

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME]

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

112th Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 12th January, 1977

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (9)

Cde. H. D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

*Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation

***Non-elected Minister**

*Cde. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

*Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance (Absent)

*Cde. S. S. Naraine, A. A.,
Minister of Works and Housing

*Cde. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. G. B. Kennard, C. C. H.,
Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. C. L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development (Absent)

*Cde. F. R. Wills, S. C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)

Ministers (5)

Cde. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House

*Cde. O. M. R. Harper,
Minister of Health (Absent)

*Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

Cde. M. Kasim, A. A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Minister**

Cde. O. E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

Cde. C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent)**

Cde. K. B. Bancroft,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

Cde. J. P. Chowritmootoo,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

*Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection **(Absent)**

*Cde. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) **(Absent)**

*Cde. F. U. A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

Cde. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of National Development **(Absent)**

Cde. M. M. Ackman, C. C. H.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister,
and Government Chief Whip

Cde. E. L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture **(Absent – on leave)**

***Non-elected Minister**

Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Cde. R. H. O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Social Development

Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

(Absent)

Other Members (19)

Cde. L. M. Branco
Cde. E. M. Bynoe
Cde. E. H. A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh
Cde. K. M. E. Jonas
Cde. M. Nissar
Cde. L. E. Ramsahoye
Cde. J. G. Ramson
Cde. P.A. Rayman
Cde. E. M. Stoby, J. P.
Cde. S. H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.
Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
Cde. H. A. Taylor
Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman
Cde. L. E. Willems
Cde. C. E. Wrights, J.P.
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

Members of the Opposition (15)

(i) People's Progressive Party (13)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. B. Jagan

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran

Other Members (11)

Cde. J. Jagan

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J. P., Opposition Chief Whip

Cde. Narbada Persaud

Cde. C. Collymore

Cde. S. F. Mohamed

Cde. L. Lalbahadur

(Absent – on leave)

Cde. C. C. Belgrave

Cde. R. Ally

Cde. Dalchand, J. P.

Cde. Dindayal

Cde. H. Nokta

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

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National Assembly

2 – 2.05 p.m.

2. p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Ambrose for today's Sitting.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Repairs to Sluice at Dena Creek

Cde. Dindayal: Cde. Speaker, I wish to ask Question No. 7, standing in my name on the Order Paper:

Will the Minister of Agriculture say when the defective sluice at Dena Creek, between Cullen and Ambramszuil Essequibo, will be repaired?

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Kennard): Cde. Speaker, the Dena Sluice I presently defective and it is proposed to replace it as part of the works under the Tapakuma Irrigation Project. It is hoped to award the Construction Contract about mid this year, 2977. In the interim the District Engineer was instructed to examine the structure and to carry out temporary repairs to hold the situation until the structure is replaced. However, the District Engineer is being hampered in this exercise by acts of vandalism and hooliganism. The workmen were threatened by cutlass-armed men and the Police had to be called in on 26th November, 1976. Drainage is being effected in the interim through the Golden Fleece Sluice and repairs will be done when it is safe to do so.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, is the hon. Minister saying that the Police Force is not capable of controlling a few vandals who, according to him, want to prevent repairs

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on an important sluice which has to do with Drainage and Irrigation? That will be my first supplementary question. I do not know if you want me to ask another one so that he can answer both at the same time.

Cde. Kennard: I think that question is for the Minister of Home Affairs.

The Speaker: I would have thought so myself.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The other question I want to ask is: Is the Minister aware that this sluice has been out of order for nearly eight years and there has been consistent representation by the farmers for it to be repaired and, if he does not agree, to wait until a contract is awarded would really affect production in that area because farmers would be afraid to produce.?

The Speaker: Cde. Kennard, the relevant portion is the one about production.

Cde. Kennard: Cde. Speaker as stated in the last sentence of my reply the area is being drained through the Golden Fleece sluice at the present time.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1977, totaling \$417,283,736.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Listed for consideration today are five Heads and four Divisions falling under the responsibility of four Ministers. We will consider from now to 4 p.m. the Head and Division under the responsibility of the Minister of Information and Culture. From 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. we will consider the two Heads and the two Divisions under the responsibility of the Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation. Tonight, from 8 o'clock we will consider the two Heads and the one Division falling under the responsibility of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of National Development and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

I trust that I will have the co-operation of all members to see that we adhere strictly to this time-table. We will now begin with the Ministry of Information and Culture pages 54 – 58. I propose that all the questions will be asked and then the Minister will make one comprehensive reply. If not it will take up much time getting up and sitting down and so rob Members of valuable time. Pages 54 – 58.

HEAD 20 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Question propose that the sum of \$3,845,348 for Head 20 Ministry of Information and Culture stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Comrades, I will also not allow general debate on the Heads. We have had five full days of that. Policies will not be permitted to be discussed under this aspect of the Estimates. Hon. Member Mrs. DeSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: I will do the pages from 54 to 58 just as you want.; Page 55 subhead 1, item (53); Page 56, items (92) and (122); Page 57 item (142) subheads 4, 12, 14, 16, 22, 24 and 27. It may sound a lot but some of them will be dealt with together; on page 58 subheads 31, 33, 34, 36 and 37.

Starting on page 55, item (53) Archivist: First of all, as the documents that form the day-to-day running of this honourable House will be preserved for posterity in the Archives I do wish to congratulate the Minister – I don't know if she is responsible for the publications – for the new form in which allotted time I set out. I understand congratulations should go to the Leader of the House on how the Estimates are set out. I think it is set out much better than it has been in the past. I do hope it will help us to speed up matters.

For the Archivist we have been asked to spend \$11,640 under current expenditure. Could the hon. Minister tell us how much progress has been made with the re-housing of our archives? We know right now it is in a very difficult position where things are jumbled up. As a matter of fact in a recent Court case when some information was sought by the Court regarding the registration of newspapers the person who gave evidence for the Archives said it was impossible to check and find out as the place was in a shocking condition because of the overcrowding. Could the Minister give us some information as to what progress has been made? Let us know how they are getting on because some of these newspapers are very old and irreplaceable and if quick action is not taken they will be lost forever.

Turning to page 56 item (92), Vehicle Driver: There should have been 16 of them on the establishment since 1975. The Revised Estimates for 1976 show that we spent \$9,528. We have been asked now to spend \$34,716. Why this big increase? Was it that we didn't have 16 drivers before and we have just got them? Could the hon. Minister tell us if the vehicles of the Ministry of Information and Culture are used solely for the work of the Ministry of Information and Culture or are they used for another purpose?

Item (122) of Head 20 Box Office Clerk, page 56: This is a new allocation because obviously the centre is now getting into its stride and we have to have clerks there for booking. Could the Minister please assure this House that the Box Office will be provided with a seating plan of the auditorium. Great inconvenience is caused to the public who have to push their way to the Box Office then to the auditorium to find out where the seats are. They have to go back

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and forth. Secondly may I ask that a special course on how to deal with the public be given to both young ladies there? One particular young lady is not very good at it.

2.15 p.m.

I turn to item (142) Commuted Overtime on page 57. The legend states a “Now Item.” We know what overtime is, we know what commuted overtime is but this sum of \$70,000 for the Cultural Centre for commuted overtime seems a lot of money. Could we have a few more details please?

On the same page 57, subhead 12, Broadcasting – General: We have been asked to provide \$10,000 for broadcasting generally. Why is this amount so small? The revised estimate for 1976 was \$32,500. We appreciate that cuts are being made but we want to figure that is a little more realistic and so that the Minister will not have to come back later in the year to ask for more money to pay broadcasting bills. We know that electricity rates are going up and presumably the cost of time will go up at the broadcasting station. Maybe the hon. Minister can help us out with some information on that score.

Subhead 14, Operation and Maintenance of Motor Vehicles, \$85,000: The revised estimate for last year was \$125,000. The manner in which people who use the Government vehicles – and I do not refer only to the Ministry of Information; I think this would apply to all Government Departments – the way the vehicles are maintained, the careless use, abuse and misuse of vehicles, squanders a lot of money that the country can ill afford. In this year of war against waste what are we doing about cutting down on maintenance of vehicles? The Minister will say that she has reduced the vote from \$125,000 to \$85,000. Again, I say: Please do not come back this year for a supplementary vote.

I have dealt with subhead 6 when dealing with the previous pages, so I shall not repeat it.

For History and Culture, subhead 22, \$75,000 is being requested for 1977. I just want to make a small point under culture which comes under the Ministry of Information and culture. The Minister said that she is responsible for publishing and publicizing and this will include talking about our culture, our history and the rest of it. Does she have any control over, or does she oversee or know what is intended to be broadcast, or publicized, in any form or shape concerning our history and culture? I am thinking of one special incident. Every week we have seminars publicizing the work of the Government and Party and what is being done for Guyana. Various persons such as heads of Departments, the head of Guystac, and even the Police speak at these seminars. I was really disgusted the other week to read that we are carrying our culture beyond the ridiculous. A senior police officer addressed a seminar and – I am not quoting him word for word – said that we must do away with certain phrases and words that are used. For example, people who keep bees talk about their Queen bee. He said we must do away with the word “Queen” Somebody suggested we call her leader bee. Maybe the hon. Minister George King will be called the hon. George Leader or something like that. However, these are international occupations and games and we take part with the rest of the world. If we are going to use our own nomenclature for words that are accepted we are going to be the laughing stock of the world. Could the Minister tell us under the heading of History and Culture how the Ministry proposes to handle this search for identity? Also, we are spending \$75,000 for the dissemination of news and information of our culture and we would like to know something about how it is spent.

Subhead 24, Board of Trustees, Georgetown Cultural Centre: We have been asked to vote \$100 for this. Last year the revised estimate was \$3,125. Could the hon. Minister tell us why she is asking for only \$100? What is the money to be spent on? Is it an honorarium, some sort of fees for them or is it expenses incurred in their duties as Board of Trustees? It does not seem a realistic figure. I know we are trying to narrow the gap but we do need to have fairly accurate figures.

We come to Subhead 27, Public Relations Programme: Last year we voted \$800,000; for 1977 we are only being asked to vote \$250,000. When we remember the magnitude of the work of public relations which the Ministry of Information and Culture encompasses, \$250,000 does not seem a sufficient amount of money. Let us have something a little more realistic. Added to this, when the hon. Minister of Health spoke yesterday he said there was a terrific need for health education. That is why we talk about the Government establishing its priorities. Let us spend money where it ought to be spent. Health education is of vital importance and the Ministry of Information and Culture has the facilities, has the personnel, has the equipment; it is capable of helping in this very important field and yet a cut is made here.

I agree that we must cut down on waste, but let us do so in other areas like the buying of vehicles. Though there has been a cut the vote is still very high for purchase and maintenance of vehicles. Let us make a cut on those things and put the money where it ought to go, giving the right priority to health, for example. As the Minister of Health said we need a massive health programme which we all on this side of the House support.

I am dealing with the subheads on page 58, the last page under Current Expenditure, together because they deal with the same sort of matter.

The Chairman: Hon. Members Mrs. DaSilva, if we are going to keep the balance of 40 minutes for the Opposition and 180 minutes on the other side for each Head then I will have to give the major Opposition all the time. I thought perhaps something would have been worked out with the Opposition that the other side would have had more time. Here it is the major Opposition would want to ask several questions and then the Minister will not have full opportunity to reply and we are going to get into difficulties. The questions should be crisp instead of making a very long comment.

Mrs. DaSilva: Yes, sir. I appreciate your point. May I respectfully point out to you it is now twenty-five past two. I did not really check but we were supposed to start at 2 o'clock.

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2.15 – 2.25 p.m.

We had a few matters before the House. Let us say that I started five or seven minutes past two o'clock. I will finish maybe in another two or three minutes. I would have had approximately fifteen minutes out of two hours for the whole Opposition. I do not think that is too much to be granted.

The Chairman: But you are out of proportion, that is far in excess of your allocation.

Mrs. DaSilva: 15 minutes out of 2 hours?

The Chairman: I don't want to argue. Please let us continue.

2.25 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: Subheads 31, 33, 34, 36 and 37. Communication Research Centre, Communication Training, Contribution to Caribbean Conservation Association and Subscription to Caribbean News Agency (CANA) respectively: Except for the subscription to the Caribbean Conservation Association, they all deal with communication. There has been a significant drop in the amount of money asked for communications under capital expenditure. Could the hon. Minister give us some indication as to why this is so other than just saying we are trying to cut down expenses? Are we going to lose anything by having this big drop? On subhead 37, Subscription to Caribbean News Agency (CANA), we have been asked to vote \$56,300. The revised estimates for last year show \$28,150. I thought that subscriptions were at a fixed rate. Why is it practically double this year? Are we paying another year in advance or are we behind hand with payments? Could the hon. Minister please tell us?

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, I would like to touch on page 54, the general head, Information Services, items (13) to (19); page 55, Cultural Centre, items (65) to (79); I would

like to touch on items (97), (112) and (118) to (124) on page 56; subheads 4, 8, 25, and 26 on page 57 and on subheads 36, 37 and 38 on page 58.

I note, Cde. Chairman, that whilst the money allocated for the Ministry of Information and Culture has been drastically cut, items (13) to (19) on page 54 who may not be necessary at this moment. For example, you have under Information Services, Chief Information Officer, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Assistant Chief Information Officer, Principal Information Officer, Senior Information Officer, Information Officer, Information Assistant and about fifteen other Information Officers attached there. I would like to know from the Minister whether there is enough work as a result of the drastic cut, which we welcome, for these various Information Officers to be fully occupied and, taking the point about deployment of personnel, whether there is any intention for these Information Officers to be deployed to other sections of developmental projects and if so, where?

On page 55, Cultural Centre, there again we seem to be burdened with a number of personnel from items (65) to (79) who will be engaged in various works in the Cultural Centre. Now, I am not aware of what programmes the Minister has in mind that the Cultural Centre would be engaged in over the year and we would like to know whether these people here would be full-time employees or whether they will be paid and there will not be work for them to do. I would therefore like the Minister to expand a little on this head and tell us a little more about the programmes and whether there is in fact enough work for all of these people to be engaged in, because the sum allocated under this head is extremely large indeed.

Page 56, with respect to item (97), Secretary, Board of Film Censors: I would like to ask the Minister if, having regard to her admission about the kind of films that have been coming in and having agreed that there can be a better selection of films, whether – now that apparently she

would have more time as a result of the drastic cut in the Ministry's expenditure – she herself would be in a position to pay specific attention to this field to ensure that the correct films would be coming in for the public audience, films which would be in keeping with the objectives of the Government, that will inculcate the correct attitudes we would like to inculcate in this country.

I would also like to ask the reason for the big jump under item 9112) which is Director, Institute of Creative Arts. There seems to be a jump from \$28,800 to \$60,000 and I would like to know what the reasons for this increase under this item are.

Item (135), page 57. Again we see provision for 15 Information Officers. I asked the question on this before, but I would again ask what will be the function of these 15 information Officers at this stage?

Under subhead 4, Postage, Cables, Telegrams, I notice that the 1976 Revised Estimates allotted \$1,000 under this head but for 1977 this has jumped to \$200,000, an increase of \$199,800. I am unaware that postage rates, for example, have risen and I do not know what can account for this huge leap in the expenses under the head, Postage, Cables and Telegrams to the tune of \$199,000. Something I think is definitely wrong here and I want to know whether some mistake has been made in the typing of this or whether the Minister has considered this head properly for this big increase.

Attached to that is subhead 8. While subhead 4 is saying Postage, Cables and Telegrams is going to be increased by \$199,000, at the same time, there is subhead 8, Distribution Expenses, (Publications) and \$30,000 has been allotted to that subhead. We would like to know what is the distinction between postage, as is referred to under subhead 4, and Distribution Expenses (Publications) as is referred to under subhead 8?

2.35 p.m.

Subhead 25, speaks about the Expenses District Officer. A small sum has been allocated to that, \$10,000, but I would like to ask the Minister of Information and Culture where these District Offices are and what are the functions of the District Officers with respect to the Ministry.

Subhead 26, with respect to Sports and Games, I note a drop from \$210,000 last year to \$50,000. I assume that this drop is the result of satisfaction by the Minister that enough is being done in this field, which we disagree with completely. We are surprised therefore that this big drop has taken place because there seems to be so much more that is demanded in the field of sports and games. In many areas of the country we find that people do not enjoy the facilities of having proper sports activities and we are surprised therefore that there has been this cut. One would have thought it would have needed promotion particularly in view of the shortages that exist in the country. One would seek to remark that there is great demand and need for mass involvement in sports activities and if we are going to see cuts to this extent, I do not think that we will be able to arrive at such objective very easily.

Then to go on to page 58, subhead 37, Subscription to Caribbean News Agency (CANA), a previous speaker referred to this subhead but I would like to use the opportunity to ask the Cde. Minister, seeing that she agreed with me in the debate, about the absence of news pieces coming from Dubosky and TASS particularly, whether, now that she has agreed with me over the remarks I made, she is now in the position to say that news media would avail their pages to take items coming from TASS and Dubosky in particular and perhaps other progressive agencies which may be willing to send news items to Guyana. I think that this is an important ideological and principled question at this stage. I would like to know the Minister's views on this question and if they are in the positive, then we would like to know how early we can expect to see our news media carrying more material coming from these press agencies.

Finally I would like to ask a question on subhead 38, Maintenance of Centres for Sports and Culture. The sum of \$10,000 has been allocated. I am not aware, and I would like the Minister to explain where these sports and culture centres exist and how many exist in the country at the moment, whether there are intentions, looking at such a small allocation, to build more such centres.

Cde. Sukul: I would like to ask the Minister of Information and Culture two questions on page 55, item (49), Senior Research Communication Officer, and item (63), Secretary, National Sports Council. On item (49), I would like to ask the Minister of Information and Culture what is the function of the Communication Research Centre. Is this a waste of the people's money? On item (63), I would like to ask her whether it is true that the National Sports Council was not in operation during 1976 and if so, why?

Cde. Taylor: I would like to ask three questions on pages 47, subhead 9, Films, and 21, Publishing and Publicising, and on page 59, subhead 7, National Festivals and Exhibitions. I believe that people are entitled to know what their money is being spent on and the Cde. Minister of Information and Culture may be able to tell us what the \$100,000 will be spent on.

On page 57, subhead 21, I would like to know why so much money is being spent on sending out information yet many Guyanese at home and abroad still do not understand what is happening in Guyana.

Page 59, subhead 7, National Festivals and Exhibitions: This is austerity year; is it not a waste of people's money to send such a large team? It was rumoured that there were 200 performers for the Festival in Lagos. Is it not dividing our people to participate in a Festival for Black and African people?

