 2018. According to what is stated in the ledger, this is what was spent, and you are coming back for the same amount of \$32,090,000. Could you say what buildings the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is renting?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes. The building in question are not buildings. The rental of buildings pertains to the provision of a residence for the Secretary-General (SG) of the CARICOM Secretariat. This is a residence that used to be on Camp Street. He has now moved to the East Coast, but I forgot the exact name of the place. The rental for persons reposted, because when officers are reposted, those rentals have to be paid by us, is also included in that.

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy - \$2,451,629,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.49 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$52,912,000

Ms. Teixeira: Project code 1200500 – Buildings: I assume this has to do with the completion of the Head Office or the project called HOUSE. Is the payment of retention for the completion of the works there or is this for another building works that is going on?

I also noticed that \$157 million was budgeted and the expenditure is \$146 million which is \$10 million under. Is it expected by the end of this year that you will use the entire allocation? For 2019, will this complete the new building for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Mr. Greenidge: There is a 5% retention for completion and that accounts for the figure of \$11,812,000 as shown here.

As regard to the \$157 million, we have at this point in time arrived at a point where we have to wait for a critical input to be imported. The ceiling tiles for the building is late, and you are right it is a protocol and consular building. They were supposed to be shipped, I do not know how many times, in the recent past. We are expecting them still in the coming week, but until those are in place, then a number of electrical works and other internal works will have to wait.

That is the reason why this amount has not been spent. We hope, and we have budgeted to spend it before the end of the year. As I said, we have been advised that it ought to arrive during course of this week or the coming week.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2501100 – Office Equipment and Furniture: Could the Hon. Minister indicate based on the description of the project which of the overseas embassies or overseas missions are going to be benefiting from this allocation?

Mr. Greenidge: The \$10 million shown against this item is not for equipment for overseas missions, but entirely for the head office.

Mr. Rohee: What is it for?

Mr. Greenidge: It is for the head office.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1200500 – Buildings: Construction of embassy and fence: I assume this is the Embassy in Brazil...

Mr. Greenidge: I think you are a little premature.

Mr. Rohee: Pardon.

Mr. Greenidge: We are at Programme 1.

Mr. Rohee: I am sorry.

Mr. Greenidge: I was just indicating that we are not yet at the item being raised by the Colleague.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy - \$52,912,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$3,771,088,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: I noticed there is an increase of \$40 million. Could the Hon. Minister say is there an increase in rental rates for the buildings already being rented or are new buildings being rented?

Mr. Greenidge: The figures and the increase that is shown here of 4% reflects increased rental cost which increases are a part of contractual obligations. It involves the rental for offices in Toronto, India, and New York.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I assume these are persons who are mainly your Ambassadors and High Commissioners. Is that correct? There is an allocation of \$520 million which is an increase of almost \$40 million more from 2018. Are we hiring more High Commissioners and Ambassadors or replacing any? Do we have more Consul Generals? What explains the increase between 2018 of \$462,243,000 to \$520 million for contracted employees under this foreign policy promotion?

Mr. Greenidge: The increase shown here reflects salary increases, as well as payments for education, and medical allowances.

In addition to the amount shown in 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has requested and would expect that \$51.9 million be paid by the Ministry of Finance against employment expenses here.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances: Again, this has gone up from Budget 2018 which had a figure of \$484,522,000 and we seem to have spent so far in 2018 \$508,522,000. First of all, where does this additional money come from and have we vired it from somewhere else?

For 2019, the projection for benefits and allowances is \$598,222,000: Could the Hon. Minister say what are some of benefits and allowances that are available for those different levels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whether external in the foreign missions, or in the local offices, because I think this is one of the highest levels of benefits and allowances in the Public Service other than the Ministry of the Presidency?

Mr. Greenidge: I believe the suggestion that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff anywhere are so privileged is almost intended to cause me problems with my staff members. The payments here are end of contract benefits for the locally recruited staff [*Inaudible*] local to the mission abroad, and it covers also with medical insurance and vacation allowances for those staff posted to the missions.

We also received from the Ministry of Finance \$147 million against employment cost for 2018. The other cost for 2018 are the end of tenure benefits and other benefits and allowances. The end of tenure year benefits was paid, for example, to Washington which came up to \$43 million, in New York \$47.8 million, Consul General in New York \$27 million, London, Ottawa, Toronto, and Barbados. I do not know if you want those details, but basically that is how it is broken down.

Ms. Teixeira: Follow-up: Based on the allocation and the actual expenditure under Benefits and Allowances: how was this gap filled, because you were spending more than what was allocated? Was there any virement or some other means of increasing the sum under this head?

Mr. Greenidge: The additional cost was met by the Ministry of Finance under line item 6141 - Other Employment Cost.

Ms. Teixeira: Did you say line item 6141 - Other Employment Cost?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6331 – Refunds of Revenues: Five hundred thousand dollars. Normally this deals with when you sell passports you would offer services at our foreign missions and this becomes a standard figure. Do we ever increase the amount of money that we earned in offering these services at the mission, because it is always at this standard which is \$500,000? First of all, am I correct in saying this deals with passports, notarising documents, and birth certificates, the services that our missions offer... why does it seem to never go up? It always just stays at this nice and neutral number of \$500,000.

Mr. Greenidge: Might I add to the answer I gave to the previous question that part of the reason, because I saw my Colleague looking a little puzzled, why one would have had to resort to the Ministry of Finance line item 6141 – Other Employment Cost, was of course a result of a court decision where some additional cost had to be met that had not been catered for.

8.04 p.m.

As regard to the line item 6331 – Refunds of Revenues, such refunds are made when individuals request services, then those are cancelled during the course of the year. It is where transactions are being withdrawn, we have to make refunds. It is essentially passport.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$3,771,088,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$482,715,000

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, I have been standing before Mr. Rohee.

Mr. Chairman: It is not so much who stands first, but who catches the Speaker's eyes first.

Ms. Selman: I am the tiniest in the House, so you would not notice me, Sir. If I may, Mr. Chairman, project code 2501100 – Office Equipment and Furniture: Could the Hon. Minister identify the overseas missions which would benefit from furniture and equipment?

Mr. Greenidge: I extend condolences to my Colleague from the other side for tininess and being overlooked.

Mr. Selman: No one has died.

Mr. Greenidge: I am surprised that she found it a handicap that it is all. Mr. Chairman, the missions in question are Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the Consul General in New York, the Embassy in Switzerland, Consul General in Barbados, Consul General in Toronto, Embassies in Ottawa, Washington, India, Paramaribo, Suriname, Brasilia, Brazil, Caracas, and in Havana, Cuba; London, United Kingdom (UK) High Commission, as well as Nickerie in Suriname, Consul General, the Embassy in Kuwait, Embassy in Beijing, Chancellery in Brussels as well as, Chancellors in Boa Vista and Embassy in South Africa. It is practically all of the missions. Unfortunately, that is how it has to go.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Selman, do you have a follow-up question?

Ms. Selman: No, Mr. Chairman. I was actually moving on to another project code.

Mr. Chairman: Please, proceed.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Sir. Project Code 1200500 – Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say how much of the budgetary provision will be spent on the construction of the Embassy in Brazil? What is the proposed timeline for the completion of the construction of the Embassy?

Mr. Greenidge: The question is, when do we expect the project to be completed? The Chancellor and Ambassadors residency are due to be completed by the end of 2019. The Embassy building itself will be completed by the end of 2020.

Mr. Rohee: On the same line item, follow-up on my Colleague's question. The firm that is the contractor for this building, is it a contracting firm from Brazil? Could you give us the name of the contracting firm? Could the Minister say whether any local materials from Guyana are being used to be part of the construction of the building?

Follow-up: The Minister, I think, made a statement sometime earlier this week to the effect that the Government is contemplating establishing a mission in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Could the Minister elaborate a little further on that?

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, the amount shown for in 2018 Budget under this project code is for the funding of the architectural designs, which have been completed. Therefore, we are now moving to the tendering process. The question of whether or not the firm is a Brazilian one and the name does not arise at this stage. The tender has not been awarded.

On the question of the opening of missions in future, we are in discussions with the UAE for the opening of a mission there in 2019. We are also looking at the possibility, the feasibility, and cost of probably one for the African Union, but, that has not yet been settled. On the UAE, because of its import...

Mr. Rohee: Is that in Addis?

Mr. Greenidge: Yes. Let me say first off, all, because of the importance of UAE and the rising out of the dispute - had with them both on the diplomatic front, that is establishing an office and in terms of collaboration that they are willing to undertake with us on infrastructure side, social infrastructural, this is one that is a priority.

Of course, there are petroleum producing states that seem in a position in which they could assist us in developing our own capacity, giving us advice, and so forth.

As you know we also were speaking to some others including Indonesia and Cordova. The one, that is in a position, I think, to assist us and where we might be quickly be able to establish an Embassy is the UAE.

Ms. Teixeira: Project Code 2400300 – Land Transport: In the Budget of 2018, it appears as if the Ministry has spent the money allocated for it on vehicles. Could the Minister say how many vehicles were acquired or transport was acquired in 2018? The allocation for 2019, \$46,670,000 for the purchase of vehicles. Could the Minister say how many vehicles are being proposed to be purchased and for which missions?

Mr. Greenidge: It is intended to be three additional vehicles which were procured in 2018 namely, Barbados, London, Switzerland.

In 2019, we are proposing to acquire vehicles for Paramaribo Embassy, Brussels Embassy and the High Commission in India, Dele.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$482,715,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$79,937,000

Mr. Rohee: Hon. Minister, having regard to the emphasis which I understand the Government is paying on the question of economic diplomacy and the missions abroad; it appears to me that your foreign trade aspect of the Ministry's operation seems to be rather barebones in terms of staffing....

[Hon. Member: What is the line item?] The line item is very clear for us to see having been sitting here for the pass [*Inaudible*]. I am talking about the staffing details.

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Rohee if there is a line item provided, then it would be helpful to all.

Mr. Rohee: Line items 6111 to 6117: As I said to the Minister, that his staff, in respect to the foreign trade functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seems to be rather barebones having regard to the responsibilities of the Ministry in promoting economic diplomacy, which the President himself has adumbrated and given instructions to the Minister to carry out.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure our Colleague that we are acting very much in consonance with the statements and the instructions by the President. If you look at page 75 you would see that the total number of contracted employees in 2019 will increase by 12 to 13 persons. I would like to say also that in relation to the work...

8.19 p.m.

Microphone malfunctioned

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, am I to take it that the Sergeant-at-Arms is responding to a comment that I made earlier about size?

Mr. Chairman: We wanted to keep you connected.

Mr. Greenidge: I want to also say that first of all, you will see that increase reflecting an increase in strength of the Foreign Trade Department including the appointment of a Head of Foreign Trade with considerable experience and analytical skills, as well as our embarking arrangement with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for working jointly on the fashioning of a plan on Foreign Trade Policy, as well as a number of services that you will see in relation to establishing an exporters database, a national trade information portal, possibly a trade magazine, and a variety of other strategies, data base and alike.