The Chairman: Cde. Feroze Mohamed, asked his questions, crisply and promptly. Similarly with the other two members; I wonder if that could be an indication of how we can move ahead.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, very crisp and brief, on page 55, Culture, even in today's **Chronicle** in the Editorial there was a call for the development of a national cultural policy. I want to support that editorial of the **Chronicle** because it appears to me that we are far from developing, much less evolving, a national culture. We have got a number of things that can be developed, promoted - -

The Chairman: Under what head are you speaking?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Page 55, under National History and Arts Council, the organization and institution set up some time ago to deal with the particular thing that I am talking about, because we are paying people. There are a number of things that can be done and are forgotten and I feel that much more has to be done for culture in the country. In addition to Cde. Bynoe who spoke and called for the banning of a single calypso, I can quote the Chronicle, quite correctly, that there are a number of suggestive calypsoes played over the air particularly on G.B.S. between 4 and 4.30 p.m. every day with the exception probably of Sunday. Maybe they are played on Sunday too. I do not want to name them, but I could suggest one – "Fat Man." I listen to them and they do a lot of harm and the Chronicle said that children listen to the radio and these calypsoes are very suggestive.

I want to propose to the hon. Minister, under the culture head, that, the History and arts Council, or Culture Council as it is called now, be so constituted that it will represent the broad cultural themes we have in Guyana so that things like nagara will once again become very prominent. This House has two experts on nagara dancing. I think, Cde. Chairman, you know both of them. There are other aspects. For instance, a comrade by the name of Philip - -

The Chairman: I am not going to allow this kind of contribution. This is a policy statement. You must question the History and Arts Council in some other form if you want to do that. That is a policy decision we debated before. Your shadow Minister of Information and Culture should have brought that out in his policy speech.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want to propose in so far as culture is concerned, so far as the calypsos I have been talking about are concerned, that a small committees be set up, and I think it is quite permissible under this aspect of our exercise of this Parliament where we criticize, we propose, . . . that a small committee be set up to examine these immoral, suggestive, indecent calypsos played over the air with a view to recommending to the Ministry of Culture the banning of those that are not palatable to cultured and decent people, and particularly in pursuit of socialism which, as you know, must be a healthy thing and not anything adulterated or demoralising.

With respect to sport which comes under item (63), I wonder if the Cde. Minister is aware that outside of the Government Service persons who are employed in sugar estates, now Government, and are involved in sport, up to the ending of December were not even given time off to go and play things like cricket. They lose their days for bonuses and such things. I wonder if the Cde. Minister would not get as a strict principle, not only in Government bodies but even in private bodies that all workers who are deficient in sport, in culture, in drama, be given the necessary leave without loss of pay or without loss of bonuses. This is not happening at the moment in the sugar estates in particular and I speak with particular reference to Blairmont where I visited.

2.45 p.m.

Finally, Cde. Chairman, it was five years ago that a question on Archives was raised by me in the House and the Government promised that something would be done. I wish strongly

to suggest that the Minister take action in this matter. The Estimates do not reflect any capital expenditure for the rehousing of the Archives.

Cde. Roshan Ally: Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask a question on page 58, subhead 38, Maintenance of Centres for Sports and Culture. I would like to ask the Cde. Minister how many such centres are existing and where. Secondly, why was one centre built at No. 53 Village instead of No. 64 Village when there is a Community Centre catering for sports and culture just about one hundred rods away and when the population of No. 53 Village is just one-fifth of the population at No. 64 Village.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Field-Ridley: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. I am a little at a loss to know how to tackle these questions. Perhaps it would be easier if I went through the questions raised by each Member and answered them. I hope you will bear with me because this means skipping from page to page.

At page 55, Cde. DaSilva dealt with item (53), Archivist. She asked how much progress has been made on the rehousing of the Archives. I think I am very happy to be able to say to this House that the drawings are now completed for the new Archival building. That building will be sited on what used to be the D'Urban Race Course, just north of Chapel Street, for those of you who know that site. The plans have been vetted by the professional officers and supervision is being given through the Ministry of Works and Housing. The next stage is the preparation of the land and during the year we will do as much as possible within the limitations that we have to get that building on the way. I am sure hon. Members would appreciate that even if we had all the funds needed we could not have finished it with this year.

It is true that there has been a problem in the Archives because of overcrowding. Because of that we have had to move on section of the Archives to the building that formerly

housed the Guyana Society so that researchers who need to have access to some of our documents now go to that building rather than to the traditional building known as “The Archives.” As I said before, during this year we will start the building.

I think Cde. DaSilva then went to page 56, item (92) and she asked about vehicle drivers. I think her point was that there had been a significant increase in this vote. However, if she looks at what has been happening, in 1975 we spent just over \$7,000; in 1976 we voted what was needed for employment of sixteen drivers but, in fact, we spent just over \$9,000. Unless we can get all those places properly filled then there may well be less expenditure on this item. The sum reflected is what is needed for the full employment of the 16 drivers. It does not differ significantly from what was voted last year.

Cde. DaSilva then went on to item (122), Box Office Clerk. We have two clerks working there. The hon. Member had mentioned this to me some time ago outside of this House and we have taken action on this. I think her suggestion of putting up a plan of the seating near to where the tickets are purchased is a good one. In fact, it had been proposed by the Ministry but in the implementation of that proposal the plan did not appear at the ticket office but appeared within the Centre itself. We have accepted her proposal.

In terms of training people to deal with the public, this is something we need to pay attention to throughout the entire country. Class prejudice, all kinds of prejudices exist. Sometimes people do not behave to members of the public as they should. We all try to do the best we can in this area and to continue the process of training and re-training.

On page 57, the hon. Member then went on to item (142), Commuted Overtime. This is a new item. There are many categories in this particular Ministry and I think hon. Members will appreciate it if they stopped to think that these are people whose work extends not only over the hours of a normal day, 8 – 4, but by the very nature of their tasks they work during the evenings,

during holidays, Sundays and Saturdays. Information Officers, for example, are called upon, not now and then, but as part of their duty to function all day, any time, to cover events in the evenings or on Sundays or on holidays, being at seminars, talking to people, meeting them, and discussing their problems when people are at home. This has to be when they are at home from work. So we have categories like the Information Officers, like people in our Film Unit who work well beyond the call of duty, who are in fact literally on call twenty-four hours a day for seven days a week.

In the past these people all worked without any overtime at all. They did it as part of their duty and we owe them a bit of gratitude. However, it was impossible to continue forever like that and this commuted overtime really is a token, payment for those kinds of services. When we work out the real overtime they ought to be paid, if we paid it like that, it went well beyond this, but the workers themselves agreed that commuted overtime was the best way to handle it. They recognise that when they took the jobs this was part of the demand of the work that they were expected to do.

I am not sure that in terms of working it out we have reached the real solution to the problem, but generally I think there is a great deal of satisfaction with this way of handling the problem. As I say, it is a token to them because, in fact, they are still doing very many hours for what, in other circumstances, is regarded as overtime. They are involved in the job and they give that kind of service to the people.

The next question was in respect of subhead 12, Broadcasting General. The amount voted is \$10,000. What happened in the past was that the Ministry of Information and culture produced certain programmes on the radio and paid the radio station for that time. This has been a long-standing arrangement long before we had a Ministry of Information. Since that kind of approach to the subject we have looked at the whole question of the information services throughout the country including the mass media and broadcasting and it is our position that

there needs to be an integration of the broadcasting services with the general communication network. In that way, Government has assumed responsibility for financing the general system of communication, including the radio station, G.B.S., Therefore it was not a question of paying G.B.S. per programme as we had done in the past. It was a general approach to the question.

In terms of Radio Demerara which is still a private radio station, our discussions with them have been towards encouraging them towards getting them to function in a developmental capacity. I think that every Member will appreciate that there are limitations in the very structure of Radio Demerara which call for other kinds of solutions. But at the moment this is the one that we raised. Subhead 14, Operation and Maintenance of Motor Vehicles: What are we doing, the hon. Member asked, about the maintenance of vehicles? This subhead dropped from \$125,000 to \$85,000. I was not quite sure what was happening here because sometime later in mentioning the cut in the public relations programme, the hon. Member did make the point, which I found a little astonishing in view of the points she made under this subhead, that rather than cutting an important vote like public relations and programming we should cut instead things like purchasing of vehicles and maintaining vehicles. Nevertheless in spite of having said this she is questioning the cut in this vote which is for maintenance of motor vehicles. It is a cut and we will have problems keeping within this but we just have to because as we know the general position calls for cuts.

We have been having raining programmes for our drivers to try and increase their awareness of the use of the road and the care of the vehicles. We have introduced a system where a driver is responsible for his own vehicle so there is no unnecessary interchange. Therefore we believe that this will encourage him to drive with a sense of responsibility and a sense of care towards his vehicle which he regards as something for which he is responsible. We do have a workshop at the Ministry and we have been trying to make them a little more efficient. With these things in mind we are trying to keep within the limits bearing in mind the problem that the Nation as a whole has.

Subhead 22, Ministry and Culture. When the Minister had control over things that are broadcast and/or written, or over things that are said at various seminars, she particularly mentioned the question of a queen bee, the abolition of the “queen” part of that description.

I think that we should bear in mind that we are going through a period of trying to find ourselves, when the mass of our people are beginning to understand a new kind of future for themselves; a different reality, that they now begin to take pride in themselves as Guyanese; that when they recognise the danger of cultural aggression, then you will have people who could propose this sort of thing. To my mind that is not a great danger. We will sort it out bit by bit. We will have, as we have had in the past, some people demanding that we change the name of Georgetown. Those are suggestions that come from people and I think these are the things that stimulate activity and thinking. It does not mean because somebody made that proposal at the radio station or at a seminar that there will be hasty action on it. But certainly this is something worthy of discussion, until we understand really what are the fundamental areas that need changing and what are the peripheral areas and how things relate to each other. I am not worried. It is part of the very healthy discussion that is going on in this process of nation building.

Subhead 24, Board of Trustees, Georgetown Cultural Centre: The Board of Trustees Georgetown Cultural Centre is no more, because the Georgetown Cultural Centre is no more. This was a centre that had the tasks that are now carried out by institutions like the History and Arts Council, by the Ministry of Agriculture, by groups like the Museum because they started in a day when we had not that kind of attention being paid to the fostering of the culture of our people and attention being paid to the agricultural data of our people and the publication of magazines and allied areas.

Since there are so many agencies involved in these activities, the Georgetown Cultural Centre has clearly outlived the purpose for which it was set up and they have re-constituted

themselves in alliance with professional organisations into a group that will concentrate their attentions on increasing the sensitivity and the productivity of professional groups and maintain a watch on professional standards. Now this hundred dollar represents a payment of an insurance which was left over from them which had to be maintained for a little time.

Subhead 27, Public Relations Programme. The hon. Member said that there is too little and we ought to cut down in other areas that I have mentioned, buying vehicles, maintenance of vehicles. I am very happy to have heard this from the hon. Member because year after year I have stood here and replied to that same hon. Member who has been saying too much has been spent on Public Relations. And I think it is a major milestone that she has recognised that Public Relations are important. We have to cut because the limitations imposed on us by the budgetary provisions have demanded this. Now it means that every officer has to accept this challenge and use other techniques of Public Relations programming.

We have found out in the past not to rely very heavily for our Public Relations Programming on the written word. We do booklets, articles in the newspaper pamphlets, brochures. Now, there is need for that. We have done posters and ... In view of this we have to be more imaginative and we recognise that fundamentally people are convinced and understand in a face-to-face situation where they can have an opportunity to see the person talking to them, to ask questions, to exchange views. In that situation we have to have public relations programme devised using the services of interested groups in our community, groups like, for example, the Consumers Association, the Trade Unions. You will notice the kind of initiative that they have displayed, and are displaying, in the devising of a scheme to sell Defence Bonds. In fact, we use groups within our community that are interested in people, that have a relationship with people and we use those in our public relations effort. It is a pity that the vote has had to be cut but this is a reflection of the sort of challenges that must be met now and we will just have to find a way to use this \$250,000 as effectively as possible to ensure that people understand what is important for them.

Page 58 subheads 31,33,34,36 and 37 which deal with various aspects of communications. The hon. Member particularly mentioned the subscription to the Caribbean News Agency pointing out that it had doubled since 1976. The reason for this is very simple. We became subscribers to that news agency half way through the year and therefore our expenditure represents a half year subscription. This year, because we are already members, this sum represents a total year's subscription.

Cde. Chairman, I wonder if you can assist me. I cannot remember the question she asked on the general communication net work that she had identified under these items. If I am not mistaken she asked whether the drop in all these allocations would not represent a loss to the country.

Communication Training, of course, is important as are all our other Heads. We have had to make general cuts but the training programme has been set up. The Communication vote tends to bear the cost of job training, ad hoc training programmes, sometimes with the assistance of other agencies. It means that we cannot have too much help from other agencies where we have to pay boarding and accommodation, but we can still keep up that training by having our senior officers and others in Guyana who are skilled in communications, to run this programme for us. This again is a response to the problems of financing. Perhaps it is good in that our self-reliance will have an opportunity to show itself with effect.

I think, Cde. Chairman that takes care of the questions that the hon. Member Mrs. Da Silva asked.

3.05 p.m.

The next speaker, as I remember, was Cde. Feroze Mohamed. His questions started on page 54 in which he challenged under items (13) and (19) the need for all these information people. It is absolutely essential to have these information people

and indeed to have more because information is the process which deals with the education of our people for the kind of life that they are called upon to live. Programmes have to be devised, people have to have a responsibility to see that education flows in many ways and that information, which is a necessary part of that education, flows from people to the decision-makers and from one set of people to other sets of people, from region to region, so that there is a healthy understanding of what is happening throughout the country. We do this, as I mentioned, by the written word, but of course there is a film unit which gives people living on the Corentyne, for example, an opportunity to see what is done at the hydro-electric scheme and to give people who have lived on the Coast an opportunity to see what is happening about the National Service and the National Service camps. This is part of the education process.

To do that we must have responsible people, who understand the communications process, guiding that programme. I think when we stop to realize that we have at least fifteen Ministries, all of which do not yet have public relations or information officers, because our training has started but has not been able to keep pace with all the demands, we will recognise that even these officers identified do not provide the kind of services that we in this Ministry would like to be able to provide. I think a lot of misunderstanding that we in this House have heard here expressed by Members on the other side would perhaps have been different had we had more information officers perhaps working directly with them.

In addition to this, we have the regions and in all the regions decisions are taken. We need to ensure that the people who make an input into those decisions, that is, the people who live in those regions are fully briefed all the time on what is happening among their neighbouring villages by the other decision-makers in the regions so that there is a constant flow. Far from being too many people even with the cuts in this Ministry it provides an opportunity for us to stretch ourselves in areas that perhaps have not been fully attended to in the past and to develop the process of communication in the country. **[Interruption]** People are more productive when they understand why they are producing and this is one of the fundamental

differences between the P.N.C. and the P.P.P. While they tried to stultify people from understanding what was happening, perhaps because they did not understand themselves, we try to inform people and through that information there is production and productivity and the mood which has created the self-reliance for people.

On page 55, was the next question which dealt with the Cultural Centres, and again the question was raised: Do we need all these people? I should like to assure the hon. Member who asked this question that this is a very small part of the kind of staff that runs cultural centres in any part of the world. But as is usual in Guyana each citizen functions like many others in several other countries, and we have indicated here the kind of staff that is needed to keep the cultural centre in production. This question was raised, Cde. Chairman, you will remember in the general debate by the same Member and in that same general debate I answered that question. I pointed out that the Cultural Centre was being geared to be used on the basis of at least a one-week show per month rising to two weeks of shows per month. The intervening times, the other 2 weeks, would be used s rehearsal time, so that we have a period of two weeks of shows and two weeks of rehearsing every month. We will start, however, with a show for one week.

We have had requests from many other countries to come here to perform at the Cultural Centre and we have invited some of our friends. The pattern that we are trying to preserve is that one month we will have a show done by a group in Guyana and the following month we have an overseas group, because we see that through these shows we have again another input into the education of us all, that we see the performing arts of people, that we share in their cultural norms and through this we develop ourselves.

In addition to this, since the Cultural Centre is intended to be a real cultural centre, its doors are open to all citizens in Guyana either to participate by being part of the audience or to put on themselves a show but, as I said in the general debate, such skills as we have in the

Ministry will be used to upgrade the efforts of those who are interested in using the Centre but perhaps because of lack of opportunity have not developed that kind of perfected expertise to use what is in fact an excellent cultural centre. Everyone who has been it has said that it is certainly the best in the region but that Centre cannot work unless we have a staff who can adequately run it and maintain it. This is why it is necessary for it to have this expenditure.

Page 56, item (97), Secretary, Board of film Censors: I think the hon. Member asked whether I could personally pay some attention to the working of their Board. I myself, Cde. Chairman, whenever I can manage it attend censoring of films, as the hon. Member behind can tell you. It is not, of course, always possible for the Minister herself to be involved so directly because of the pressure of other work. We do briefing sessions with every group of censors. We do have educational sessions at which we discuss on the basis of actual films that we see, what is it we are looking for, what is it we are trying to see, what is the role that the film is playing. It is an on-going process.

I do not believe that this House would ever like us to reach a situation where one person, perhaps the Minister, single-handedly decides what film is to be shown. Therefore we work with the board of Film Censors. The last Board was appointed when the only Opposition within the House was what is now regarded as the mini-Opposition and they were invited to have people on that Board of Film Censors. However, we have in the past had members from the P.P.P. and we have members representing other areas of interest within our community – education probation, police, consumers, all sorts of persons, and it will take a little time, until our society throws up the censors who will be able to select the films that will give the direction that we want. As I said again and again in the general debate in response to the same kind of question, there are other things that have to happen; censoring is a very negative position, because the distributor brings in the film and you respond either positively or negatively. The positive thing is the work of the film unit and the contacts that we have established which have brought to Guyana films from other countries.

Item (112), Director Institute of Creative Arts: The hon. Comrade on the other side asked why there was an increase in this vote. There has not been an increase in this vote. Last year \$60,000 was the sum voted and this year \$60,000 is the sum to be voted. However, the sum of \$28,000 was spent, because all the directors – and you will see that there are five directors against that subhead – were not appointed each one heading one section of the Institute of Creative Arts.

3.15 p.m.

One page 57, I think the Comrade further looked at item (135) and asked what was the need for these fifteen Information Officers, what is the function of these fifteen information officers. We have embarked, in the ministry, on a programme of training for Information Officers so that we realize selected Information Officers for one year to become full-time members of the programme in Communications at the University of Guyana. Every time we release one officer, it means we have a gap in our already highly-stretched gap so this gives us the opportunity to fill those positions. That course caters for fifteen at a time and so this represents an alternate fifteen Information Officers.

Because of the process of integrating the services, some of those people who have been trained do not come directly from the Ministry but from areas of the mass media, but we do the same thing, that is, we will perhaps continue to pay that person while he is at the University so that he can improve himself, but the work continues.