Whilst the numbers were increased and some of these increases reflect a movement from one other part of the Ministry to bring together the technical skills associated with trade, although it is shown under line item 6111 – Administrative. These are technical officers also, but they undertake the tasks that I have listed. ... **[Hon. Member: [Inaudible]]** ...That is because I do not want to read you the list of the undertakings.

As regard to the staffing, let me just say concretely that we transferred six Foreign Service Officers from programme 01, six to this department and there is also a transfer of a Foreign Trade Officer and a Director of International Corporation. There is also one Foreign Service Officer being transferred to this category. There is in fact and I have before me the list of the eleven Officers involved in this programme.

In fact, there is a substantial increase in the capacity of this department. You will see it reflected in the quality and quantity of its work.

Mr. Rohee: Follow-up: Having regard to the tradition, I was wondering, could the Minister could say if the Government is contemplating appointing or posting to each mission a Foreign Trade and Investment Officer to fulfil the responsibility of bringing trading and investment to this country which we so badly need. This is because there have been a lot of criticism that the country has not been attracting much investment. The porting of a Foreign Trade and Investment Officer at each mission is something which I was wondering whether the Ministry, which part of the Government, is contemplating.

Mr. Greenidge: At this stage, we are not proposing to appoint to each of the missions a Foreign Trade Officer with that purpose. Let me say to you that in relation to the missions in Brussels and Geneva, right now, officers have been assigned to those missions whose functions will cover the

trades, promotions, and analysis functions. They are working within the context with the formulation of International Trade Policy within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) also within the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States - European Union (ACP-EU) cut and frame work and these are Officers who some are trained in Geneva.

We will eventually assign an Officer to Toronto with that specific task in mind. It is not intended to put one in each mission, certainly not at this point in time, but that we would strengthen and continue to send the trained Officers to some of the selected missions whose task had been specifically identified as focusing on trades and investment promotion and related matters. Eventually you would have seen the same being done in relation to South Africa and possibly China and New York.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: In the 2018 Budget zero funds was allocated under contracted employees and in the staffing, details provided to us, there are zero contracted employees. However, the revised 2018 Budget shows that \$7,758,000 was spent under contracted employees and of course the projection in 2019, the Ministry will spend \$29,021,000 for three contracted employees. Could the Minister explain with no provision for contracted employees the \$7,758,000, where did it emanate from? You had to find the money from somewhere. Who was employed because it shows that there is no one employed in 2018 under contracted employees?

Mr. Greenidge: In relation to Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees, the Director of International Corporation and the Foreign Service Officer were transferred from Programme 01 and there is a Director of Foreign Trade recruited. Those are the new and transferred employees.

Part of the reason for the differences between 2018 and 2019 is that the Director of Foreign Trade, for example, only started in September. The transfer took place in August of the other two Officers that I mentioned. Does that help?

Ms. Teixeira: Where did you then found the money in the transfer? Therefore, the money was already allocated for them where they were. Were those funds transferred over to this heading?

Mr. Greenidge: The funds were transferred from programme 01.

Programme: 043 –Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$79,937,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: This concludes consideration of the Estimates for Agency 04: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thank you Minister and thanks to your staff. Hon. Vice President, you will need to occupy your correct chair. *8.28 p.m.*

Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs [Mr. Allicock]: Mr. Chairman, could I just ask that the two Ministers partake? Could she do the Current Expenditure and I do the Capital Expenditure? Is that allowed?

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Valerie Garrido-Lowe, will do issues relating to Current Estimates and the Hon. Vice President will treat to the issues relating to Capital Estimates.

Agency: 17 Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs [8.32 p.m.]

Current Expenditure

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,115,286,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let us give ourselves a chance to hear the discussion on the Estimates of the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6301- Education Subventions and Grants: Could the Hon. Minister say what mount of the voted provision of \$89,479,000 is for the Women's Sewing Group for sewing the 2019 school uniforms? What amount is for the school uniform materials and accessories?

8.34 p.m.

Minister within the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs [Ms. Garrido-Lowe]: Thank you for your question, Hon. Member.

The estimate caters for the procurement of uniform cloth, sewing, packaging and transportation for the distribution to the hinterland students. The costs are all-inclusive for the respective regions. Total students per region would be 12,711 for Region 1, at a cost of \$31,403,578; Region 7, 6,684

students, at a cost of \$18,221,095; Region 8, 3,924 students, at a cost of \$12,792,635; Region 9, 10,589 students, at a cost of \$27,061,178 – at \$1,200 per uniform.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Hon. Minister be a little more helpful? My question to her was what amount of that sum of \$89,479,000, in total, goes to sewing and what goes to material? That is making it a bit simpler. I did not ask for the regional breakdown nor the number of students. I know where they are going.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: The total cost for sewing would be \$33,908,000. That will go to the women sewing groups.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: And how much for the materials?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is your question fully answered?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, no. The Hon. Minister did not give me the amount for the uniform materials. But, in the meantime, I can ask some follow-up questions, so they can sort out the amount which I am asking for.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under the same line item 6301, Education Subventions and Grants, could the Hon. Minister say if the 2018 school uniforms have been delivered to the Ministry and what is the schedule for the delivery to the schools in the hinterland?