On page 57, subhead 4, Postage, Cables and Telegrams: The question was: why the fantastic increase? Was it a typing error or had we not examined this properly? The reason for the increase came out in a discussion we had recently because the Post Office is now a Corporation. In the past the vote for sending letters from Ministries was contained in the

Communications Section of the Ministry of Works and Housing. Each individual Ministry just used an envelope marked “O.G.G.S.” and the cost of posting that letter came out of a vote in a different Ministry. Now, because it is a Corporation, every Ministry is called upon to pay the actual cost of posting its own letters and you will probably find this provision in other Ministries. I make the point now so that the question is not raised under every Ministry and we can save some time later on.

One page 57 too, the Comrade under subhead 8, raised the question of Distribution Expenses (Publications) and wanted to know if there is a distinction between that and subhead 4 and why we still need this in view of the other sum. I think perhaps he will understand now that I have explained that the other sum is for posting letters. This subhead, Distribution Expenses, is to distribute the publications that we do. For some of them we take on people to take them out by hand; we use whatever technique I possible but this money I only for the publications we do, not the general correspondence that is involved in the Ministry’s duties.

Subhead 25, Expenses District Offices: Where are these and what are their functions? These are the offices which house the district Information Officers. There are ten such offices. As I said in the general debate, we have vacancies in many of the posts but we do have ten offices. They are roughly, I would say, within each region, the Information Officers use offices of other Government agencies but we have them on the East Coast, at Linden, at New Amsterdam, on the Essequibo Coast. I can go on like that but they are in each region and the function is to act as the headquarters for the information personnel so that the citizens who, for example, want insurance know where to come to make contact, or the farmer who wants us to see what he has been doing on his farm knows where to go to get the Information Officer, or somebody else who has a problem which he feels should be brought to somebody else’s attention of a Ministry’s attention, he knows where to find the Information Officers so that he can get that kind of assistance.

For subhead 26, Sports and Games, there is a drop to \$50,000. Why the drop? They are not satisfied with sports activities. The drop is because of the general position of the country. Last year, 1976, we were able to give assistance to practically every national association; we were able to subsidise the sending of tams overseas. As a result of that, we did not call too heavily on national associations to raise their own funds. I think all of them received a great deal of assistance from the Ministry, not only directly in cash but through provision of equipment. This year, the vote has been reduced and I think it was very refreshing for me to hear one of the officers of one of those national associations who came seeking an appointment say that he understood the stringency in terms of allocation of funds available to Government and he suggested that we call upon the associations to make a greater contribution themselves directly to sport. He said that because of the assistance they had received last year, they were in a far better position now to help themselves than they had been previously. And, therefore, with that kind of co-operation there should not be a reduction in the level of sporting activities.

I am surprised that the Comrade is disappointed with the level of sporting activities in the country. We had this question again in the general debate. He asked it last year; I thought he was satisfied and that in the interim he would have taken the opportunity to travel around the country to see what is happening about sport. I think that one claim that the Opposition cannot make is that sport is not played in every little village, in every region. Up the rivers and in the by-way of this country there is sport. I think really that we have to ignore that particular kind of criticism.

On page 58 the Comrade referred to the point raised in the general debate, the question of the mass media carrying items from socialist agencies or agencies operating in socialist countries. I explained then that CANA is a Caribbean agency and that is our first interests, that we do carry reports from the other agencies but we have problems because we do not have wire services coming directly so we have to get them indirectly; that we get news items through the missions established in this country and since a few of them have recently established offices

like TASS, for example, we do get news items from these groups, photographs and that sort of thing.

However, I did not say this in the general debate and perhaps I should say it now, that even though socialist countries, for the most part, have so very much in common with the aspirations of Guyana, we still have to remember that Guyana has her own interest which must be attended to and that we cannot assume that once a news item comes out of one of these agencies which the Member mentioned, that it can automatically be put in our media effectively and in that way contribute to our development. Some of them have cultural problem and some of them – and just up to yesterday I saw one – can have inaccuracies of fact because they have problems too, as the rest of the world has problems and so even in using those releases that come out of friendly countries we still have to remember that we must look at it with Guyanese eyes and use them in terms of our general policy that the media must be supportive of production and development in the country.

Finally, he asked on subhead 38, Maintenance of Centres for Sports and Culture, where are they and what do they do? In fact, there are very many centres for sports and culture and I myself could not tell you exactly how many there are. In Berbice, I know there have been eight new centres established in 1976. This is happening all over the country. These centres are being established by the residents of areas themselves. We have not been in the past giving them very much financial assistance from this vote. Some of them have got assistance through Community Development in terms of erecting the centres and the interest that we get from that area. Almost all of them have been getting technical assistance from the Ministry in terms of creative arts and performing arts in which they become involved. This vote directly supports one centre, the Uitivlugt Centre, which is the only one that the Ministry is solely responsible for at the moment. As you know, there I sa scheme to establish five such centres amounting to then such centres. The other centres in the country are run by the people themselves, have been built

by the people themselves through the assistance of Community Development. I think that brings to an end the questions asked by Cde. Mohamed.

We had some questions from Cde. Sukul. He asked what the Communication Research Centre was; what were its functions? Is this a waste of people's money? The Communication Research Centre is the centre that is charged with researching, with investigating the reaction of people to the receiving of messages, to understanding what is happening in the country, their general reaction to what is happening in the country.

3.25 p.m.

For example, before a decision is taken one needs to have an idea of what people think about the decision that is proposed because we believe that decisions should be taken in accordance with a full understanding by the people who will be affected by those decisions. There are several techniques that can be used to get those kinds of opinions. Some are informal and are used, some come through party groups, some come through the regional system, but this centre represents an attempt at structured research where a programme is prepared, a questionnaire is prepared, researchers who are trained to ask the kind of questions to get the information they want are employed, and they go out in the country to get the reaction of people in a structured way to whatever the issue is so that through this centre we are able to say, for example if people understand what is socialism, if people understand what is co-operativeism, how people are reacting to the various things that are happening around them. This gives the information that is absolutely essential for effective decision-making. We have been, over the year, trying to make this section very strong because we believe it is an important element in the functioning of any community in any country.

One page 57 the comrade asked under subhead 9, Films, what is this \$100,000 being used for. Perhaps I can look at this with another head under the Division, capital expenditure, for the same run.

Our film unit, as I mentioned in the general debate, becomes fully self-sufficient in 1977 because we will be able to do all black and white films and all colour films. Now this \$100,000 is being used to do two kinds of films: one, a magazine film which comes out every other week which is produced in 65 mm. for showing in the cinemas throughout the country and 16 mm. which is taken around the country through these ten officers that we were talking about in the various regions so that people who do not have access to cinemas can have an opportunity to see these things which tell the story of what is happening in Guyana. Each film tends to have something on development that is happening, something on sport, something on culture, things of general interest.

In addition to that we will continue making feature films. I do hope, Cde. Chairman, that by now you and hon. Members have had an opportunity to see the films that were done last year particularly "Ours to Build" which has been commended by people within and without Guyana in terms of the quality of film which is a feature film about our own country. We have done feature films of National Service, for example, and that kind of production will continue. In addition to this there are many films which are needed in terms, for example, of the legumes project that show people how to plant legumes, how to care for them so that we encourage the drive towards productivity. The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva I know has always been mentioning nutrition. This is the kind of input that we will make during this year.

Some of the cost of producing films will be curtailed now because whereas in the past we had to send all our films and at least one person to the United Kingdom to have them processed and printed, now we can do this in Guyana. In addition to this, of course, it saves foreign reserves.

The other question raised was on page 57 subhead 21, why is so much money being spent on sending out information yet many Guyanese at home and abroad still do not understand what is happening in Guyana. This is a complaint that we have had many times especially from Guyanese overseas who come back home because they say that the rumours are fantastic over there. But then some of the rumours right here we know are fantastic. There are some organized groups overseas which deliberately peddle misinformation about their own country; some of them could claim to have some affiliation with groups on the other side of this House but I am sure that could not be true because they could not be so destructive of the interest of their own country.

This vote must be seen as an attempt to get the information to media within Guyana and outside of Guyana so that they can help us disseminate it. But Cde. Chairman, I would like to use this opportunity to ask Guyanese to be careful that they write the truth about their own country because I know there are many Guyanese who write letters distorting the picture in Guyana. When that happens this public relations vote cannot assist very much because if my aunt writes and tells me she is starving and dropping on the street, I am more likely to believe that than a publication. So those who are involved in that kind of dissemination that is harmful to the country, I think perhaps they should stop it, but then we must remember too that no matter what information is sent out, there are agencies whose interest is in destroying Guyana and destabilising the country. This is the counter-productive element that we have to deal with and even though this sun might seem large in terms of mounting an effective public relations programme, within Guyana and overseas, it is in fact very small but it can be maximised tremendously if every Guyanese recognised that he himself is a public relations agent for his own country.

It was asked on page 59: Seeing that it is austerity year, is it not a waste of money to send people to the Festival? They referred to the rumour that 200 people were going to the Festival and raised the important point as to whether it is not dividing our people for us to

participate in a Black and African Festival. First of all, let me say that our participation in the Festival, which is a cultural Festival, is absolutely essential in terms of the position we have taken as part of the developing world. This is a Festival in which the participants will come from the developing world where they will have an opportunity of understanding their cultural bases, where they will have an opportunity of understanding one another. When we remember that we have been developed, grown up, encouraged in a system of isolation one country from the other, that we are ignorant, for example, about the cultural patterns of African countries, the cultural patterns of India, the cultural patterns of other countries in the developing world, it is absolutely essential that Guyana be part of this.

We have in other areas, political and economic, given our pledge and our support and our commitment to the whole culture of the developing world. Now I think we have been called upon to do this in terms of a cultural expression and this is the area where people relate very easily to people of another country. When the economic discussions go on, we have teams of leaders in different areas during that discussion but countries come close to each other when the people of those countries come close to each other and this kind of cultural expression is one effective way of doing it.

The second part of the question, whether it is not divisive because this is a festival, the Second World Festival of Black and African Art and Culture. I think it is important for this House to know why it has that name. First of all, “African”, because it was an attempt to include all the countries of Africa including the countries of North Africa, the Arab countries, which some people have been arguing some time ago were not rightly African countries. And so the name “African: was chosen to represent that.

The name “Black” was chosen because it was recognised that outside of Africa there were a lot of black people who needed to know more about each other. From the first meeting we had it clarified very clearly that Black People did not refer only to people who trace

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themselves from African descent but in fact the interpretation of Black People is the interpretation that we in Guyana adhere to, this is the interpretation of people with black coloured skins, the non-white people of the world and these non-white people of the world are the people who are represented in this Festival. I am sure that members will be interested to know that in one of the zone there is coming representation from India to that Festival of Black and African culture and art.

3.35 p.m.

I think that the next question raised concerned the Secretary of the Sports Council. The question was asked on page 55, item (63). The comrade stated that there had not been a National Sports council in operation last year. That is quite true because during 1976 it was found necessary to reorganize the National Sports Council. There has been a problem with the Sports Council from time to time because people still confuse the concept of the Sports Council and from time to time say that their kind of sport has not been represented on the Council. We have ensured this year that there is nobody at all on the Council that has been reconstituted who represents any particular sport. Rather, we have tried to put people on the Council who will be responsible for the various elements that go to the successful implementation of a sports policy. The new Chairman of the Council is Cde. Joseph 'Reds' Perreira. He is assisted by a team which includes people like B.L. Crombie who will be in charge of ensuring that sports equipment is in adequate supply in terms of the needs of the sporting public in Guyana.

As you know, since we have allowed sports goods in duty free and have limited the mark-up on them, we have had to take control of the distribution of this so that people would not take advantage of a concession which is meant to benefit the sportsman. We found, however, that we have not worked out a close *liaison* between those who were in sport and those who sold sports equipment. There is a Committee under B.L. Crombie now who will be responsible to

ensure that that liaison is completed and, therefore, that the sports goods are in fact in the country when they are needed.

Then we have other people like Cde. Fernandes who is in charge of facilities for the playing of sports throughout the country. There are other people like Lightweight **Kissoon**. I do not know if many Members know him but this is someone who has made a great contribution to sport through his enthusiasm, his energy, his interest. He is a person who, I think, does not own a cent in this world but who has given a great deal more than many who own much more than that. **[Applause]** We have females represented on the Board with different kinds of responsibility and I trust that this reorganization, under the leadership which I am sure is dynamic, will give us the kind of thrust that the Sports Council should be given.

Cde. Ally, I think, asked a question on page 58, subhead 38, Maintenance of centres for Sports and culture. That was asked before and answered before. Secondly, he asked why was one such Centre built at No. 53 themselves decided that they wanted a Cultural Centre. I cannot find an adjective to describe it myself. If people themselves want a Cultural Centre, are willing to build it, do they themselves, I think it demonstrates the kind of interest that we have been able to stimulate among the people in satisfying their own cultural needs, and I think we should be very proud of it. What I think the hon. Member should do is stimulate people of No. 64, if he can, to build a Cultural Centre. **[Interruption]** Cde. Chairman, I hope you did not hear the irresponsible comments from that side.

I have a feeling that Cde. Persaud asked some questions. He started on page 55 and spoke about the need for the national cultural policy. I think what he should say is the need for national cultural policy that is written down. We are in the process of doing this. In fact, there was a conference of the Caribbean region on cultural policies sponsored by UNESCO, about two months ago at which Guyana was represented. The purpose of that was to prepare the background work for a seminar being held in Latin America under the sponsorship of UNESCO,

for Ministers of Culture to discuss national cultural policy. Guyana I know in the process of putting on paper the cultural policy which we have been pursuing.

He raised the question of calypsoes, that were suggestive, being played on G.B.S. and suggested a formation of a committee to vet immoral, suggestive and indecent calypsoes and recommend the banning of them. Perhaps, I feel more strongly than the hon. Member on the other side that when there is smut it should be kept in the correct place. That is certainly not in terms of defending the views of the public. He has been talking of suggestive calypsoes. Calypsoes are funny things. When people talk about suggestive calypsoes it is usually because the calypso is noting on something that is within that person's own mind. I myself, as a mother of children, have heard children singing calypsoes that some adults with some kind of experience, regard with horror. But those children interpret those calypsoes in a different way in the light of their own innocent experiences. So I would like to caution the hon. Members not to use his experience to interpret for the nation the calypsoes which he finds suggestive. G.B.S. has, infact, banned some songs which they found were not suggestive but smutty. **[Interruption.]** I don't know Fat man. The comrade is obviously well versed in this area. I cannot challenge his expertise in this area; I am not competent. However, G.B.S. has a system of examining the works and how they are used. This is a problem especially in terms of Caribbean and local songs because, in our enthusiasm to promote these, we sometimes include those that we should not. I will remind them of their responsibility to the nation, so they can look at them and see if they have allowed to be played on their station, not suggestive calypsoes but smutty calypsoes. Suggestive ones remain with the listener.

In the area of sport, he raised the question particularly referring to the sugar estates that there are people with ability in the area of sport who could not get time off to play the game or who lost bonuses. Cabinet has taken a decision that has been communicated to the National Sporting Associations that when there is a problem or when there is a need to release a player or persons in culture for service in this area of development in Guyana, if that application is

processed through me as Minister responsible for Culture and Sport, then I have been charged with the responsibility of following that through to ensure that two things happen: That arrangements are made for the continued productivity of the enterprise in which the Sportsman or the person involved in cultural exercises is involved, because our productivity cannot be allowed to drop, but at the same time to balance that with the need for people who are skilled in this area to be able to make their contribution in sport or culture towards the development generally of the nation. I have done this in quite a few cases which have come to me through the national association.

We have been able, to example, for the first time to arrange sessions of live-in periods of training for many of our national sportsmen. We have been able, for example, to have our national boxers go to Potaro where they spent three months in an atmosphere which was conducive to the development of their sport. Some of them were working people but they were able to get time off. We have had our national hockey team in camp. In the same way, we have had not only our national football team but our youth football team living in those kinds of circumstances

This process is in fact in operation and if this is not happening in the particular cases that the comrade knows, I wonder if it is because the particular person with the problem is not in contact with the national association or with the regional system which feeds information into the Ministry of Sport. If he has not, perhaps they could advise that he does this because in every region there is a Sports Council established which is in contact with the National Sports Development Council and those requests can be fed in through the system.

3.45 p.m.

We have been able, too, to do the same thing in the field of culture. For example, at the last Guyfesta people were able to come in from all the regions. Many were workers who had to

be given leave. They came in, they lived in Georgetown during this period. Then we sent a team to Carifesta. Some of those were employed in various agencies but they were able to get the time off to go with no loss.

Finally, the comrade asked that we take action on the matter of the Archives. We are taking action. There is a small capital vote that we will just have to use and do as much that can be done under that Head. Let us hope that next year we will be in a position to at least complete that building or at least to get into a position where we can start working with it.

Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. I think I have answered all the questions.

Head 20, Ministry of Information and Culture - \$3,845,348 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 59.

DIVISION XI – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$746,500 for Division XI, Ministry of Information and culture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Comrades, we have got 12 minutes more. Sufficient time must be given to the Minister to answer. If not it would be an exercise in futility. Cde. Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: I noted that in the Cde. Minister's reply she did not take the opportunity of speaking of things to be done. She mentioned the successes of her Ministry and achievements.

The Chairman: Page 59.

Cde. Mohamed: I would like to refer to subhead 3 and subhead 4. I notice here, Cde. Chairman, that according to the Estimates subhead 3, Production Unit, is to have an expenditure of \$100,000 for the completion of the film on Cuffy etc.

I would like to recall that in the Approved Estimates there was allocated \$450,800 but the Revised Estimates for 1976 showed the figure \$1,100,000 “for the completion of the film on Cuffy etc”. I do not know what etc. means. And now in 1977 I note that the sum of \$100,000 is again requested, for the completion of the film on Cuffy etc. Obviously, Cde. Speaker, we seem to be making a vacuum or we have been taking quite a long time to produce this film on Cuffy. We seem to be spending over a million dollars on this production and in this moment of drastic cuts and austerity year, we ought to watch at this; and instead help out in the crisis situation we have found in terms of nutrition, in terms of production or whatever ways the Minister would like to argue. It would appear, to my mind that this money is not justified at this moment.

I want to go back again as I did before, but it is necessary to speak on subhead 4, Dubbing Theatre. Again we find an explanatory note speaking about the provision “for completion of roof”. That came up several times in supplementary Estimates. The 1976 Revised Estimates indicated \$400,000 for the completion of a roof. Now we see an additional \$70,000. We would like the Minister to answer what type of roof is costing \$470,000 to build. And we would like the Minister to say whether we are right or wrong that first they built the roof and then having realized that that roof was not going to work they took down the roof and they have re-constructed another roof and are about to complete it. The completion will cost \$70,000 according to the Capital Expenditure.

Now we do not know what has happened here on this subhead, but the amount of money spent for the roof seems to be questionable and we need some proper explanation from the

Minister. I would also like briefly to point out that in spite of the answers given by the Minister to the question that no money has been allocated to the development of sports, no money has been allocated for the development of communities.

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed, do you want an answer to the questions you asked? I don't think so. The Minister has 8 minutes in which to reply.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman I think these are important matters and we hope the Minister will - - - -

The Chairman: The Minister will only have 8 minutes to answer if you allow her to do it now. If you don't I will put the Head when it comes and you will get no answers.