Could the Minister also explain to the House, if these materials have not yet been delivered, what is her intention or what measures will be put in the place for the 2018 uniforms to go out before the end of 2018, and whether she will seek to correct the procurement for materials for school uniforms in 2019?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, there seems to be three questions there.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Member, the Public Procurement Commission has recommended that the valuation be reviewed. It is being processed right now and we are awaiting an award. It is our intention that we

deliver before the end of the year. For 2019, we certainly intend to correct this matter so that the children will at least get their uniforms in a timely manner. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Thank you, Hon. Minister. A final follow-up on this line item. Will the same procedure apply to the sewing of the school uniforms? If the Ministry intends to distribute the 2018 uniforms by the 31st of this year, my question is, how will they deal with the sum of \$33,908,000 with respect to sewing for the 2018? Will they send it back to the Consolidated Fund or what will they do?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, if the service is not given, only then will the money be returned to the Consolidated Fund. But once we get the award in time and we can secure the servicing of these uniforms, then certainly, it will be paid for. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I noticed that in 2019, a total of \$80,502,000 has been allocated. I wish to ask, how is this sum to be allocated to the Bina Hill Institute, the Kanuku Mountain Regional Group and the National Toshao Council Secretariat?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, the increase caters for an additional \$4 million to support the work of the National Toshao Council (NTC). This will cater for the operational cost and salary for a cleaner which will be \$40,000 as well as an increase of \$6 million for the Bina Hill Institute. The subvention caters for the National Toshao Council, \$20 million for next year; Bina Hill Institute, \$56 million; Kanuku Mountain Regional Group, \$4,502,000. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Follow-up question. Could the Hon. Minister explain to this House what prompted the increase by the \$6 million for Bina Hill Institute over and above the 2017 and 2018 voted provisions?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Next year, the Green Enterprise Centre will be commissioned or become functional. That is a natural expansion and hence the allocation to cater for that. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Follow-up, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister layover in writing the expenditures or items or activities to be funded by the \$56 million to the Bina Hill Institute?

Could the Hon. Minister also say what justified the Bina Hill Institute, a community-based project, to be the recipient of \$56 million as opposed to the NTC receiving \$20 million or a 280% over and above, knowing that the NTC has a legislative mandate with wide ranging functions and has to cover 215 villages, satellites and communities?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, the Bina Hill Institute, I think it started off as a project but now it is an educational institute of recognition and standing. It caters for students from Regions 1, 8 and 9. I think that we will expand to Region 7. Of course, as any educational institute, it is whole year round; it is something permanent. On the other hand, while the National Toshaos Council has a mandate to do outreaches and things like that and supports the 215 villages, it also has the ability to raise its own funds from international communities and so on. But the Bina Hill Institute badly needs the Government's support. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: A final follow-up on line item 6321. Is the Minister telling us that the Bina Hill Institute will continue to receive a subvention of the amount of \$56 million annually with increases as we go on in the future?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, I would like to give you an actual answer, but I have to say that this money – the subvention – will be based on need and justification. The Green Enterprise Centre will be there from next year. So, we will look at that and see how we go along from there. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you please state what has caused the Ministry to increase fuel and lubricants by 37.6% over the 2018 expenditure?

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a line item there?

Mr. Dharamlall: Sorry, Sir. Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, the increase caters for fuel to facilitate seven Welfare Officers during our outreaches to Regions 1, 8 and 9, at a cost of \$4,600,000. The allocation caters for outreaches for Community Development Officers (CDOs), \$6,600,000; purchase of gas and diesel

for the Ministry's vehicles, \$10,120,000; cooking gas for the indigenous residents, \$840,000 and the student dormitory for \$840,000 – both annually. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Just a clarification. Are you saying that we are buying cooking gas for the dormitory under fuel and lubricants?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: It is under the line item here.

Mr. Dharamlall: Going onto line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister please state what has caused the Ministry to more than double its local travel and subsistence over the 2017 expenditure?

8.49 p.m.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Is it line item 6261?

Mr. Dharamlall: Correct.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, the increase caters for monitoring of projects, meals, and accommodations for the consultations on the Amerindian Act; meals and accommodation for the monitoring of welfare cases and visits to communities by Welfare Officers and visits to the prisons to the tune of \$16,402,400. That is for the Amerindian Act.

In 2019, there are 24 field trips with accommodations and meals done by the Vice-President and the Minister within the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs. There will also be 10 field trips done by the Permanent Secretary (PS), Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS), Engineer, Internal Auditor and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer. There will also be field trips for monitoring staff, including Government departments.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, if you do not mind, could the Hon. Member, layover the field trips?

Mr. Chairman: I hope that the Hon. Minister, is benefitting from what you are saying. Please go ahead.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you please layover the breakdown of your Local Travel and Subsistence, line item 6261? One of the things that I noticed is that you did not mention the

Project Officers to whom I hope most of this should have been allocated. We will like to know the villages and the dates when the consultations on the Amerindian Act will take place.

Line item 6265 - Other Transport, Travel and Postage: There is an increase above the 2017 actual figure plus 52% on this, could the Hon. Minister please state what has caused this?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: The increase caters for the flights for consultation on the Amerindian Act which is \$13 million. There are 30 field visits with airfares at \$10,500,000 in various regions to be done by the Hon. Minister and team; six field visits with airfares at \$2,100,000 to be done by the Legal Officer; for community development and project assistance, 28 field visits with airfares at \$9,800,000 to be done by the PS, DPS, Internal Auditor, Engineer and M&E Officer; 50 trips with airfares at \$10 million for the governance departments, CDOs and Principal Regional Development Officers (PRDOs); monitoring of all projects with airfares at \$27,546,800; postage of capital items, \$2,100,000; and assisting with the return of patients from the interior who seek medical attention in Georgetown, \$29,953,200.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister please lay that over as well? I will like to indicate that I am surprised that the Ministry is spending more time in the air than on the ground. I have not heard of any overland transportation, only airfares all the time.