Cde. Mohamed: I just wanted to make a point Cde. Chairman on the question of sports and community centres. Again nothing is being done for development. We would like the Cde. Minister, despite her previous answers, to say whether under Capital Expenditure we are not going to see any development.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, there is no item raised on that. He is speaking about films and dubbing of films. Cde. Minister.

Cde. Field-Ridley: Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. In terms of subhead 3 which says "To provide for the completion of the film on Cuffy etc.", last year we had just over \$1 million and we have \$100,000, more. Now, that, as I explained last year, was to provide the equipment to furnish fully a colour laboratory for the film centre. I say it slowly because I said it a year ago. We have purchased most of that equipment now and that is why I was able to say by the end of the year we will be completely self-sufficient in the production of not only black

and white films but colour films. The vote is to get that equipment, the chemicals concerned, the training that is necessary; all of that is in this Vote.

The vote is also intended to provide the Capital Expenditure for the film on Cuffy. Now the script for the film is completed. The building has gone on and equipment is there to complete the training and the use of that colour laboratory which is part of the same vote. Over and above, any leftover will be used on the Cuffy film. But the Cuffy film is absolutely essential in terms of our general development of awareness of ourselves. Cuffy is the national hero of Guyana. He embodies a lot of the qualities that we need to have now and I think one of the ways of paying our respects to him is to ensure that all of us understand what that whole experience was about.

Subhead 4, Dubbing Theatre: Now this concerns the building itself, although the subhead mentions the roof alone. We started off with just a dubbing theatre. I explained two years ago that is the section of the film centre which dubs on the sound to the picture so that when you see a picture you hear the sound and you will see the picture in front of your eyes. In addition to that question, there is the rest of the film centre which are the buildings that you see near to the Cultural Centre if you were to pass.

The rest of this vote has been used not to put up just a roof but a whole building that you see south of the part that dealt with dubbing. That is not quite complete. The sum is to complete that roof and all the foundations, the walls, the floor, the equipment are already in. Go and look at the building and you will see how the money has been spent. Thank you, Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: I would like to have some information on page 49 subhead 6, Government Archives and National Trust. Would the Minister give us very briefly what progress has been made with regard to the establishment of buildings of the National Trust. Could the Minister tell us if it is proposed to identify buildings of similar types of architecture, to have three or four of a similar type of architecture rather than trying to spread it over various types. I have this in mind because I believe that we are going to identify a hotel on Main Street of rather dubious character while next to it we have the Attorney General's Chamber with the same type of architecture.

Cde. Chairman: Cde. Minister.

3.55 p.m.

Cde. Field-Ridley: thank you very much Cde. Chairman. The National Trust has put out a book in which they have identified not only buildings, but monuments to come under the National Trust. The same newspaper which we have been talking about has carried several articles on some of these buildings identified. I think the hon. Member is a little wrong in the identification of some of the buildings on Main Street.

In some cases the Trust has identified areas rather than single buildings to preserve the general architecture of an area so that we have with us, constantly being used, some of our history. We have gone through the National Trust to identify buildings and monuments throughout Guyana, and the newspaper has been reporting this faithfully. I think two weeks ago we have had identification of a Temple in Woodley Park to which the National Trust has made a donation to restore it as it used to be. We have also made a contribution to the St. George's Cathedral to help in the restoration of the building. I think that was the question the hon. Member asked.

12.1.77

National Assembly

3.45 – 3.55 p.m.

Division XI, Ministry of Information and Culture, \$746,500, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: It is now for o'clock. Perhaps this is a convenient time to take the suspension. The Sitting of the House is suspended for thirty minutes.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting Suspended at 4 p.m.

4.25 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Head 76, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, Pages 181 and 182: Comrades and hon. Members, I wish to draw your attention to page 182. There is a correction I shall like to bring to your attention. On that page, please change \$1,361,000 to read \$1,521,000, and the grand total should read \$2,151,335 and not \$1,991,335. It does not affect the other additions, totals or anything; there has just been some typographical error. Will Members kindly indicate the items they wish to speak on?

HEAD 76 – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES AND NATIONAL MOBILISATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,151,335 for Head 76, Ministry of Co-operatives and National mobilization stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: I should like to raise a question on page 182, subheads 4, 7 and 21. I wonder if the hon. Minister will explain Postages, Cables, Telegrams. The legend is clear, but they say for local postage and I should like to know if letters posted locally are not handled free at the Post Office.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, I do not want to answer for the Minister, but if you were here you would have heard the Minister of Information and Culture stating that for all Ministries you will see this new type of heading and that is because the post office has now become a Corporation and all Ministries will have to pay the Corporation for such services. There is nothing like free postage nowadays; we all have to pay. Perhaps I merely mention this so as to obviate the necessity of the asking of this question time and again.

4.30 p.m.

Cde. Ram Karran: I would not have asked it under anything else but I notice it is said all through the Estimates. Uniforms, subhead 7: The explanation given is “New subhead”. This phrase is used against some of these estimates and it is just as if nothing had been written. “New Subhead” explains nothing; it gives one the impression that the Government has made a decision and therefore it is there. I have made this observation time and again in this Chamber that if a new subhead is introduced then a short explanation be given which will obviate the need for Members to get up and ask questions. It would save a great deal of time and, of course, as it is recorded there we would know why in this austerity year, for instance, \$3,000 is going to be spent on a new subhead for uniforms. Who are going to be supplied with uniforms?

If we may move on to subhead 21, Operation of Bus Service, and close the questions I wish to raise, \$160,000 is voted for the operation of a bus service. What sort of bus service? Where does it run? Whom does it take? And if it is a bus service that is going to operate for the transportation of the public, why is it not handled by the organisations well suited for that

purpose, the Guyana Transport Services where you have maintenance crews, where you have equipment and everything geared for the operation of the bus service? As you know, Cde. Chairman, if we have things done in bits and pieces all over the place it means that your administrative costs will be high. It means that you have to duplicate your services for maintenance, equipment etc. and I am sure the expert or the near expert on this, the hon. Minister of Works, could have advised the Minister or the people who thought that they ought to run separate empires that it would be costlier to the taxpayers in this country.

One deficiency, I have noticed in this Head, I have not seen and I looked for it – the corresponding side of it. I assume that this is going to be a commercial concern. On the other side of the ledger, I have not seen the anticipated income or revenue from this subhead. I hope that the hon. Minister will be able to give that explanation and to indicate the reasons why this was not taken into the regular service. I do not want to anticipate because I believe from what I have heard and seen that there is a bit of discrimination in a certain bus operation on the East Coast of Demerara. If this is what I suspect has been taking place, I shall be grateful for an opportunity to come back with a supplementary question if this is the service that I anticipate is being run.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: A short question generally on staffing; page 181, subhead 1, items (8), (10), (11), (14), (15), (22), and on page 182 –

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, please – I have to write; if you will call the items a little slower.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Well, sir, I thought it would have been faster if I just dealt with them one after the other. But do you want to know beforehand? Could I call them as I go along or

do you want them beforehand?

The Chairman: Suit your own convenience.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Very well, sir, subhead 1, item (8) is in respect of the clerical establishment and since 1975 the complement has been 42 but if we not in respect of actual expenditure, in 1974, \$54,000 has been spent in 1975, \$46,400; in 1976, \$100,258 was the sum approved but the revised amount is \$55,907. We are asking in 1977 for another high figure as was approved in 1976 - \$105,146. If we have been spending at the level of \$50,000 approximately, either we must cut down on this amount of 42 persons or fill the vacancies. What is the position here? We would like to know. Obviously, there are vacancies.

In respect of the Co-operatives Division, item (10), Deputy Chief Co-operatives Officer. I asked a similar question in December, 1975. Nothing was listed in the revised estimates for 1976. The approved estimate for 1976 was \$12,384. The revised estimate has nothing and the 1977 estimate is \$12,384. Obviously the post is not filled. In 1975 December, when we were debating we got some explanation about the Principal being at Kuru Kuru College. Are we still operating without a Deputy Chief Co-operatives Officer?

Item (11), Assistant Chief Co-operatives Officer:. There are supposed to be six. If we look at the revised figure for 1976 it is only \$32,988 and yet we are asking in 1977 for \$61,668. Is this due to vacancies? Will they be filled this year?

We go on now to item (14), Co-operatives Auditor. There are supposed to be 12 Auditors II/I. I would like us to look at this very carefully. In 1974, the actual expenditure for these supposedly twelve people was \$8,400; in 1975 the actual was \$3,300. In 1976, the sum of \$47,232 was provided in the Estimates but it is now being revised to \$6,588. Yet, in 1977 we are again voting \$47,232. I called this a scandalous state of affairs year before the last and I

continue to call it so because we have so many problems arising in respect of co-operative societies and books not being kept properly and if we have in the Estimates provision for twelve of these officers, then we should have twelve officers. Why is it that even though we provided money for twelve officers in 1976, it was revised to \$6,588? Why do we not fill these posts? They were not filled in 1975 nor in 1976. In 1977, will they be filled?

Item (15), Captain Engineer. The sum of \$2,208 was provided in the Estimates for 1976. Nothing is shown in the Revised Estimates column and now we are asking in 1977 for \$12,208. If we do not need the post then do not let us ask for the money. We did not spend it in 1976, why should we spend it in 1977, an austerity year? We have not spent it in any year so that apparently the post is still unfilled. If we can get along with it for so many years maybe we can continue to get along with it in this austerity year.

Moving on now to item (22), there are supposed to be 16 Supernumerary Constables. In the 1976 Estimates provision was sought for \$32,832 for these constables and in the Revised Estimates column the amount reflected in only \$8,366 showing again that there must have been vacancies, that the posts were not filled. Again, if we can get through with only \$8,000 worth of supernumerary constables for 1976, then perhaps we do not need \$32,986 in 1977.

4.40 p.m.

Turning to page 182, the question of uniforms has already been asked so we go to subhead 10, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles. I will also deal with subhead 12, Water Transport. If we look at the revised estimates for 1976, at the level of expenditure for these two heads, we will see that in respect of maintenance and operation of vehicles in 1976 the revised figure is \$46,000. Why then in 1977 do we want \$75,000 in this austerity year? Again, in respect of water transport, the revised estimate for last year was \$2,991. Why then are we

asking for \$12,000 for 1977? Let us cut down on expenditure. That is the kind of expenditure that we can cut down on.

We go down the page to subhead 17 Electricity. The question I am raising will probably arise in other parts of the Estimates and therefore one answer would probably suffice. The revised figure in 1976 for electricity was \$44,343. The approved estimates for 1976 was \$45,000 so we asked for \$45,000; we spent just a little less \$44,343, but for 1977 when electricity charges have in fact gone up – I understand the announcement has been made – will we not need more than \$40,000 and will this not be the position in respect of every Ministry in respect of electricity? Am I right in presuming that we will have supplementary provisions in respect of electricity for every Ministry since –

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, I do not want to interrupt you. Unfortunately you could not come here during the general debate because of your illness but an explanation was given in respect of electricity, that despite the rates will be increased, there will be economies effected. They will have to effect economies and that is why you will find a reduction primarily for electricity in all the estimates. They have understood the problem you are raising and they have explained that although the rates will be going up there will have to be economies effected.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Thank you, sir. To the extent to which I understand they have gone up, I will be looking for those applications for supplementary provisions to see whether in fact their promise will be kept.

Subhead 19, Expenses – Kuru Kuru Co-operation College: The amount provided in the 1976 Approved Estimates was \$1.2 million. The revised amount was \$1 million and that was very good indeed. The amount for 1977 is \$800,000, which again is very laudable. I merely want an assurance from the hon. Minister that since this is a continuing establishment with continuing

classes, an established institution which means continuing expenditure, whether he thinks that they will be able to survive. And I know how important the Co-operative College is to the Minister and his Government. I would like to know that they will in fact be able to survive with a \$200,000 cut in the recurrent expenditure of this co-operation college.

That completes it except that the Cde. Ram Karran did raise the subject of the operation of the bus service. I would like to see where, if there is any revenue from this.

Cde. Jaiserrisingh: On page 182 subhead 19, Expenses – Kuru Kuru Co-operation College. I have just two simple questions. Are the facilities at the College available for Guyanese only? The motto of the Kuru Kuru College is “Towards Self-Reliance.” How far has this been accomplished since the college has been established?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Page 182 subhead 11, Grants to Voluntary Social Welfare Organisations and subhead 15, Subsidy – Fish Project. Would the Minister kindly say which are the voluntary and social welfare organizations that are receiving grants from the Government?

Subhead 15 is a sore one. Why do we have to subsidise a fish project at all when the subsidy has been cut from so many essential items which ought to be subsidised? This country can be virtually self-sufficient in fish so that if you operate a project it can be viable without any subsidy. If a subsidy has to be given towards a fish project, it shows mismanagement, or the fish is being given away free, or people are stealing the money. The trawlers that are operated are compelled under the arrangement for them to operate to bring in a certain amount of fish either for nothing or very cheaply, and even if the Government sells the fish at 35 cents per pound it can still be viable and pay for itself. Why, therefore, must we grant a subsidy of \$200,000? What is worse, this is under the Ministry get into a fish story? It has to arrange Local Government Elections. In fact, I proceed further now to move formally the deletion of item 15 from this estimate.

The Chairman: There are several Heads. I cannot understand why the Opposition cannot get together and let the person who is going to speak on this Head ask all the questions. Who is next?

Cde. Dalchand: Page 182. Coming back to the same subhead 19, what I want to say is that we notice that the sum has been reduced. What we notice on page 182 –

The Chairman: What item are you speaking on?

Cde. Dalchand: Subhead 19, Expenses – Kuru Kuru Co-operation College. What I notice on page 183 under the Capital Estimates the Ministry is asking for \$300,000 more for the Kuru Kuru College, it says here, “To provide for the expansion and furnishing of the College.” Despite the fact that it is asking for \$300,000 to expand and furnish the college, it is asking for a reduction in the cost of running it.

Page 185 –

The Chairman: We have not reached that far. Cde. Persaud, your deletion is out of order. You have to give one day’s notice. Cde. Minister Green.

The Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Cde. Green): Cde. Chairman, I must thank you for dealing with the first question raised by Cde. Ram Karran on the question of postages.

The other question had to do with subhead 7 on page 182, a new subhead, Uniforms. This is an effort to introduce some level of uniformity and discipline among drivers and office assistants, in particular, and constables, and it was a decision to give that category of workers

uniforms, first, because we think it is necessary and, secondly, it assists the employee to come to work looking and feeling some type of self-respect and decency.

4.50 p.m.

The bus service, Cde. Chairman, at subhead 21, seems to be of concern to Cde. Ram Karran. I believe this matter was aired publicly before but in response and for the record, may I explain first of all how it happens to come within the area of this Ministry as the comrade seems to wish to direct the Cabinet and Prime Minister as to how to allocate subjects and which Ministry must be responsible for what.

The name of this Ministry is Co-operatives and National Mobilisation. The G.T.A. held a conference on the Essequibo Coast sometime early 1976 and one of the Motions brought before that conference was the problem facing teachers and pupils, school children, particularly in parts of the urban centre, the East Coast, East Bank and generally along the Coast of Guyana. Around the same time problems arose with other workers from the Guyana Labour Union but particularly workers who have to get to work early. Out of that conference a group agreed that they should form a co-operative to apply suggestions on where we said we would help them to provide a service for themselves. The matter was discussed; permission obtained from the relevant authorities and the project was launched last year.

The co-operative group at the moment is a group consisting of assistants from the Ministry, with technical assistance from an officer of the Small Industries Corporation, the G.T.A. and the G.L.U. they are now running a fleet of eleven small-size buses and they serve, apart from the other things, by taking cultural and other groups from place to place. They have relieved the problems which faced a number of school children and teachers in certain built-up areas.

It is consistent with the Government's policy and programme that groups of people who are willing to help themselves must receive assistance from the Government. At Victoria on the 7th July 1975, at the opening of Co-operative Week, the Prime Minister and Leader of the Party and country, made it very clear that Government Corporations, were part of the transition apparatus and that ultimately it was the co-operative groups of people willing to work and share the resources that must control the economic sector of the country.

The hon. Member Feilden Singh on page 181, asked a number of questions dealing with staff. These questions have been answered time and time again and it is not a question of understanding. I can give a general answer with your leave Cde. Chairman. It is a question of adjustments of personnel, the question of using temporary staff – and if you look at the very page, item 24, Temporary clerical Assistants, it is from this vote that adjustments are made and this has been explained in this House, as far as I can remember, every year. The hon. Member shouts from the west, "Fill the post" but in terms of the massive expansion taking place in Guyana it is not always convenient or prudent to fill certain vacancies but we hold them with officers who will wish to see if they can satisfy the minimum criteria before they are formally appointed.

The situation at item (12), Senior Co-operative Officer, remains the same and this adjustment will be made during the current year. I suspect, Cde. Chairman, that there is an error in the hon. Member Feilden Singh's Estimates and the figure he quoted, \$12,208 for item (15) Captain Engineer is not \$12,208 but \$2,208. In my copy there is also a mark and since we both suffer from not perfect eye-sight, it is understandable. I think that would, therefore explain his concern. That too, is obviously the printer's devil for which I apologise on behalf of the printers.

There was a question from him dealing with item (22) Supernumerary Constable. This is similar to the other response I made, that adjustments are now being made where the new

Constabulary will be relieving some of the Constables to the Ministry and, therefore, we propose to spend this money this year.

Page 182, with respect to Maintenance and Operations of Vehicles the question was posed: Why the increase since we are talking about a cut-back? In terms of certain activity it is important to maintain the mobility and contact with people for the very fact that we may be passing through a difficult year and it is anticipated that with the likely rise in the cost of maintenance, spares and, perhaps, fuel before the end of this current year this increase will be considered justifiable. I believe, Cde. Chairman, you gave the explanation in so far as electricity rates are concerned.

At 19, Expenses – Kuru Kuru Co-operation College, a question was asked. At Kuru Kuru it is a living institution and, in so far as the current expenditure is concerned, by improving the internal administration and other arrangements of the training institution, it is expected that the money provided will be sufficient to maintain the level of efficiency and confidence within the four walls, so to speak, of the campus. In fact, at the college we have made significant gains over the past few months and years and because of the improved level of efficiency this sum is considered adequate.

Cde. Sattie Jaiserrisingh asked a question on page 182 with respect to the facilities at Kuru Kuru Co-operative College. She asked whether the facilities are available to Guyanese only. In keeping with the objectives of Government, the facilities are available to persons other than Guyanese. In fact, we extend the facilities to residents in the Caribbean region since it is the only Co-operative Training Centre in this area, at least in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Already 11 students, five from St. Kitts, three from St. Lucia and three from Dominica have participated in the training on the college campus.

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5 p.m.