Line item 6281 - Security Services - there is a 33% increase over 2018: Could the Hon. Minister please state what has caused this?

Ms. Garrido -Lowe: The decrease is due to...

Mr. Dharamlall: It is an increase.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: No, there is no increase in line item 6281, Security Services.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, line item 6281, Security Services, moved from \$42,119,000 to \$56,211,000. It is an increase of more than 33%.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, I think that you are speaking about the Revised allocation, but the 2018 allocation was \$66,309,000.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the Revised allocation will be the actual allocation. The budgeted sum is \$66,309,000 but the Revised sum for 2018 is \$42,119,000. That is what they will spend or what they have already spent. I am asking the Minister, what has caused the increase to \$56,211,000 in 2019. Or, is the Minister saying now that the budgeted \$66,309,000 is what the Ministry will end up spending, and not the Revised \$42,119,000 that the Minister of Finance presented to us?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, based on the newly revised contracts which are listed here, Mondays to Saturdays we are not catering this time for armed guards. The rate from Mondays to Saturdays for unarmed guards is \$390 per hour. Sundays and holidays for unarmed guards is \$780 per hour and armed guards for holidays is \$940 per hour.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, just to clear up for the Minister, there is an increase from \$42,119,000 in 2018, to \$56,211,000 in 2019. The Minister is speaking of a decrease, but the Budget is speaking to almost a 33% increase. I am asking the Minister what has caused this increase and the Minister is speaking about a decrease. Something is definitely wrong at the Ministry in terms of what they have budgeted for and what the Minister of Finance presented.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, this allocation is based on the present contract that we have signed up for the new year.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister, please submit to the House copies of the 2018 contracts versus the 2019 contracts?

Finally, line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, could the Hon. Minister please state whether the Head of the Bina Hill Institute is being paid from this allocation and what is the salary and benefits of this individual?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, indeed the Principal is being paid from this subvention.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would also like the salary and benefits please, thank you.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, we will be happy to layover the details for this as soon as possible.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you. Hon. Minister, could you please indicate whether the Principal of the Bina Hill Institute is a locally recruited person, or someone outsourced from the region?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: The Bina Hill Institute happens to be a subvention agency managed by a Board of Trustees. Yes, it is a local, a Guyanese person who is highly qualified and hails from Region 1. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: In addition to the Principal, is there any other high technical or administrative person, for example a Director, Executive Director, or a Consultant to the Bina Hill Institute being paid for by the subvention?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: There is no other person that is being paid from this subvention that I know of.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, for line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, for the Bina Hill Institute, how many academic staff are on the staffing strength?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: There are 25 academic and support staff at the Bina Hill Institute.

Mr. Dharamlall: Follow-up: Could you indicate the highest paid of the academic staff?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: The Principal is the highest paid staff there and she earns a sum of \$350,000 per month.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, I recall that before the Bina Hill Institute receives its tranches financial reports ought to be presented. Could I ask you Hon. Minister, when last did the Ministry receive an updated financial report from the Bina Hill Institute? Did the Ministry receive any financial report, and do you accept financial reports before you issue a tranche during the year?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: A financial report is required for every tranche and the Internal Auditor visited Bina Hill Institute last month. Thank you.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: In 2018, I noticed there are 46 employees, and in 2019 there are 56. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what are the

designations of the 10 new contracted employees? Could the Hon. Minister also tell the House what are the salaries and other benefits for the 10 persons who are the highest paid contracted workers?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, the increase of 10 additional staff caters for four Welfare Officers and six Community Development Officers with salaries of General Schedule (GS)7, \$92,779, and an increase of 3%, 6.5% and 7% in salary. As for the highest paid contracted workers in the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs, the Permanent Secretary is the highest paid; the Special Assistant on Legal Issues is the second highest paid worker and the Special Assistant on Projects and Community Development is the third highest paid worker. They are the same since they are two Special Assistants. There is the Principal Regional Development Officer, the Communications Officer and the Community Development Officer which amounts to five officers. The others would be Community Development Officers. Thank you.

9.04 p.m.

Ms. Pearson- Fredericks: Could the Hon. Minister layover that information with the salaries and other benefits to the House? Thank you.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Yes.

Ms. Pearson- Fredericks: Mr. Chairman, line item 6117 - Temporary Employees: I noticed under 2017 there was no budgetary allocation. The staffing details under 2018 is zero, however, I noticed under 2018 what was spent was \$5,968,000 although there was no budgetary allocation and there was no staff according to the staffing details. In 2019, there is an allocation of \$5,155,000 and I noticed five staff. My question is: How is it that the Ministry spent over \$5 million and there was no temporary staff. I would like to know where the money that was spent came from. The second question is now that there would be five temporary staff an allocation is asked for which is less than what was spent in 2018, by almost \$500,000. Thank you.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, the \$5,155,000 came from line items 6141 and 6116. That catered for five Community Development Officers at a salary of \$95,381 and \$82,056 per month. Thank you.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister repeat the line item where it came from?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Line items 6116 and 6141.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Sir, my question is where did the \$5,968,000 come from that was spent in 2018 when there was no budgetary allocation.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: It was a special provision through the Ministry of Finance from line items 6141 and 6116. Thank you.

Mr. Charlie: I would like to touch again on line item 6116, Contracted Employees. Hon. Minister, in the form of transparency and accountability to the Indigenous people, why is the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs not complying with the circularised instruction of No. 2017/89 as it pertains to contract employees to the fixed establishment?

Mr. Chairman: Is there a line item to which your question refers?