The other question which is part of the response I gave to Cde. Feilden Singh is that the motto of the College is “Toward Self-Reliance.” How far has this been accomplished? The College, apart from serving as a teaching institution, has done fairly well and I have some interesting figures. For last year it produced 229,865 pounds of poultry meat, 9,890 eggs; 7,000 pounds of gibleet; 3,865 pounds of beef; 36,765 pounds of pork; 12, 910 gallons of milk; 125,000 pounds of pineapples and over 40 pounds of vegetables and, of particular pride to me, over 600 pounds of rabbit meat.

Apart from those figures I gave, the kitchen section of the College does not have to purchase very many items other than those produced on the campus.

Cde. Persaud asked on page 182, subhead 11, which were the voluntary organizations that received the grants. There are a number of small groups like the Women’s Institutes, the small voluntary organisation we see in various parts of the country. It is a small sum and really could not serve the large organizations.

Cde. Persaud is concerned about fish. So are we. First of all let me restate, it is the Prime Minister who must decide which Ministry handles which matter and not the Opposition. The reason for the subsidy is that it was a deliberate policy by the government to assist the Guyana Wholesale Co-operative Complex, the distribution agent for the fish in this particular exercise. In fact, with the improve facilities we now have it is likely dependent upon the catch that we get and the freezing facilities we are already using, that this subsidy may not be necessary next year. It is just a possibility.

The reason for the subsidy is that the fish brought in is not restricted to the cheap fish for the urban population. But fish is at the moment distributed along the East Coast, West Coast,

East Bank, across the river as far as Winiperu into several of the wood grants and timber and mining areas as far as Linden on both sides of the river. We have an arrangement in addition, with the Guyana National Service to supply them with fish when they, for reasons of bad catching possibilities, may fall short. We also supply them with fresh fish we supply the New Amsterdam Fish complex with fresh fish. Transportation distribution of this size and regularity therefore could not be undertaken by the Complex and still sell fish at 35 cents a pound. This is why fish in some areas are sold for as much as \$1.60 and even \$1.80 and, if it is special fish, \$2,00 a pound in some area.

As the Cde. Leader explained during his presentation, fish is an excellent source of protein. In fact, some nutritionists contend that the best form of protein comes from fish. It is the responsibility of the Government to see the vital foods are available to the population as cheaply as possible. And the argument, therefore, that we should subsidise things other than fish in a very faulty argument both in terms of our concept and both in terms of the health of the Nation.

My friend Cde. Dalchand asked a question which I believe I have already responded to, that we need more money to expand; that there is a reduction on the current expenditure. I explained that it is because of the improved facilities and efficiencies at the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Chairman, no one on this side suggested - -

The Chairman: I am not going to allow you to discourse on that. We have lots of other Heads to go through.

Cde. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister suggested that we are saying who is going to decide what subjects should be put under what Ministries. I did not say that and the hon. Minister should understand and . . .

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran that is not a supplementary question.

Cde. Ram Karran: sir, this is raised out of the question. I would like to develop the point to convince you that the hon. Prime Minister is not a dictator. It did not appear so last night. What we are saying is that deficiencies can arise out of the improper posting of Heads. And this House has the right to point that out.

No public accounts committee, no House looking at this matter, will disagree with the point that if you were able to put together subjects or services that have one administration, one set of spares, one set of equipment, that it would affect savings to the economy. That is why the Minister is impudent – I apologise for using such a strong word – to suggest that we are trying to tell the hon. Prime Minister how to distribute subjects. I did not attempt to do that and I would not do that. All I am pointing out is that it is a better way. And surely we have the right of saying what we think if in our opinion, from our experience, that is a better way. But the point I wish to make is supplementary.

With respect to the operation of this bus service, the Minister has confirmed that this is the same thing that we are talking about when he said the Guyana Teachers Association and the Guyana Labour Union passed a resolution some time ago in Essequibo and they are operating a bus run with public funds and are discriminating in so doing. They are running a bus service that picks up passengers and children from Buxton, from Beterverwagting, from Plaisance. And the people who live between these points, at Annandale, at La Bonne Intention, at Industry, at Ogle, do not have the service. I have never seen that bus in Bel Air where a lot of people reside and work in Georgetown. I have never seen that bus passing there and picking up people.

5.10 p.m.

I think that this is the case, even if the Minister is saying that it is not so, how can we put in the recurrent Estimates in this House a substantive head of \$160,000 to subsidise members of the

public who are entitled to the same level of wages as other people in the country? This is nasty, this is discrimination. This is the worst type of feather-bedding.

I exhort the hon. Minister to delete this item on his own accord. We cannot talk about co-operation when you start to do things like this. This was, as the Minister said, a matter which was publicly aired. I do not know if the system has changed now, but it is stinking to think that on the current Estimates we are going to talk about co-operation and we are going to feather-bed people who work with the G.L.U., people who are living in certain villages, while the rest of the people have to pay the full fare.

I feel very strongly about this, and I appeal to the hon. Minister to let us get along with a system that all can call fair and not to do things like this because these little items are the irritants that create the disunity, disaffection and, in fact, can add to what they call destabilization within the society. I say so with the greatest sincerity, and I ask the hon. Minister to look at it in its proper perspective. He can find this in no country in which you have a parliamentary system of government.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Green: Cde. Chairman, I was almost getting worried about the health of my good friend as it is just half an hour since he has had his tea, but he survived and he certainly enjoyed himself. I think if Cde. Ram Karran was speaking for the People's Progressive Party what he has said hits at the problems that some people face in a now thrust of people's involvement. I attempted to explain, first of all, how it is that the Ministry of Co-operative gets involved in ventures such as this. I also recalled the words of the political leader of the country who gives us guidelines and provides guidance for us to implement. The whole idea of groups of people getting together to achieve, the whole concept of self-reliance, providing services that they need, is consistent with the Party and the Government position. There is no discrimination; if any

group gets together, accepts the principles of co-operation and co-operativism, this Government is duty bound to offer whatever assistance it is possible to offer.

If I may I will deal with some other subject raised by another Member on that side, a subject that deals with the same sort of problem. When the Leader of the Opposition was talking about the very fish product during his presentation across the Table I reminded him that he has not yet responded to a letter in which I offered to assist on this question of distribution in certain areas. Only today they sent a gentleman to the Wholesale Complex to discuss the matter. And this attitude was, “All right, the P.P.P. sent me to look at this thing, you must provide me with a scale, a truck, everything – almost a hand to sell the fish.” He was prepared to do nothing at all; there was no effort on his part to even pretend that he was willing or capable of helping himself. They say heaven helps those who help themselves. The P.N.C. Government would help those who are willing to help themselves.

On this whole question of the bus service, and for that matter public, or social our community service, the Government is consistent. If any group recognises the need for service that may be inadequate at the national level and that they may need in the community and are prepared to combine their human and natural resources and this group has done – the organisations and the school teachers have put money towards the project, but like any transport service it cannot be economic in the initial stages, buses are expensive, the spares are expensive, and it is unfortunate that the comrade should attempt to suggest the nature of discrimination that he suggested in so far as the service is concerned. To my knowledge, the service caters for groups of teachers through the G.T.A. through the schools and there is absolutely no discrimination. The only limitation is in terms of the persons a given bus can take and there must be a cutoff point. I have seen those buses and I can see no discrimination in terms of race, in terms of size of the children, in terms of the school they go to, in terms of their ethnic origin, in terms of their religious persuasions because I witnessed the formal handing over ceremony held at Teachers’ Association ground, and I was pleasantly surprised at the interest that the very

school children were taking. In fact, it is being used as a teaching institution where they not only work together but they help with the marking and the keeping of the books which the co-operative is using to show in a positive way at the level of the school how people can get together to help themselves.

Cde. Chairman, it is not for me to indulge in throwing bricks and to remind the members of the People's Progressive party that during their regime they had co-operatives at Black Bush Polder that had all sorts of peculiar arrangements, that had \$3 million rice mills where money was thrown down the drain from the beginning of the project, not by any mismanagement. The whole design was to give substantial sums of money to people they assumed, and perhaps quite rightly at that time, to be their supporters. The problem we have in this House is that people can only see a venture, see an exercise, in their own terms. They can only translate the exercise the way they have done things.

Head 76, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, \$2,151,335, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 183.

DIVISION XXIX – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES AND NATIONAL MOBILISATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$740,000 for division XXIX, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: I wonder if I can raise a small question which will probably bring out a great deal of steam from the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister went at great length in the

last reply to a very simple question. May I ask him what is the position with respect to the co-operative venture operated by –

The Chairman: You are speaking on what item or subhead?

Cde. Ram Karran: Subhead 2, Co-operative Development: What co-operative development has taken place with respect to the Non Pariel Co-operatives organisation. I want to give him some information so that he will recall the matter. It is a registered body and had been operating for a number of years, had been cultivating rice, and had a cattle farm. It enjoyed a lease from the Estate and had been operating at a considerable profit, it did not require any subsistence or grant from the Government, but all of a sudden the co-operative was suspended. Its books were impounded for over a year. I compliment the Minister, because his staff was unable to go through these voluminous documents for over a year. It is only recently they have been returned, but the lands have been taken away and the lands are now producing nothing. The empowering has all been destroyed, the fences have been broken down and any attempt to occupy these lands either by grazing cattle or in any other form has resulted in the members of the co-operative being physically assaulted, threatened with guns and chased away from these lands. I wonder what principles of co-operativism the Ministry is using to cultivate lands, this is the Non Pariel Livestock and Producers Association badly need, and to develop cattle which we so badly need, in the milk and other products.

5.20 p.m.

Perhaps I might outline, Cde. Chairman, that the average yield on this plot of land which the members of the co-operative cultivated has been fairly high, much higher than the national average and it had been so for a long time because these people use what we call the intensive system of agriculture; they supplement their meager wages from the Estates by working on this land in their spare time; there is a good number of them. We cannot understand. I had myself made representations to the hon. Minister on behalf of those people because they happen to be

members of the Union of which I am a member and I had every indication from the hon. Minister that these lands would have been reverted to these people. I went back to office and tried to confirm the promise the hon. Minister had said but in his reply to me he seemed to have changed his mind somewhere between the time I left his office and arrived at my office.

This is one of the things that is creating a lot of bother in the minds of a lot of people particularly on the East Coast. Apart from asking the hon. Minister to tell us what has happened – I know that I will not get an opportunity to speak after him, so I wish at the same time to exhort him to see that these lands are returned to the people because it is the only way by which we will be able to increase production and bring about a state of satisfaction to a large section of the Guyanese people. What has happened at Non Pariel and at Enterprise has created a great deal of fear in the minds of other people and there are a lot of co-operative ventures that have not been started by this Government that are successful, that are not dependent on the Government for subsidy. All these people are worried because they occupy Government lands or lands belonging to the nation and they are getting certain services which are entitled to all but the fear arising from what happened to the Non Pariel Co-operative is pervading the whole society particularly those co-operators and we may well have a situation where production will lag, will fall and perhaps disappear altogether leaving the exports in the Ministry, the co-operators, to go out and do the co-operating and also do the producing.

So, in this spirit, I hope that the hon. Minister will tell us something that we expect to hear today that the discrimination we charge him with of taking away people's lands through the agency of his backbenchers – I don't see him here – with a gun, will end, that these lands will be given back to the people, that the interior works, the drains and the dams and so on would be made back, the fencing will be put back because it was destroyed by them, so that people can peacefully occupy the land for which they have the lease, a lease which has been in existence even before Government acquired these lands from the sugar industry.

The Chairman: Cde. Hussain.

Cde. Hussain: Cde. Chairman, I have two questions to ask the Cde. Minister on page 183, subhead 2, Co-operative Development. Question one: what significant contribution have fishermen's co-operatives made to the development of Guyana? Question two: Guyana Marketing Corporation has recently constructed its ham and bacon factory, at Farm, East Bank Demerara, and it is to be operated on a 24-hour basis. As I understand it, the successful operation is dependent on the supply of pigs from the Pig-Rearing Co-operatives. If this is the case, Cde. Chairman, could the hon. Minister say what has been the value of pigs sold to the Corporation and the percentage of this figure against total purchases made by the Guyana Marketing Corporation?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Green: Cde. Chairman, I am not sure what type of response to give to the observation made by Cde. Ram Karran because I am still hoping, within this House and without, that the whole question – and it is relevant to what I am about to say and what he has said – of the involvement of the P.P.P. in building this nation will be taken seriously and that we will not use the House and every opportunity for pin-pricking and unproductive political excursions.

Cde. Ram Karran has said a “mouthful” to use a local parlance, when he indicated that the members of the Non Pariel Co-operative Livestock Society are his colleagues in the same union. I do not know what work he does apart from being a shareholder in GIMPEX. That, I think is significant because what has happened here is that, as part of our general programme of strengthening the co-operative movement with the problems of staff and difficulties of legion type, we have been looking at all the societies over the past year or two. We had occasion to cancel the registration of some societies because we are satisfied that they can no longer function as co-operative societies. The Non Pariel Co-operative Society has not yet been cancelled because it is the view of my officers and my view that there is still hope for the group but the difficulty is that the group is not allowed – and I say so seriously and I hope it is taken seriously

– to function as a co-operative society. I do not want to go into the past and some of the details which the hon. Member is aware of.

When we began the general investigation of a number of societies, we found that this society had no records. They produced some books subsequently and there were difficulties with the young officer who was sent to investigate. I took Cde. Ram Karran seriously because he know, and I know, that this society was used – and I say so in this House because I have the information – to bring funds to the People’s Progressive Party. There was no evidence of distribution of shares or anything. It was used to put funds in the coffers of the People’s Progressive party.

But Cde. Chairman, we politicians have been in this business for a long time and I was prepared to forgive them for that – the land was there, the land was worked – if they were prepared to work seriously. But what has happened? They refused on six occasions to turn up at meetings at the invitation of my senior and district officers; sometimes they could not find the Chairman. On one occasion one man attended and after five minutes he had to go and hustle and do something else.

As far as the Non Pariel Society is concerned, this Government must ensure that all land is productively used and I would hope that the leaders of the People’s Progressive Party would allow farmers, peasants and people to work co-operatively, consistent with Government policy and produce for the nation. I gave an instance in this House of the interference – and I am glad Cde. Naraine and I got agreement by a group of people at Grove Housing Scheme to take them out of the mess and squalor they were in and the G.A.W.U. officials have been pelting and intimidating people because they turned out in large numbers to meet Cde. Naraine and myself.

I do not know what they are worried about. I think it is unfortunate, perhaps fortunate, that they should raise this question of the non Pareil Co-operative Society. In the presence of my Senior Co-operative Officer I will again give instructions that every human effort be made to mobilise

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and organize that group of hard-working people into an effective co-operative society which will accept the rules and the norms consistent with government policy.

Cde. Hussain asked the contribution of the Fishermen's Co-operative Society towards the development of Guyana. I am very happy to report that here we have a sound group who did not allow themselves to be interfered with or got at and this fishermen's co-operative sold a total of \$1.25 million during 1976 bringing down the cost of fishing tackle, cordage, hooks, . . . etc., which were being used by some of the firms in Water Street and some of the other places to make it uneconomic for the smaller fishermen to operate. The co-operative itself is maintaining an excellent fleet and in this way it is contributing to the development of Guyana.

Perhaps we can take this opportunity to give public credit to the two moving officers of that society, a Cde. Salim and a Cde. Khan who have worked with a true spirit of co-operativism for the year in that society.

The other question Cde. Hussain asked about the G.N.C. has a very short answer. The value of pigs bought from co-operative societies and pig-rearing co-operative societies was nearly \$2 million and the percentage of total G.M.C. purchases by the pig rearers co-operatives society was 55 per cent of the total spent.

Division XXIX, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation - \$740,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 184 t 186, Head 77, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Local Government).

**HEAD 77 – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES AND NATIONAL MOBILISATION
(LOCAL GOVERNMENT)**

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,082,806 for Head 77, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Local Government) stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Dalchand.

Cde. Dalchand: On page 184, I would like an explanation on items (15), (21), (22), (24), (25), (26), (27), (29), and (30).

The Chairman: No question on pages 185 and 186?

Cde. Dalchand: On page 185, I have two other questions on subheads 2 and 8 under Other Charges.

The Chairman: What about page 186?

Cde. Dalchand: On page 184 item (15), Assistant Chief Local Government Officer, we have an increase from the revised estimates of \$18,960 to \$27,360. The explanation given in the last column is “normal increment.” In 1976 there were three people employed and in 1977 three people will be employed according to these estimates. I was looking –

The Chairman: The estimates do not say so. The estimate says the establishment calls for three people. It does not say three people were employed in 1976.

Cde. Dalchand: The explanation says normal increment and I was looking at –

The Chairman: Where did you see “normal increment.”

Cde. Dalchand: I was calculating the increments of three people. If three people were employed at their annual allowances of \$260 per year that brings me to \$1,080 but –

The Chairman: Cde. Dalchand, the Minister took great pains and you were given full reins so that questions like this would not be repeated continuously and waste valuable time, so that you could ask more pertinent questions. The explanation is simple. The establishment calls for three. Last year only two people were employed. The establishment calls for three. That is what is going to happen. If you divided it by three you will see what will happen.

Cde. Dalchand: The same situation will apply to item (21), Assistant Chief Valuation Officer, with the exception of item (22), in 1976 the revised estimate called for \$7,035 and in 1977 they are asking for \$32,388, the establishment again calls for the same kind of thing right away through. What is necessary here is a better explanation.

On page 185, Other Charges, Transport and Travelling \$180,000 and Land and Water Transport \$40,000, I do not know what type of transportation, what is the difference between the two. **[Interruption]** Transport and travelling, land and water transport. Those are my questions.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want to speak on the Head Local Government in General.

The Chairman: No. I am not allowing that. You have to find some specific item. We had that in the general debate.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The point I wish to make will arise from the various contributions that the Government will make to local authorities and it will have relevance.

The Chairman: I would like to know the item and the page you are referring to. If not, I will call somebody else.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: We are doing page 186 at the moment.

The Chairman: Pages 184 to 186.

5.40 p.m.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Grants to Village Authorities towards Administrative Expenses, subhead 12. Years ago we abolished what was known as the Local Government Board. The whole idea was to move from appointed Local Authorities and District Councils to that of elected bodies because we want people's involvement in the administration of their own affairs. People's involvement can only be achieved when the people themselves choose those who should look after their interest, particularly in village development. Village development is an important segment of development in any country. In fact, there must be relation and cohesion in the general development processes so that we could have a balance development in so many areas; lights, water, roads and other such important facilities for the community to live happily and their well-being well taken care of.

Unfortunately, in this National Assembly, we are called upon to vote money in the form of grants, as I referred to in that particular subhead for bodies to be appointed. In fact, many Local Authorities – I do not want to spend a long time naming them all – Grove, Herstelling, for example, and so many others throughout the country and places on the East Coast ... The majority of these Councils have had their term expired and the people in those areas where elections were held, fairly or unfairly – I do not want to deal with that question at the moment – have no confidence in those who are administering the village.

Further, in many of the Local Authorities themselves, many Ministers of the Government have spoken against those members of the Council or Councils who have not been pulling their weight, who have been absenting themselves from meetings and who, in fact, are showing no interest in the Councils to which they were elected or appointed. I would wish to ask the Cde. Minister concerned what step will be taken to allow our communities throughout the country, not excluding the cities of Georgetown, New Amsterdam and those new areas that have been converted into cities, like Corriverton, to have the right to put people there who can look after their interest. There could be greater development because, involved in this Ministry is Community Development. The Ministry is called ‘National Mobilisation.’ To mobilise the people you have to carry them in spirit and feeling and if their aspirations are not with you and you are working contrary to their aspirations, then the whole purpose of development will be thwarted in this country.

It is wholly wrong from 1970 to now to have, in many of the areas where there were elections, those people sitting as Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors or what have you, six years when the Local Government Ordinance made provision for elections to be held at periods and intervals specifically stated in that Ordinance.

I think the fundamental issue in this Ministry is for the Government this year, if it is possible now, to give an indication as to what step will be taken to have democratic local institutions, whether Village Council, District Council or what have you, in accordance with the Municipality and Local Government Act so that we can work towards real development in the country. If not, it is not fair for us to vote money as grants.

One of the sore points in any of these areas – I do not want to name them – is the roads that are deplorable. For instance, you can hardly drive through. I can take one are – Bath Settlement. All these areas have been brought under Local Authorities. I am not competent, probably, to discuss the position of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Act which makes provision for moneys to be spent for the development of this road and other facilities, but now

that these areas have been brought under Local Government control, whether elected or otherwise, the communities are being told that the Local Authorities will build the road and offer the facilities for various purposes. But we have no indication as to when these roads are going to be built. Surely, we want to narrow the gap between urban and rural life. We have got migration from the rural areas to the city. That is why you have got such a difficult housing problem where we cannot house the people.

But if the communities are allowed to develop in the various areas where there are adequate facilities – recreational, social, economic and other facilities – I am sure that there will be a lessening in the migration from the rural area to the city. There is a greater danger in that because in the city you cannot charge on the asphalted road, there are many things you cannot do in many areas.

If those people are allowed to live under democratic, fair and just systems, they can make a greater contribution to the total development of this country. I, therefore, pass as a significant question in this debate on Local Government: Why Local Government elections are being postponed so frequently without satisfactory explanations? In fact, there can be no explanation if it is a violation of the provisions of the law as made by the Government itself. Hence, I call for immediate holding of Local Government elections throughout the country; that all the necessary steps be taken to ensure that those elections are fair and that we allow the community to develop and we put an end to migration so that the rural communities can bloom as we would like them to bloom and live happily.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Cde. Seeram Prashad, gave areas in which they have lights. He has not told us how many areas do not have lights. In fact, Corriverton is supposed to be a city. I can tell you. For several weeks they are without lights. It is a town and that township has been reduced to a ghost town. There are a lot of activities that go on in that area. Springlands, which links Corentyne with Nickerie is a bright spot and, in fact, they go without

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lights. These are the facilities that are affecting Local Government City Councils or the township. The people's interest will be represented and development will be to their satisfaction.

The number of problems and complaints that Ministers have to deal with at the moment will be reduced because if the Ministers in the various areas meet with the satisfaction of the communities their representation can be made right there.

5.50 p.m.

The Chairman: Cde. Jaiserrisingh.

Cde. Jaiserrisingh: Page 185 subhead 49. What I would like to say is that the Community Development Department has been involved in a number of successful craft exhibitions and I would like to ask the Minister:

- (a) How successful does he think these exhibitions have been in stimulating the craft production?
- (b) What role does he see the department playing in craft development in the future, bearing in mind that there were other agencies engaged in similar exercise.
- (c) What sort of craft organization and structure does he envisage and how would the Community Development relate to small industries in national mobilization of craft production.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Page 184 subhead 1, item (2) Assistant Secretary General and this is not covered by the Minister's previous explanation. There are four posts provided for in the establishment. The approved amount for 1976 for those four posts was \$30,648. Let us forget the revised figure. That was in respect to the Minister's explanation. I am not talking about the revised. This is the amount provided in 1976 in the Approved Estimate for these four posts.

In 1977 the amount provided for those four posts is \$7,392. And we have the increase/decrease column correctly reflecting a decrease of \$23,256 from the amount provided in 1976 Approved. There is no explanation as in other instances for that decrease. In respect of all the other items where there is no explanation as in other instances for that decrease. In respect of all the other items where there is an increase or decrease an explanation is given. What is the explanation for that decrease? Surely \$7,392 asked for in 1977 cannot pay four officers. If it cannot pay four officers then let us correct it; let us delete the number "4" and make it one or whatever it is. At least we are entitled to an explanation for that kind of decrease.

And again I crave your indulgence to go to item 15. The point the hon. Member Dalchand was making has not met with the Minister's explanation in respect of subhead 1 item (15). Again we are not dealing with revised amounts. The approved amount for those three officers was \$20,016. What they are asking for those same three officers in 1977 is \$27,360. The increase is correctly listed as \$7,344; there is an asterisk attached to it and when you look at the top of the asterisk there is the explanation "Normal increments." So wherever there is an asterisk it means "normal increment." Under salary scale A26 the normal increment is \$360 a year. If you multiply that by three you will get \$1,080. Therefore \$7,344 cannot include normal increments for three officers. There must be some explanation. What is it?

In respect of the Valuation Division at page 184 I will deal with items (21) to (26) together. Those list the various categories of Valuation Officers except the Chief and the

Deputy chief and here we see in the Revised Column – I am dealing with Revised – there is a much lower level of expenditure. I anticipate that the Minister will say that the posts were filled with the bodies out of the temporary establishment. What I want to say is that there is general dissatisfaction. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction in respect of this Valuation Division. I would like to know whether there is not, in fact, a significant amount of under-staffing and non-filling of vacancies which results in the present officers being so over-worked that there is high dissatisfaction at the present moment.

I am solicitous of the welfare of these officers. There has been very much under-spending and there must therefore be some reason for this. I suspect that it may well be that the Ministry does not have the trained personnel. If it does not have the trained personnel, what plans are there to train personnel in order to fill staff in this Valuation Division?

In respect of page 185 I will deal with item (35), District Community Development Officer II/I. There is a decrease in the amount being requested in 1977 from that approved in 1976. The decrease is listed in the last column as – 2,087 so the Ministry is asking for \$2,087 less than it asked for in 1976 and the legend says “Some offices vacant.”

This is the first time I am seeing a legend which says “some offices vacant.” This leads me to ask how many of these officers are vacant and if the Ministry is asking for less money does this mean that in fact it is recognizing the vacancies but it does not propose to fill vacancies and that is why it is asking for this money. Is it that the Ministry is deliberately not filling vacancies and is therefore asking for less money? Is that the position?

I shall deal with subhead 1 items (36) and (42) on the same page together. Item (36) is in respect of Manager, Food Unit and Item (42) is in respect of the Assistant Manager Food Unit. There seems to be discrimination here because the Manager of the Food Unit at item (36) is on the Permanent Pensionable Establishment, whereas the Assistant Manager is listed only as

Temporary Establishment. What is the position there? If this is the second in charge then one would hope that he can be assured of some continuity and there would not be this great disparity between himself and his immediate superior. At the same time perhaps I would ask for some details in respect of this Food Unit? The staff remains the same.

Subhead 15 Expenses – Central Food Unit, the vote is reduced by \$50,000 and if the vote is reduced by \$50,000 then perhaps there is not enough work to be done. The staff remains the same. So what is the position in respect of the Food Unit? What will it be doing for this year?

On page 186 I shall deal with subhead 13, Grants to Morawhanna Village District. We note that as far back as these Estimates go, that is, 1974, the Grant to Morawhanna Village District has remained static at \$800. We all know that costs have escalated. We all know that everything has increased and it does seem that this is far too paltry a sum to keep on giving to these depressed areas, Morawhanna Village District. When will the Minister raise this sum from \$800 at which it has been for so many years?

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Subhead 17, Health Centres. The amount voted in 1976 was \$200,000, the amount being requested for 1977 is \$50,000. This is what bothers me. Always it seems that health is the one that suffers most. One would have thought that the health of this nation was the nation's most precious asset and here it is in respect of health centres the Government is cutting the amount down by three – quarters, instead of \$200,000 which was provided and is also shown in the revised column so that presumably it would have been spent the money for last year. Now instead of \$200,000 only \$50,000, is to be provided. Where are we going? Why should health centres suffer? Why should not vehicles, equipment, miscellaneous votes or things like that be cut? Why affect the health of the nation and cut down this vote so drastically, allowing only a quarter of the 1976 estimate.

Subhead 20, National Insurance: I merely want to make the point in respect of subhead 20 that the revised amount for 1976 was \$99,310, that is what it was revised at for national insurance for people employed in 1976. For 1977 the figure being requested is \$66,000. There is a big difference between \$66,000 and \$99,000. Obviously if you are going to be paying out less in national insurance then you must be employing less people. Could the Minister give us an explanation? What would be the position in respect of those people who will not be paying national insurance because they will not be employed. But even if you find somewhere else to put them they will have to pay national insurance. Is it that they are going to be doing voluntary work somewhere else? What is the position here?

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Chairman, just two brief question on page 186, subhead 14, Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority areas. The amount of money approved 1976 was \$300,000, the revised estimate is also \$300,000. We have noted a reduction here of \$50,000. The first question is whether the Minister can tell us in which areas this sum of money, having now been reduced by \$50,000 to \$250,000 has been spent, whether there are selected areas for this expenditure or whether it is spent over all the areas.

The second question deals with subhead 17 in regard to health centres. The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh made the point on the same question which I so wanted to raise, whether this sum is going to be spread out in all the centres previously being serviced with \$200,000 or whether the \$50,000 which is now being allocated is going to be givento only a few health centres.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister Green.

Cde. Green: Cde. Chairman, the first question is on page 185 and deals with the question of transport and travelling. I should like to explain to Cde. Dalchand that there is a difference between the two things – one deals with the officers, the expenses which they incur and the other deals with the maintenance of vehicles and river craft that are owned by the

Ministry. The latter is found under land and water transport and the former under transport and travelling.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud asked a question about local government and posed the question: When will local government elections be held? First of all, let me say that this Government, the Party, subscribes to the principle of involvement by people and the right of people to full participation and involvement. The whole question of local government elections was explained but perhaps I need to do it again. The problems raised, insofar as some of the existing councils are concerned, are accepted by this side of the House. There have been very severe problems. There are some members of the councils who have suffered from inertia. We have already noted the fact that they need new blood in some areas and made a change in some circumstances.

The question of appointed bodies, there is a misconception about this whole electoral process. We are at the moment examining in great detail the way to deal with the whole question of representation at the local level. The concept and operation of local government, as he himself alluded to the Local Government Board, was something which we looked at, there was a Marshall Report which we implemented in 1970.

Since then we have been looking at the geographic divisions. We have since established six ministerial regions and arranged three Regions in the three large urban centres. We are now looking at the relationship between local government and the regional system. Dialogue has already commenced within the Party and if the members of the people's Progressive Party are really serious about this question of critical support certainly they can be involved in the discussions that are going on. What we are seeking to do is whenever the discussions are at an end that we have viable institutions or organisations whether we call this regional councils, local government councils, municipalities or what have you. The whole idea is that we will have to look for geographic areas where people can be self-reliant, where they can have a sense of

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working together and have viable organization so that they contribute to the national growth and development.

On this question of elections it is interesting, the P.P.P. boycotted the last local government elections. All sorts of reasons they gave. They boycotted the conference in England in 1965 it was. They talked about critical support, and we thought that at last here is an opportunity to have an arrangement where there can be total participation. But recent events caused us to question, as one of my colleagues said, whether there is support or whether it is critical or what is the difference, and whether they are serious. I am not sure, even if we completed this examination within a few weeks and elections called, whether we will not hear about another boycott. It is difficult to anticipate the pattern of the behavior of some of my honourable friends and comrades.

Therefore I want to say that the thing is being looked at, we are concerned about people's involvement, but we do not want to merely have elections when the institutional arrangements are not conducive to the real total involvement, and not just total involvement, of the people in the running of their affairs.

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The hon. Member Mr. Singh asked a question at page 185 under item (49), Community Development Workers and the question of exhibitions was posed. These exhibitions that have been put on by the Community Development Division are intended to highlight the work of the Division and the Adult Education groups and to show the public what we have accomplished insofar as the training and the production centres are concerned.

Further, it is our view that the exhibition serves to demonstrate and popularize the use of various locally produced and locally-found materials which were hitherto not used and in fact were, in some instances, thrown away so that when we move to the next stage of using the

materials we will have a group of people who can effectively use them and produce at high standards, because we do not want to use local materials and reduce substantially our standard of dress and ornaments etc.

For the future, the division in addition to fulfilling its role in the field of training and craft, will increase its activities in the organization of groups into viable units – co-operatives and individuals – who can work them to make a living and a livelihood. The whole idea is for the division to move into the areas that we have not concentrated on in the past. We have done structures in the past. We will now concentrate on training of people and making people self-reliant and to be able to make a living for themselves.

The problem with item (2) is that the adjustment has been made because two officers who once occupied the post are no longer in the Service but because of the present Public Service financial arrangements, it is necessary to keep them on the establishment so that they can enjoy their pension and pensionable rights. That also explains what appears to be the difficulty at (15) and the adjustments are made by the filling of the other posts.

Valuation Division.: I am glad to know the comrade's solicitude for the officers whom he claims are overworked. I thought he would have made another complaint because the Valuation Division has become very unpopular with certain groups who have been accustomed to exploitation and valuing property which they acquired for a few cents at rather substantial rates and prices. However, the low level of expenditure reflected here is because the posts have just been filled and the same thing holds for item (16) where the vacancies are now being filled and the people are coming in at the bottom of the scale.

The other question about the Manager of the Food Unit is that the Assistant is only temporary. He is a Public Servant and can in fact move to any part of the Service and we do not want to hold that post. Therefore the comparison is unnecessary at this stage. He asked the question: what will the staff at the Food Unit be doing? One of the reasons why we were able

to reduce that vote is that we will no longer have to pay the storage and delivery costs since the United Nations will now be paying and that explains the reduction of \$50,000 under this Head.

Page 186, subhead 12, Grants to Village Authorities towards Administrative Expenses:

The Chairman: I think you answered that before. The real question he was asking was to hold elections.

Cde. Green: Thank you, Cde. Chairman, I was not sure what response to give to that. Subhead 17, Health Centres. The Ministry of Health will pick up some of the expenditure that normally was borne by the Local Government Division as far as health Centres are concerned. Subhead 20, National Insurance, we had to pay last year a number of staff who are now with Regional Development and that explains the lower sum here. I cannot answer the question posed by Cde. Narbada Persaud as to exactly which roads will be done and which areas. We do an initial allocation at the beginning of the year but based on a number of circumstances – **[Interruption.]** We are talking about the road subvention. You asked a question on subhead 14, Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority areas.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Which Local Authority?

Cde. Green: The same reply. We cannot say which Local Authority because it will depend on a number of circumstances. We are working very closely with the Ministry of Works which has now set up a special unit to deal with the Farm-to-Market Roads on the Essequibo Coast and other parts of the country and that unit which has been established will also take care of roads in the Local Government areas but things like weather, availability of materials and the severity of the particular need in an area must be considered on a daily basis.

Head 77, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Local Government) - \$2,082,806 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 187.

**DIVISION XXX – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES AND NATIONAL
MOBILISATION (LOCAL GOVERNMENT)**

Question proposed that the sum of \$265,000 for Division XXX, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Local Government) stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Ally.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Chairman, I wish the Cde. Minister to tell us the reason why he or his Ministry is still thinking of giving loans to Local Authorities since the Local Authorities are not really working in the interest of the development of this country. Cde. Chairman, here is a clipping from the Minister himself who made this statement that the Local Authorities are not really working towards the development of this country.

On the other hand, today Local Authorities are more so a destructive element in this country than anything else. Everybody knows it. Roads are in miserable conditions; streets are in miserable conditions and what not. Even some of the projects that the people had, like the farming areas and so forth, the present Local Authorities have destroyed. What I think, as the Cde. Minister himself suggests here, is that there is need for an examination of the Local Authorities. And, although he himself has admitted this, yet the Government fails to hold Local Government Elections. They understand that the Local Authorities today are not really working in the interest of the people and the development of the country.

And so I would like to ask the hon. Minister to use his influence and see that the Government holds local government elections. This is badly needed at the moment if you really mean to carry this country forward –

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The Chairman: We have had enough talking about local government elections. Proceed with it.

Cde. Ally: I just wanted to ask if the Minister will answer this question. Why are they still thinking of giving loans to these local authorities after they know that the local authorities are misspending the money?

Mr. M. F. Singh: I will give the hon. Minister a chance to give us some propaganda in respect of subhead 3, Community Development Projects. The Revised Estimates for 1976 for community development projects was \$1.5 million. The sum being asked for in 1977 is \$65,000 and the legend says: "To provide for completion of projects." Obviously, from a level of \$1.5 million the \$65,000 is merely to complete what was started last year. Perhaps the hon. Minister could tell us what are these projects that are to be completed. I am sure he would like to go to town on this. Perhaps I would be saving somebody over on the other side from asking a question.

The Chairman: We have only 9 minutes more.

Mr. M. F. Singh: The other question is, since this is only \$65,000 for 1977 what will the present personnel do? I refer, for example, to the 76 Community Development workers on page 185. There is provision for 76 community Development Workers under item (49). There will be no money except \$65,000. Those 76 and all the other people, what will they do in the absence of such large sums as \$ 1½ million which we had for last year?

Cde. Ally rose –

The Chairman: Cde. Hussain.

Cde. Hussain: Page 187 subhead 1, Loans to Local Authorities: Why do building applications, which have to be submitted to local authorities in the first instance, take such a long time to be approved by the relevant authorities? What plans are in effect to implement the processing of building applications in view of Government's programme for housing the nation?

Cde. Green: Cde. Chairman, I reject Cde. Roshan Ally's statement that the local authorities are not working. I am not saying that they are a bunch of angels but we have had some excellent work from some local authorities. I think what happens in this House is that some members cannot help but express their own disappointment in so many ways. I think Cde. Roshan Ally is associated with Leguan – **[Interruption]** - the Upper Corentyne, where we have some successes in some projects under the guidance of the Cde. Regional Minister. I think this is worrying him, the response to some of the projects.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh asked about community development projects. As I explained earlier the regional system which we are now looking at will be dealing this year with the physical projects in the rural areas as the division is now concentrating on the initiation and training of people and we have production units which will be responsible for producing items using local materials, as I said earlier. The question therefore of the development of the workers we do not see as a problem because the whole question of education, involvement must continue throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. Perhaps the hon. Member Mr. Singh would like to function in some of the areas, to help in the work of the development of some communities.