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: While the Ministry continues to ensure that contracted staff is sent over to the fixed establishment this, however, was a special request from the Ministry. For these special appointments that the Ministry needed, there is a need for more welfare officers in the hinterland. The Hon. Member lives there and he should know that. There is a need for more CDOs in the hinterland. While some CDOs have to monitor 40 villages we found that that was not feasible because they could not look over them every time in the special way that they need to be monitored. Hence, we had to employ more CDOs and welfare officers, especially with cases that are coming out these days. Thank you.

Mr. Charlie: I am surprised that the Ministry is not adhering to the instructions of Circular No. 2017/89 since it was a recommendation by the Audit Department that you follow instructions. Hon. Minister you touched on the Welfare Officers, but could you relate to this House how many Welfare Officers the Ministry has in the hinterland regions, their locations, subdistricts and villages?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, so far, we have seven Welfare Officers in the outlying regions. Thank you.

Mr. Charlie: Mr. Chairman, I asked the Hon. Minister for the location and specifically for Region 9.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, we have two Welfare Officers in Region 1, one in Region 7, one in Region 8 and 3 in Region 9.

Mr. Charlie: To the Hon. Minister, what criteria was used to recruit the Welfare Officers? Were the vacancies advertised nationally, regionally or in the village? We will like to know.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Public Service approval was sought and also local interest.

Mr. Charlie: I now move to line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Service, a budgetary allocation for 2018, \$21,850,000. The Ministry expended \$20,227,000, a difference of \$1,623,000 underspent by the Ministry. The increased allocation for 2019 is a whopping \$27 million. To the Hon. Minister, could you relate to the House how many vehicles under the Ministry underwent servicing? What nature of service these vehicles received? What is the number of vehicles to benefit under this line item and are the works pertaining to servicing of vehicles advertised and is the Procurement Act adhered to?

[Mr. Figueira in Chair]

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you Mr. Chairman, and it is nice seeing you there.

Hon. Member, first of all, the procurement laws were observed, and the increase caters for the maintenance of five new all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for CDOs, a vehicle for the Accounts Department and a 30-seater bus for the hostel. The estimate caters for the maintenance of 14 vehicles in the various villages for CDOs, and 17 vehicles at the Ministry's head office. Thank you.

Mr. Charlie: A while ago, the Minister alluded to the CDOs who are employed in the hinterland regions. I asked for the advertisement of the vehicle service or maintenance. To the Hon. Minister, are advertisements done regionally or is the maintenance of vehicles done nationally or is it sole-sourced?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: There is national tendering and sole-sourcing.

Mr. Charlie: Could the Hon. Minister relate to this House how many sole-sourcing transactions were done under this line item?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, I would offer to lay that over as soon as possible.

Mr. Charlie: Thank you.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: An allocation of \$210,000,000. Could the Hon. Minister tell the House what are the national and other events and what sum would be allocated for each activity?

9.19 p.m.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member the increase is due for the expansion of heritage activities. The estimate caters for assistance to the North Pakaraimas Football Tournament - \$1 million; assistance in the Upper Mazaruni District Games - \$1.5 million; assistance to the Deep South Games - \$1 million; assistance to North Rupununi Games - \$ 1 million; assistance to other sports activities and village expositions - \$3.5 million; contribution to Moruka Exposition - \$1.5 million; contribution to Rupununi Exposition - \$1.5 million; contribution to Pakaraimas Exposition - \$8 million; contribution to Rupununi Rodeo - \$1 million; contribution to Rupununi Music and Arts Festival - \$5 million; Heritage Celebration - \$102,905,000; Mash and Independence celebrations for Head Office and Scholarship students - \$10,095,000; and National Toshao Conference - \$74 million.

Mr. Croal: Hon. Minister, line item 6111, Administrative, you made mention about the recruitment of Welfare Officers as well as a number of Community Development Officers (CDOs). You also mentioned that for the procurement policy, correct me if I am wrong because I am trying to quote you, the criteria you used was special interest. Could you confirm that is what you said? Having said that, if someone is interested in becoming a Welfare Officer, how could they be aware that there is a vacant position?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: The vacancy was circulated through the Public Service Commission (PSC) and also in the villages.

Mr. Croal: In essence, we did not have any public advertisements for those positions. Could you identify what is the minimum criteria for someone to fill that position? Yes, they must use the process of special interest. Could you say what is the minimum qualification that they may need to possess?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: The minimum criteria is a sound secondary education and experience working in a similar position within the villages or the region. Added to that, they were trained by the Ministry of Social Protection to be level one Welfare Officers.

Mr. Croal: You are therefore confirming that the criteria at the Public Service Commission level or at the Ministry is far different from the criteria for a Welfare Officer who will be performing similar duties being employed through your Ministry through special interest. Could you confirm if that is so?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: A special waiver was requested with regards to working within and among the Indigenous peoples. That would include language skills to interact with their people so that they could be comfortable in the performance of their duties. We are trying to empower Hinterland people within their communities.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Does this apply to newly recruited Community Development Officers and was a similar criterion used as with the Welfare Officers?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Yes, a special waiver was also requested for the Community Development Officers. We needed them to be from within their communities and to have experience, for example retired persons and so on, in working as Counsellors and Toshaoes and so on.

Mr. Croal: Could you say whether you still vacancies for Welfare Officers and Community Development Officers within the hinterland region?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, we have one more vacancy for a CDO and one Welfare Officer.

Mr. Croal: My final request under line item 6116, Hon. Minister, could you lay over the information of the Welfare Officers and the CDOs and their exact locations of where they are?