Cde. Hussain asked the question of local authorities dealing with the question of building applications. The present position provides for the applications to be processed first at the local authority level and thereafter by the Central Housing Authority, and then Health, etc. We are aware that this is a long process involving several agencies and people and has led to frustration and to problems. It is proposed that all building applications should be finally approved at the local authority level and that the local authorities will function within given guidelines agreed to

by the Minister of Health, Housing, etc. Towards the accomplishment of this process, action is being taken to provide and to bring to this House certain legal amendments to make this a possibility within the not too distant future.

Division XXX, Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Local Government)
- \$265,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: May I indicate perhaps for the benefit of the backbenchers that if they merely sit and push the button when they want to ask question it will be exceptionally difficult for me to know who is the person pressing the button. They will have to stand; if not, I will not call them. I wouldn't know. I am not a magician. The Sitting of the House will resume at 8 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 6.30 p.m.

8 p.m.

On resumption - -

INACCURATE PRESS REPORT

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, I am sorry that neither Cde. Janet Jagan nor the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is here. I had warned about the reporting in the Mirror, its inaccuracies insofar as the rulings of the Speaker are concerned or statements made by the Speaker. I had warned further that if it persisted I was going to exclude the reporter of the Mirror from this Chamber. I am giving the last and final warning.

Yesterday, when the business of this House commenced, under the item “Presentation of papers” there was no Senior Member. I distinctly said there was “no Senior Member” and therefore deplored or regretted their absence and called on Minister Nascimento to present that Paper. I do not think there is much offence when it is said “no senior Minister” although I said “no senior Member”. But what I take offence to is that all sorts of inferences could be drawn there; that I am by-passing the Leader of the House who normally would have presented the Paper and lots of other inferences that I do not wish to mention. But the **Mirror** goes on to state:

“Having stated his concern, he then called on Minister of State K. Nascimento to present the statement. Parliamentary Affairs Minister C. Ramsaroop was the lone Minister in the front benches of the ruling party at the time.”

This is not so. Cde. Ramsaroop was not in the House when I called on Cde. Kit Nascimento. He was not sitting in the House and I will not countenance this type of reporting. I have said this before. I called you in my private office and warned you. Again I have to make reference to reporting from the **Mirror**. This is the last time I am making this statement if any further statement I have made is twisted by the **Mirror** I will exclude the Mirror newspaper reporter from the House. For that matter, the reporter from any newspaper that is guilty.

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1977

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1977, totaling \$417,283,736.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 85, Head 31.

HEAD 31 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,856,956 for Head 31, Ministry of National Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Nissar: Cde. Chairman, with your permission will you allow me to ask the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister a few questions with regard to the general functioning of his Ministry? I am aware that this Ministry sponsors Development Courses. Could he tell us:

1. What is done in the Developers Course?
2. In grading-up courses, what is the objective?
3. Why does the Ministry of National Development mobilise such large rallies of people? Does the Minister organise only party members, for instance, at the twelfth anniversary celebration?
4. Why are details not presented as is done in other Ministries?
5. Why are practical tasks emphasised in National Development?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: I am speaking on subhead 2, which deals with National Development Expenses. I just heard the hon. Member ask why details are not presented. I was going to say,

if I had spoken before him, that I suppose it would be an exercise in futility to continue to ask for details in respect of this Ministry. I have been doing it for years. This Ministry is unlike other Ministries. I have been doing it for years. This Ministry is unlike other Ministries which present details so that we can see how the money is spent. This Ministry never does so and I have been asking for years and have been getting very negative responses. So I suppose we will be relegated to hearing those negative reasons once again.

I really rejoice at seeing rejoice at seeing the reduction from the revised level of \$13.3 million to the level of \$5.8 million which is being requested for 1977. It is really a very significant reduction. If we look at it, the Approved Estimate for 1976 was \$10 million. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister came back to Parliament, as I expected he would, and got an additional \$3,312,910 to make it \$13,312,910 for the every questionable activities of this Ministry. One has been told that this Ministry is the Ministry which finances the P.N.C. activities. But we rejoice at this reduction in the level. Though we recognise this as very laudable, I would like to ask the Minister how he proposes – by this reduction of the level – to run his Ministry at this reduced level, a reduction of nearly \$7.5 million, so that we can be assured that there will be no application for supplementary provisions. Let him tell us how he will do it: By deployment or retrenchment of staff? I certainly would like to know that there would not be any applications for supplementary provisions by this Ministry.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I wonder if I can ask you before the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister answers, whether you would permit me to speak after him because, based on particulars, one would be able to properly contribute to this head of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development.

The Chairman: I will decide when that time comes. Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development: (Cde. Reid):
Cde. Chairman, I will proceed to reply to the questions even though I believe that much of this ground has been covered during the general debate. The Developers Course, as I explained, is a course which was organised in the latter part of 1974 because of the accentuation of the thrust towards the development of a new society and if it is to succeed then all the people must understand. It would have been not a very difficult matter if, in this thrust, we had depended only on the youths because they are in their very formative years and, of course, they will accept the new way of life much easier than we who are adults. But in the development of any country we need the adults who are really in the field of production of goods and services and unless they understand some of the reasons for any change, then it is difficult to get them to release their maximum energy.

In organising the Developers' Course the objective is to get workers from all walks of life together to discuss with them what we are trying to do and the role they have to play. To do this

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we put them in an environment that is alive, not a dead environment, a very vibrant living situation, where they can mix with people from all walks of life and together sit and discuss problems and endeavour to find solutions to some of the very practical problems in our communities. One is to know one another. And it is interesting to discover that some people in their middle like have never had the experience of living and working and playing together with other people even though sometimes they live in neighbouring community or in the same communities.

If we are to integrate the masses of people in this country then those who work as administrators, Permanent Secretaries, heads of corporation, bankers and so forth, trained teachers, policemen, soldiers must have an opportunity to see how people live in real life. I remember quite clearly an experience that I will never forget that at one of the evaluation

sessions, one Manager of a corporation had to live with a farming family somewhere on the West coast and of course when they live with a family they are supposed to do some of the things or try to do some of the things that the members of the family do. This young man, a reasonable young man, had to go to the farm every day with that family and when he came back he reported in dismay, and at the same time with joy, that every day he had a distance of some 13 miles to cover to reach the farm. I laughed aloud because he thought I would have been sorry for him and I told him that it was a great experience so that he can know exactly the struggle that goes on for the development of people and the development of this country. Those are some of the experiences that people are exposed to in the Developers Course.

Then they learn what our culture can do to promote development for in this old society our capitalist rulers made sure that when they brought us here, they assassinated our culture for they know very well that if any revolution is to succeed people must be armed with this most vital ammunition, that of their culture.

So in that experience at Timehri and Madewini we try to reconstruct our culture in all practical ways and so organize it that you can take a message to a community not through loud-mouthed politicians like ourselves but by simple presentation on stage so that people will not only understand but they will enjoy this kind of experience. As a matter of fact it has been a great enlightenment in the communities where at the end of every course the developers present cultural shows. I can go on like that but I don't want to spend too much time on one question even though that is an old trick of mine. When I was a young man taking oral examinations, if I knew the first question that you asked you had no chance to ask me anymore. I am not going to do that tonight. I want to move on to the next question.

We also do grading of courses because in the capitalist society in which we have grown up there were very few opportunities for people to really learn and develop. For instance, in the little village in which I grew up it was almost impossible for anybody to benefit from any secondary education. As a matter of fact, the primary school itself was in such a condition that

it was not difficult to organize the holidays especially if rain fell. When the rain just set up you could have organized a holiday by tickling the troolie leaves so that the water came down. Some children had no opportunity to learn even when they wanted to.

So we find as we moved toward this society where education is so important, education and training, learning of skills and so on, we cannot develop this new society without people being able to perform through skills even if they do only manual work and so more and more we need people to be able to absorb new technology. Even our farmers who at one time could have gone on without any special training need a lot of training now. They need to understand a whole lot of things. They need to know some science for they will not be able to make a decent living from some of those activities if they do those activities as our grandparents did them. Now, instead of depending on the surplus, they need to have other equipment and so on. They must know to drive tractors; they must know to mix fertilizers; they must know to mix weedicides and things of that kind.

Therefore as we go through the communities, now and again we discover people who need some upgrading. We bring them to Sophia, we give them a functional opportunity; we send in names from all over the country and they go through grading up courses where we teach them some of the basic things, basic English language, a little mathematics, how to write a letter, how to articulate a point and so on, so that they can be more useful in the community, so that they will be able to recognise exploiters and exploitation for one thing.

This is important now and that is why we mount what we call “grading-up” courses. Sometimes even people who would want to go into the Police Force and the Army are at a disadvantage compared with those who had better opportunities because they have grown up in distant hinterland areas and in some of our riverain communities. Therefore we train even those and we give them an opportunity in up-grading courses before they can take the simple entrance

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examination for entry into the Police Force. We do it for nurses and all sorts of people who need a little help.

Then the Comrade asked about bringing people together in what we call a rally. That is very important. We don't bring them just for their health. We do this very consciously because it is at those rallies that people will get an opportunity in a very practical way to demonstrate their commitments. Sometimes they have to march for miles and the event is usually so impressive that it is not possible to leave without learning something. For instance, let us think of the rally we had on the 14th December, a very significant date in the history of this country, a date that will always be remembered. On the last occasion thousands of people went to the industrial site. **[Interruption]** Yes, it is difficult to count. But there were thousands of people. We aim at a certain target. We know we had thousands of people. And we see people showing their determination that even when the weather is bad they do not mind gathering. This last occasion was an experience for ourselves, the organisers, because, unlike previous occasions people mobilised their own means of transportation to get to that place. We didn't bring them from all the rural areas as we did in the past, because at times we test ourselves to see how effective is the work, and it was good to see those thousands of people, the majority of them, coming from the city of Georgetown. It was a heart-warming experience.

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We took them to that site for a reason. The year before we took the people to Melanie Damishana to show them in reality, notwithstanding some of the noises that are heard, that our commitment to house the people is a real one. In 1975 people had the opportunity to see Melanie Damishana in its construction stage. In 1976 they had this next opportunity to see the textile mill being constructed. We have a commitment to the people of this country to clothe the nation. And I am not reckoning the exhibition that was put on to show all the things that you can do with cotton cloth, all the tie-dye and so on, all the fancy shirts you can make with cotton

cloth. Now important as that may be what is very important is for our people to see what it takes to have a textile mill. That is the great thing about it, the kind of foundation that is necessary when our own workers, men and women in this country, must drive piles 72 feet deep, hundreds of them must be driven into the earth to that depth of 72 feet. People will understand when they visit other countries and see developed areas, they would know that it did not happen by chance, it did not happen by prayer; it happened through the sweat and toil of human beings, That was a great experience for me. It was very refreshing to hear the workers talk, and to see them at work with a new sense of responsibility, because this is something that they are fashioning. I do not think that there is any greater joy in a country than to see development taking place under your very eyes. That was the opportunity we gave people on 14th December. That is what we do, and when they see that, even if they did not hear anything once they have seen that that remains with them until they die.

I would encourage all comrades not to miss that kind of opportunity in the development of this country, or else they will be ashamed. I am already an old man, but I know when those structures are finished, when that textile mill is functioning, when your children and grandchildren visit there they will come home and talk to you and say, “Daddy, I have been to the textile mill and I learnt that it was constructed in such and such a year. Were you there? Did you see how it was done?” You will have to hang your head in shame if you were never there. The easy way out would be to tell them what is not true. I am asking you not to miss this opportunity. There are other cassava mills around the country: they will function some time. Development takes time. It is good to understand this Development does not come overnight. It is the intervention of man that must make development a reality. You make mistakes all along the way, but once you recognise those mistakes and you are hungry enough to learn – I have made a lot of mistakes. **[Interruption by Cde. Ram Karran.]** A lot of people make mistakes. People around you, very near and dear to you make mistakes. Remember Duncan Sandys;- **[Interruption]** When people go to these rallies it is a kind of open school, so to speak. When there are no walls to the school house, it is an open school. It is the kind of

situation where people will want to learn, where it is impossible for them to escape without learning something.

I move on to the next question, a very interesting question: Why we do not have the details? In the developing countries we try to plan as carefully as we can, but notwithstanding how carefully we plan there will be slips, there will be things occurring that one has not planned for. Especially we depend on agriculture for the production of our goods and services; we depend upon it for the production of our food. This is an activity where man is not really the master, the crop is the boss, and if you understand it then you have to be well prepared to respond to the call of the boss, the crop. We all can see, because we have all grown up in a capitalist society; we have rules and laws laid down by people who did not reckon that we would ever own this country to develop it. We still have some of those laws. I hope when the time comes to change them we will have the cooperation of this entire House. Those rules and regulations are still with us. Once you itemize in this budget then you have to go through a process, not very short sometimes, to make variations. There is a fancy word for that but don't worry with that word, "variations." We have this kind of flexibility. It is not flexibility without responsibility, for we would have no part of that kind of flexibility without responsibility. As a matter of fact, this flexibility demands even greater responsibility for we have to account for the expenditure of this fund at some time.

When a call comes from a community, sometimes by telegram or by telephone, to say that if something does not happen that very day, probably to get some men to do some work or to get a few bits and pieces of material to repair a koker, the door of the koker and things like that, are you going to wait until tomorrow? Of course if some people are not farmers they will not understand what it means to the crop when you want to stop that tide and you fail to stop it. **[Interruption]** You have to be able to do it properly because the crop has made the call for assistance. It is not only the farmers; the crop itself needs assistance and if you are to succeed

you have to be prompt. There is no time to wait. So we have the kind of flexibility where we can move in and do the job.

Sometimes when you visit an area you feel the need for some person to go in and give additional assistance. You do not get everybody willing to walk 13 miles. If that Manager of the Corporation was not really on the Developers Course he would not want to walk 13 miles. But sometimes, unless you can walk that distance, you cannot reach a farmers, you cannot reach a workers, you need much more than this to do some of this work. Go to countries where they re-orient people and you will find out how much is spent on this exercise. For those reasons we cannot really operate if we are tied down to the routine kind of allocation.

8.30 p.m.

On question No. 5, I have already said we have a lot of practical tasks. I have named some already – where we do all sorts of things: help to build little roads, not as good as the experts but useful enough to make the difference between successful work for a living and failure. All these things we do, not only with that objective but to give the office worker an opportunity to get a feel of manual work so that he can go through an experience we call “empathy”, so that he can understand what the other man is doing, so that he can appreciate the other man more and not see him just as somebody not very useful because he probably did not finish primary school and so on, that his work is very useful. That is the kind of work we trying to do during some of these courses.

I have been asked by my friend, Mr. Feilden Singh, to give a commitment, he wants us to give an assurance that we will not come to this House for any supplementary. I regret that I cannot give my hon. Friend any such assurance because in the matters that we have to deal with, we cannot really foresee all the details and difficulties. If a big event should happen and we have to bring people together in their thousands, probably to bring them together to resist aggression, what are we going to do? Are we going to fold our hands and say we have rules and

regulations and we cannot get a chance to teach them, to advise them, to inform them what they have to do? These are things that come suddenly. When the rain comes suddenly, when that house is blown down and the man has no place to live, we must move in and do something. This is a Ministry for action. We must move in and act for the benefit of the people. And in no way can I see it possible to give any assurance about what will happen. I regret that very much but, as he grows older, as he gets integrated with our communities, as he comes to know some of the problems in these communities, he will, I hope one day understand. [Applause]

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud rose.

The Chairman: Let me hear the question you are going to ask.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister –

The Chairman: Well, I am afraid you should have been very prompt on your feet. I am not going to allow the Deputy Prime Minister to stand again.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The Deputy Prime Minister said 900 persons were trained last year, I only want to ask him - -

The Chairman: If you are going to ask questions and not make long speeches which you are in the habit of doing, I will allow them.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I –

The Chairman: Look, I am not arguing. You are going to ask the questions, if not, I am going to close the item and proceed again.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I think the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister has been very revealing tonight, revealing in that we find that under a block vote a number of things will be done. I wish to pose question number one: Is the Deputy Prime Minister saying

that \$13,312,910 was spent last year to train 900 persons who went to the Developers' Course in addition to the other areas, very minor areas, to which he referred? Second question, how many persons he envisages will be trained this year with the sum of \$5.8 million?

Third question: is the Deputy Prime Minister telling this House that for the rally of the People's National Congress on the 13th December, 1976, at the Industrial site funds were used from this Head, that is, from the Ministry of National Development to mobilise the people? In fact, that was qualified when he subsequently in his contribution said if you have to mobilise people, you have to act and this is the Ministry. You see, our criticism is – we have a charge, a duty and an obligation to the people of this country. They elected us to come here to ensure that we represent them and in one of the areas that we must represent them very effectively is in the area of expenditure. Indeed, Cde. Chairman, we feel that this Head, according to what the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister has said, could be more detailed. He talked about teaching people English, Mathematics, teaching them this, that and the other, where do these teachers come from? Are they paid from this block vote? And, in fact, if they are paid from this block vote and they have specific designations for work –

The Chairman: Let me interrupt you. The Deputy Prime Minister has made a very simple statement. What he has said repeatedly in the general debate, he has said it *ad nauseam*. You cannot account for what you will have to do under this Ministry. There are innumerable things that will crop up at any time and his Ministry will have to go to the aid of people. How are you going to detail that? It is not merely dealing with teachers, mobilising people, building kokers, looking after roads, there are innumerable things he has said.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, further I wish to say that it is true that from the coffers of the Treasury of this country we are running the People's National Congress because a sign-board appears on the Ministry of National Development and the Government is not denying that that is the head-quarters of the People's National Congress. In fact, our

reservations are founded on the fact that party workers are being paid from this vote which is terribly wrong to this country and to the people of the country. We are also aware – and we say it without any fear of contradiction – that a number of people housed in the Maha Sabha building and working for the Maha Sabha are being paid from this vote. Only a few days ago two of them were dismissed: Balkarran Sharma and ... Persaud.

Further, vehicles bought from government funds are used to run the Maha Sabha. It was reported to the Press last year that the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister addressed an executive committee meeting of the Maha Sabha. What is really happening in this country? I make the point purely on principle. Maha Sabha might only be one organisation but there might be other organisations that are not Government organisations, that do not come under the State as such, private organisations, and , I feel strongly that it is wrong for this to happen.

For these reasons, we strongly criticize this type of expenditure and I do not, Cde. Chairman, with all due respect to you, concede the point made. If there is aggression, we have provision in the Estimate for defence; we have provision for security; we have provision for national mobilisation. This afternoon we questioned the bus; we have provision to the tune of \$160,000 for transport facilities for people. There seems to be tremendous duplication and confusion. For this reason, we called – and may I join in reiterating and repeating that call tonight – that this is one Ministry that should be scrapped. Nothing is meant against the individual who runs the Ministry. Probably he can assume office in another Ministry instead of having taxpayer to run a political party.

8.40 p.m.