Secondly, could you provide the information about where the vacancies exist, so I could ask the local special interest persons to apply?

I now move on to line item 6292 – Dietary. Hon. Minister you would have utilised over half of your budgetary allocation for 2018. In 2019, you are asking for an additional more than \$17 million. Could you clarify for what propose is the increase? Secondly, could you say what happened in terms of your Ministry only being able to utilise half of its budgetary allocation?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: This allocation would adequately address the dietary needs of the hinterland students, the hostel and the new tertiary dormitories that would be opened next year.

Mr. Croal: In 2017, having not gotten those new students, but you are getting some next year, you would have spent \$45 million. In 2018, you budgeted \$50 million and you spent \$27 million only, and you are now asking for \$45 million in 2019. Could you explain, having spent \$45 million in 2017?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: We are reviewing the scale of items and we are aligning it with more local items, hence a decrease. The increase for 2019 is to cater for the additional 120 students for the tertiary dormitories.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could you confirm if that is the line item that you use to assist patients who travel?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Yes, Hon. Member.

Mr. Croal: Follow-up: Could I enquire whether you provide assistance to patients who have recovered and are staying at the hostel to travel back to their regions?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Yes, Hon. Member, we do that. We assist with the return of patients to the interior locations who have recovered after seeking medical attention in Georgetown.

Mr. Croal: What about the return of bodies to the region? I know a request would be coming to the Ministry, I think, sometime tomorrow.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Yes, we do cater for the return of bodies but there is a special allocation for that. We have \$29,953,200.

Mr. Chairman: We will allow three more questions on this line item.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6292 - Dietary: Hon. Minister you just mentioned that you will now focus more on local foods. Could you please state, in 2017 when the budget was \$45 million, what were the imported international foods that were prepared for students?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Member, it was a norm to include a lot grape, apples, canned items and so on. We tried to cut that out and use a lot of farine, tasso, fish, cassava bread and more local foods other than the canned foods.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister relay to this House how many students would benefit under this line item and the cost for each student?

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: One hundred and ten students will benefit. For the Indigenous residents, 125 per month at a cost of \$670 per day, approximately.

9.34 p.m.

Mr. Charlie: The Hon. Minister alluded to going local and I guess we have local suppliers. Could the Hon. Minister relate who are the local suppliers for the local food that our patients and students would be receiving?

Mr. Chairman: That was the last question on this item.

Ms. Garrido-Lowe: We have suppliers from Regions 1, 2 and 9, so far. Thank you.

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration – \$ 1,115,286,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration – \$ 815,348,000

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Under project code 1405400, Amerindian Development Projects, I see the amount of \$702,698,000 budgeted for the provision for Amerindian development and projects. Could the Hon. Ministers say what are the projects and say, when he talks about Amerindian

development, whether we are talking about the Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) Project and if not, could the Hon. Minister direct me where I could find that project?

Mr. Allicock: To the Hon. Member, there is the ADF project, which is aligned to the United National Development Project (UNPD) Amerindian Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) Project.

Under the Amerindian Development Projects, we have the Bina Hill male dorm, Bina Hill female dorm, Green Enterprise Development Centre, the Hinterland Employment and Youth Service (HEYS) Programme, Programme Monitors, Project Coordinator, Administrative Assistance, Workshop Facilitators, monitoring and evaluation, traveling and transportation, small grants to 2,000 youths, training of trainers in launch of programmes, presidential grants and drones. We have consultancy for educational centres in Regions 1 and 7, economic projects, ground coffee production in Santa Rosa, Smith Creek Fish and Crab Project, Qurbana, Cassava/Flour Processing Facility, Agro Processing Facility in Maruranau and there is a food processing facility at Bina Hill. Maybe I could layover this list.

We have a fruit farming and processing at Paruima fruit farm and, maybe, I could give you the rates. That is estimates at \$3 million. There is Santa Cruise – another \$3 million, there is a lapidary which would be at Monkey Mountain that is a \$5 million, which is a rollover project that we would need some more money next year. There is an allocation of \$1.5 million for benabs at Kabakaburi village council, indigenous language year in all regions at \$30 million, we have a tribal village in Nappi at \$5 million, ecotourism at Karasabai - \$2 million, rest Shelter at Chenapau – \$2.5 million, we have Paramakatoi – \$2,233,800, Parishara – \$2 million, construction of village mall at Santa Rosa – \$10 million, guest House at Warapoka – \$2 million, tractors and implements to help Laluni – \$8.5 million, St. Ignatius – \$\$8.5 million...

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Sir, could I ask the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you standing on a Point of Order?

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: No, sir, could we ask the Hon. Minister to layover the information?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Minister, the request is that you layover the information rather than read it.

Mr. Allicock: Alright, I will lay it over. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Charlie: Project code 1405400 – Amerindian Development Project: I had listen carefully to the Hon. Minister alluded to \$30 million going towards the preservation of indigenous languages. Could the Hon. Minister layover to this House how many villages benefitted from the allocation for the preservation of indigenous languages and how many villages are projected to benefit from this \$30 million?

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Minister has asked to layover the information, is that correct?

Mr. Allicock: Just for information, next year would be the year of the indigenous languages, so what I am talking about here is for next year.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 1405400 – Amerindian Development Project: Hon. Minister could you please state, knowing that Amerindian development is still one of the areas that need to be treated with because of the vulnerability of Amerindian people, what is the philosophy behind your Ministry reducing the budget for Amerindian Development by,, as much as 40% from 2017, moving from \$1.17 billion in 2017 to \$702,698,000 in 2019. What is your philosophy of reducing by as much as 40% knowing that Amerindian development ought to be one of the things that we should be promulgating?

Mr. Allicock: Hon. Member, I must thank you very much for having such keen interest. The situation here is that we are in the process of reviewing the HEYS programme...

[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]

...which we have not extended to another cohort. What we are doing is ensuring that these young people are confident that they are on their way to success, so we would be in their area giving them that support and analysing the situation. Yes, it will reduce. We have worked and set a foundation that we need to build on, but, before building, we have to analyse the situation, give our young people some support, identify those who are in need of more support and we will use that to strengthen the position for future cohorts.

Mr. Dharamlall: I shudder to think that the Hon. Minister thinks that by reducing Amerindian Development Projects by 40%, over \$400 million per year, is actually going to aid Amerindian development.

Project code 1214500 – Buildings: I know last year and this year the National Toshao Council (NTC) was granted land to construct an office building, could you please state whether the Ministry would be providing support to the construction of the NTC office and whether it is considered for this year and if not, why not?

Mr. Allicock: For now, no. Let me just elaborate a little more. The design is in progress and we cannot go and put forward funding when the design is not completed.

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, on project code 1214500, Hon. Minister the land was earmark for the NTC, could you please indicate whether a title was granted to the NTC for that land or whether it is still the State's property?

Mr. Allicock: Yes, the title was granted.

Mr. Dharamlall: A follow-up: Hon. Minister could you please state whether the NTC is paying for the design of the building or whether the Ministry is paying for it? If the Ministry is paying for it, why is it taking so long, I mean, it is practically two years; 2017 and 2018?

Mr. Allicock: Hon. Member, you must remember that we have been talking about Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and this is part of FPIC and we cannot dictate for the NTC. The NTC is also working, and we are continuing to have dialogue because we have great plans.

9.49 p.m.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: At project code 1214500, Buildings, could the Hon. Minister say, out of the \$19,405,000, how much of this sum is allocated to the completion of the tertiary level dormitory which is being built at Liliendaal, and state the completion date for this facility?

Mr. Allicock: This is for retention for the total of \$9,319,502. Today is the deadline.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: At project 1405400, Amerindian Development Projects, can the Hon. Minister say, of the \$702,698,000, how much is being proposed for the village improvement plans?

In the Budget speech, it was mentioned that 22 village improvement plans were completed, that is the proposal, and that in 2019, another 133 village improvement plans were expected to be completed. Could the Minister say, of this sum, whether the funding of those village improvement plans are catered for, and if not, why not?

Mr. Allicock: That comes under current expenditure and it is line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships).

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I would like if the Minister could help this House to understand how many of those village improvement plans that are completed will be funded in 2019.

Mr. Allicock: It is under current estimates, so that was passed under current estimates.

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 1214500 – Buildings: I noticed that the Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs did some extensions to its main office. Could the Hon. Minister state whether the services that are now being executed from rental space, or rental buildings, whether those services will now be centrally housed at the newly constructed extended Ministry. And secondly, what is the final cost of the extension of the Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs?

Mr. Allicock: The final cost is the retention of \$2,045,435. The other question was ...

Mr. Dharamlall: I said the final cost - the total overall cost - and whether the services that are being executed from rented space will be centralised, once again, in the Ministry’s building.

Mr. Allicock: With regards to the accommodation, those projects that are in the units would be coming across in the first quarter of next year to the office. So, we would be easing on those costs. The final cost for the extension is \$27,286,072.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under Project Code 2406700, Land and Water Transport, when myself and Ms. Campbell-Sukhai left the Ministry, we left some fancy vehicles in top working condition for yourself and the Permanent Secretary. Could you please indicate whether the Ministers and the top level of the Ministry will once again be enjoying new vehicles to the already expanded fleet that the Ministry has?

Mr. Allicock: If I may take some time here, it is really ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you answering the question?

Mr. Allicock: Yes, we will.

Mr. Chairman: Two questions remain. Hon. Ms. Campbell-Sukhai, you have one.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I noticed that under project code 2508300, Office Furniture and Equipment, there is \$28,553,000 allocated. However, I noticed that in 2018, there was an allocation of \$20 million, could the Hon. Minister say how many departments benefitted from the \$20 million in furniture? For 2019, there is an allocation of \$28 million and more, could the Hon. Minister say which other departments will benefit from the procurement of furniture and equipment?

Mr. Allicock: The areas that would be using this funding would be Bina Hill for furnishing and equipment, and the new dormitories, the tertiary dormitories. This is how you get development.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Prime Minister, we are close to the 10:00 hour. I request that you move the motion.

Assembly resumed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House continues sitting until the consideration of this head is concluded.

Question put and agreed to.

Standing order suspended.

In committee of supply.

Mr. Chairman: There is one other question in relation to this matter. Hon. Mr. Charlie, you have the question.

Mr. Charlie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1405400 – Amerindian Development Project: Through the Hon. Minister, could you relate to this House, the number of projects for which the retention would be paid from the budgetary allocation of \$702,698,000? Could you provide a list of all the projects and the amount?

Mr. Allicock: There is the Bina Hill male dormitory – retention of \$1,683,124; Bina Hill female dormitory– retention of \$1,805,400; and the Green Enterprise Development Centre: \$111,141,982.

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration - \$815,348,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. [9.59 p.m.]

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this brings us to the end of the programme for today. I thank you for your assistance and hope that on tomorrow and the ensuing days, I can continue to feel that we will find a way of working together and complete the Estimates. I thank you.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, I move that this House be adjourned to tomorrow, Tuesday, 11th day of December, at 10.00 a.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.01 p.m.