Is the Government saying that other political parties that function in this country will be justified to place claims to have their parties financed from Government funds? We do not agree with that and we do not ask for that. Since the Constitution and other provisions of the law

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National Assembly

8.40 – 8.50 p.m.

clearly state that there will be periodical elections, it means that the party in government must function well. If it does not, the electorate must be given the opportunity at the time of the elections, to give its verdict. It is unfair, immoral, and wrong for public funds to be used so widely, so recklessly, and so callously to perpetuate one party in office. That would have been defeating completely the Constitution; it is a virtual subversion of the Constitution and the electoral process of this country. For this reason we feel strongly, we condemn this, and we call for the scrapping of this Ministry.

Cde. Reid: I think we made it quite clear. I do not think I can make it any clearer, I cannot help him further, that this block vote is not used only to train 900 persons. I regret that he could not understand. I am not going to pursue that in any attempt to make him understand. I am not capable of making him understand that. He asked how many will we train in 1977. That is also an impossible question to answer because we train as the need arises, and we give help to those who need help most.

The rally for the 14th December was not only a party occasion. It marked when the Government of the ruling People's National Congress took office and changed this country dramatically from conflict into peace. **[Applause]** It was in the interest of everybody, all the P.P.P. members. It was a very significant day for all people in this country and so when we marked this day for all the people of this country, we were not thinking of P.N.C. people. When we asked people to go to that site we were not thinking of P.N.C. people. We were thinking of the Guyanese people because it is for them that this development is being pursued – to give them food, clothes and shelter. We are not building houses only for P.N.C. people. We are not putting up a textile mill for P.N.C. people.

In the P.P.P. regime they built roads on the West Coast Demerara – and I will never forget this. When they reached areas which they believed were predominantly P.N.C., they did

not put any black top on that, and they had the gumption to tell the people: “Let the dust suffocate you.” They believe other people are doing the same thing.

When we went into Black Bush Polder to rehabilitate that community where production had fallen to five bags per acre, they thought we were going to find only P.N.C. people. Now all 17,000 acres are under cultivation. It was a lot of hard work and we did it. It was not for the P.N.C.. We went to Fort Mourant backdam – mile sand miles from the highway on feet. It was not for P.N.C. people. We don’t develop this country like that. **[Interruption]** That is what we have been doing. So that when we had this big rally, it was for all the people of Guyana. For the Enmore Martyrs Day we had a rally and we bring people together. It is not for one set of persons. It is to teach the people to remember certain events in this country, to bring them together so that they can be useful to resist aggression in all forms, in all sorts of ways. **[Interruption]** That is the exercise we are doing. When we come to the headquarters, we put the sign there - - **[Interruption]**

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, I will ask you to leave.

Cde. Reid: The Minister of National Development is also the General Secretary of the People’s National Congress and I make no apology for that. None at all! This is the way it has to be, so that you make certain things a little easier to accomplish. That is why we did it like that. We do not pay party workers from National Development funds. When we had our Biennial Congress year before the last, our takings from the people were over half a million dollars. We do not need allocation from Parliament to pay party workers. When we assist people to put on a cultural presentation, we have no business with what kind of organisation or group they are in. If they are going to carry a message to help to enlighten people, we help them to carry that message and we make no apology for that because it is the development of all the people of this country we are after. And the Comrade had the face to tell us that certain organisations we must not address. What is this place coming to that you must not go to the

Maha Sabha and talk to people. What kind of thing is this? I can't even talk about that. Cde. Chairman, that brings me to the end of this.

Head 31, Ministry of National Development - \$5,856,956 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, pages 87 to 91, Head 32.

HEAD 32 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,897,732 for Head 32, Ministry of energy and Natural Resources, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to speak on page 88, Geological Surveys Development and Mines and these are simple questions I want to ask.

The Chairman: No. You have to identify the numbers. I am not allowing general discussion on that.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item (43), (44), (45), (46), (47), (48), (49), (50), (51), (52), (53), (54), (55), (56), (57), (58), and on the other page item (80) - -

The Chairman: would you please tell me what you meant? You started at (43) and you stopped at (58).

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Going over to page 89, items (80), (81), (82), (83) and then I go to page 91 and this subhead deals with Other Charges. There are a number of them but I want to speak on surveys which would be subhead 16, and subhead 17. That will conclude my contribution.

8.50 p.m.

The Chairman: May I remind Members that I am going to give the Minister double the time that the Opposition gets to reply to questions.

Cde. Ram Karran: May I indicate my intention to speak?

The Chairman: No, I am not listening to you. I think as the Deputy Speaker in this House you should set a very good example. I have tolerated a lot of remarks you have been making. You are turning around talking with Members on the back bench, you are making all sorts of remarks, and then you want to set the example as the Deputy Speaker of this House. I am not listening to you at the moment.

Cde. Ram Karran: You have charged me with speaking to Members at the back. I do not know what thing is this. Is this a school where you must prevent people from talking? I was giving –

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, please proceed.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Chairman, I want to indicate that I wish to speak.

Cde. Chairman: Cde. Persaud, please proceed.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Chairman, am I being deprived of my right to speak in this House? On what charge? What charge has been made against me and who has tried me? My conscience is very clear.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I would like the Cde. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources to tell us the position with respect to items (43) to (50). I am thinking about acting appointments, because my information is that the Commissioner of Geological Surveys and Mines is acting, his deputy is acting and it follows that a number of those below are acting. We are concerned. I am sure the hon. Minister is concerned about our minerals, our natural resources, the need for us to mobilise technically trained men, qualified men, to ensure that we do not lose the services of some of our best men so that our richness in gold, in diamonds and in so many other areas can be explored, so that our production can rise, so that we will not find ourselves in the position where there is a complete fall in foreign reserves. It is the natural resources of our country that could help tremendously and I think the time has come – we have lost some of our best men. I am sure the Minister would not deny this fact. I want to ask him, at least in the year 1977, to put the Ministry on a better footing by letting the officers serving in this very sensitive area of the development, know their position.

If I take the Mines section for example, the Chief Inspector of Mines is now the Commissioner of Geological Survey and Mines. I do not want to question the change of office but I proceed further to say that the Inspector of Mines – I think we only have about two at the moment and we have got six mining districts. The Minister knows and I am just reminding him of the position. I am convinced and I am sure he is a reasonable Minister, that riches in all these six mining areas are not being fully exploited.

I do not deny the rise in royalty within recent times because some three or four years ago when I contributed I showed that the figure fell. I have my figures but I do not want to spend too much time on that because the position where there was a fall year after year in the production of gold has changed and I compliment the Minister for that change. But I wish to

proceed further and say that the position can be improved greater if the areas are effectively supervised and managed. Revenue will not only rise but it follows that with the rise in the production of gold there will be an increase in revenue. It goes further – an increase in our export of gold, if we are exporting at the moment. That takes care, Cde. Chairman, of page 88.

Page 89, item (80), (81), (82) and (83), under the subhead Hydropower Division.: My information is that this division is depleted and probably it has reached a stage of nonfunctioning. I am aware and will deal with that under the capital estimates of the U.M.D.A. Project. What is the position? What are the functions of the Chief Engineer and Deputy Chief Engineer at the moment? Are they only serving in an advisory capacity to the Minister and are they not directly involved in the project on the spot? If not, we would have had that authority handling the project functioning probably in isolation of Government's development, Government's policy and government's presence. I think it is sad to note that we have lost one of our brilliant men who should have been handling this project and who, I think, the hon. Minister of Energy congratulated as one of the most able engineers. No names, no licence, we all know him and the Minister knows him.

This deals with a significant development in our country – brain-drain and I think the time has come for us to ask ourselves why. If we ask ourselves why, we will find that it is due to lack of security, job satisfaction, democracy and justice. These are points that are responsible for people leaving, and people, whom we badly need, people who, I am convinced, are willing to serve this country if they are allowed. I would like tonight to issue a call to our technically qualified men who can contribute to the development of this country, to stay here and help in the development. But at the same time I wonder if I can ask the Cde. Minister of Energy if, particularly in his every sensitive Ministry, he could ensure that he condition is such that officers can function without impediment. I am not saying the Minister must say what the policy of the Government Ministry is, when talking to public officers but some of these little Caesars reach a

point where they drive out some of our brilliant men. This is something I would ask the Minister to keep his eyes on.

So I would ask the Minister to tell me what is the position with the Hydro Power Division because we see that many of the persons who should have been appointed and who should have been serving are not there. In fact, one officer has been named Manager of the U.M.D.A. Project. I can tell the Minister his name afterwards. What I am saying is that this contributes to further depletion of the Ministry and we need more technically trained men. Probably, the Minister could tell us if people now are being trained and if so how many? When will they return so that they can serve this Ministry and this country effectively?

9 p.m.

With respect to surveys, the Minister can probably under subhead 16 tell us what surveys have taken place within the last year or two. What are the findings? This is dealing with page 91 subhead 16, forest surveys, and Subhead 17, Promotion of Exports. Is it that we do not have adequate samples so that this programme of promotion of exports can continue because the fall in the vote here is from \$4,000 to \$1,000 which is a very small amount and probably ridiculous. We are a very reasonable Opposition and if given the opportunity we can help this Government. We criticize when we are satisfied in mind and in conscience that we should criticize. We oppose proposals on the Estimates when they ought to be opposed. Equally, when the estimate is small – and I proceed to make the other point – unrealistic, we say the Minister should ask for more and in fact we want to help you by asking for more tonight. Unless, of course – the surveys have failed and we don't have to samples so that we can continue to send out samples and attract investors to come in our country to buy our products. I think that takes care of the current section on which I wish to contribute.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: I wish to indicate to you, sir, that I would like to raise a few questions on page 91 subhead 15, Silviculture, and to move over to the Capital Head if we –

The Chairman: We are not dealing with that yet. Please proceed. If you were paying attention all the time you would have observed that when a member gets up he indicates what he wants to speak on and then he speaks on that Head and then we go on to another member.

Cde. Ram Karran: When I indicated the Capital Expenditure it was because I thought that all the people who had indicated their intention to speak has already done so and since what I want to raise under 15 is a flow over to the Capital Head, perhaps you will permit me to raise them together since nobody else might wish to speak on them.

First, I wanted to ask the hon. Minister whether the programme in the cultivation of Caribbean pine is continuing, that has already commenced – so it would seem – and if that is so what is this investigation that is listed under subhead 3 on the following page to provide “for the investigation into the establishment of suitable species for re-forestation”? I would like to know whether the Government is satisfied or not that the programme started out under this item with Caribbean pine is satisfactory and whether the Government is in the course of changing its policy to propagate additional species. There are questions I wish to raise on the other pages.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Starting with page 87, item (15) Petroleum Engineer. This is, in fact, a new post. It is the only post in that new division, Petroleum Division, which was created by Supplementary Estimates in 1975. In December 1975 during the general debate on the Estimates when I had the pleasure of being here, the Minister did indicate that this post was vacant. It would seem as though it could possibly be

filled now from the level of the Revised Estimates. Could the hon. Minister say whether this post has in fact been filled? There is only one post in this Division. Could the hon. Minister tell us what is the position as regards exploration for oil in Guyana? Have we made any significant strides in this particular area within recent times?

Moving on to item (21), Chemist. This again is a new post and the sum of \$6,384 is being requested for the 1977 Estimates whereas the revised amount for 1976 is \$3,192. The salary for this post is certainly modest. This department, Mr. Chairman, never did have a Chemist before. So will the hon. Minister tell us what this Chemist is doing, if he is on the job or if he is not on the Job? What is proposed that the Chemist would in fact do?

Turning over the page to page 88 items (43) to (50): This is dealing with Geological Surveys Department. I think this has been adequately covered by my hon. Friend Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud so I would move on to the next page, page 89. Again he spoke in respect of items (80) to (83.) I would like perhaps to deal specifically with item (83) under the Hydro Power Division, even though I would in fact be referring to the entire Division, raising a somewhat similar point. If we look, we will notice that in the Column, Approved Estimates, the sum of \$69,840 was provided for this item but the Revised amount is \$34,920 and the sum being requested for 1977 is \$69,840. Therefore we see from the revised figure that of the sum requested for 1976, less than half was spent or will be spent. Obviously, there are vacancies still existing and I note with some dismay though perhaps it is deliberate, that no actual figures are given for 1975. There is a column here, 1975 Actual, and most of the other posts have figures against 1975 Actual but nothing is put in respect of item (83) for actual expenditure. I wonder about this because in the 1976 Estimates on page 88 we did have listed a revised figure for 1975 and that was given as \$17,460. So that it was revised in the 1975, but the actual expenditure is not reflected here at all. Is it that nothing at all was spent in respect of this item (83) for the year 1975? Or is there an omission in respect of the actual figures?

9.10 p.m.

Dealing with the general issue of manpower: In December 1975 when we were discussing the Estimates the hon. Minister did explain that these were specialist posts and he did say that he expected that they would be filled shortly but explained that as a result of being specialist posts there was understandable difficulty in respect of filling them. But, sir, we note that there are still vacancies.

If we look at the other items on page 89 items (84) to (91) we will see from the Revised Estimates column that less was spent all the time, and they will not be accounted for by any head like temporary staff, because if we look on page 90 under temporary staff, which is listed as item (144), we will see that even though in the Estimates for 1976 the sum of \$42,690 was provided for temporary staff, the revised figure is only \$6,132 so that no staff in particular was employed to fill any acting vacancies in this Division – at least not to my knowledge, but the hon. Minister may care to amplify or say that I am wrong if that is so. But it does appear to me that there are very significant vacancies that there is very serious understaffing in this Hydro Power Division and since it appears that the Government is placing so much emphasis on this Division, I think the hon. Minister must bring us up to date as to what is happening in this particular Division.

I have no questions on page 90. Moving on to page 91 under Other Charges, I should like to deal with subheads 2 and 3 to really commend the hon. Minister for what is reflected under these subheads. Let me read them, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, the revised estimate for 1976 is \$200,000 but all he is asking for in 1977 is \$150,000. What a significant difference to earlier this evening when another hon. Minister said. “Well, look, we must necessarily spend more in respect of this kind of field because the cost of travelling may go up, because we have to move around, and we need more money in this particular field.” This Minister did not do that. This Minister, in spite of all the ominous warnings about oil increases and actual increases, has cut down his vote in respect of transport and travelling and not only has he done it in respect of this vote he has done it in respect of the miscellaneous vote.

Let us look at subhead 3, Miscellaneous. The revised figure for 1976 is \$26,000. All he is asking for in 1977 is \$20,000. I hope he will not let me down by coming to this honourable House and asking for Supplementary Provision. Let us take even another head, because there are significant reductions in very vital fields. Let us take, for example, subhead 9, Maintenance and Operation of Land and Water Transport. There again, the 1976 revised figure was \$140,000. All the Minister is asking for in 1977 is \$125,000. I wish that this example could be followed by other Ministries. Ministers get up and talk about how much more they need to spend in the areas of transport and travelling, but here is Ministry that is cutting down on expenditure in these areas. Again I congratulate him for that.

I will mention *en passant*, subhead 15, Silviculture. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran talked about that. I was in the House before and asked about it, and was told that there is a programme continuing in Bartica and in other areas. I note that expenditure has been continuing for several years in this field. Obviously there is significant acreage under this programme. Will the hon. Minister bring us up to date in respect of this silviculture programme? That is all under the recurrent head.

The Chairman: *Cde. Jack.*

Cde. Jack: Cde. Chairman, first of all, with regard to page 88, item (43) and the other items that follow concerning the various appointments. It is true that there have been a number of acting appointments resulting from the resignations of three of our senior officers in the Department of Geology and Mines. These acting appointments are expected to come to an end when the substantive appointments are made this year. In fact, the necessary recommendations have been made and we are now awaiting further action from another agency of the Government which approves of appointments. This would also refer to the case of the Inspector of Mines, who is himself acting, and the other Mines Officers. We do not have not Mines Officers but four Mines Officers at the moment. I accept the suggestion that there would be improvement if there was a greater degree of supervision. Actually my Ministry has been moving in precisely

this direction. But apart from the Inspectors of Mines, there are Mines Officers who really are the people dealing directly with the mines. They are not people trained abroad. They are people with experience, they are trained here, and we are improving the training of these people.

It has been suggested that the Hydro Power Division is depleted. Cde. Chairman, with the development of the Upper Mazaruni Authority one must recognise that emphasis is now being placed upon moving as rapidly as we can towards developing of our first large hydropower station, and all of our efforts are being turned in this direction.

9.20 p.m.

It will be recalled that when the first stage of the hydro power dam is put into operation, we should have anything between 750 and 1200 megawatts of firm power. In order to understand the significance of this development, one needs to remember and recognise that at the moment, we in Guyana, have approximately 120 to 140 megawatts of firm power so you will understand the great leap, both quantitatively and qualitatively that will take place when this power is installed. For this reason, we are utilizing all of the manpower that we can in the direction of helping to accelerate development of this hydro power scheme.

However, we had also a survey done of the entire hydro power potential of Guyana taking into account only those hydro power sites which could give a power output of six megawatts and over. The total installed capacity which it is possible to have from the various areas which have been investigated amount to something between 10,000 and 14,000 megawatts of power.

Now, the present hydro electric station when built should give us all the power that we need sometime around 1990, perhaps even later on in this century. And so the strategy of the Hydro Power Division has changed. What the Hydro Power Division would need to address its

attention to now and within the near future is not any longer trying to identify another large hydro power site because we know where these sites are. For instance, it is envisaged that the Kaieteur/Amelia area could give us an installed capacity of something like 560 megawatts. Then there is Tatabu and ... so we do know where we can get massive blocks of power if we need them.

However, my Ministry has been considering the question of looking at extremely small hydro power sites where people are living in remote areas and where it may be possible to set up a power station which will give power cheaper than one could get by running transmission lines from the Mazaruni, say, to places like New River and Lethem and other places like that. That will be the function in the immediate future of the Hydro Power Division but the urgency of such investigation has receded having regard to the great amount of power which we will have available to most of the areas of Guyana once this hydro power station has been built.

It has been mentioned that it is sad that we have lost some of our brilliant men. I think it is in fact sad but my good friend, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, mentioned some of the reasons he believes which has caused us to lose our people and if I took him down correctly, he said it was lack of security, job satisfaction, democracy and justice. Speaking for my Ministry, I know of no officer who has left because of any dissatisfaction with democracy or with justice or with lack of security. With regard to job satisfaction, that is a question of subjective appreciation by the individual concerned but I think that my very good friend would be glad if I would mention something that he omitted quite inadvertently – because he is a very careful person and certainly he would not want to omit deliberately any of the reasons that he would consider valuable – and one of these reasons happens to be money. The developed countries can offer better salaries than we can. I think I should also mention commitment if an officer is not committed, if an officer who has been trained by the people of this country, by the taxpayers' money, wants to come back here and wants us to pay him the salaries that he could get in North America, we

cannot win in that kind of bidding and many of our people, precisely because they have been brilliant, have been lured away to high-paying jobs particularly in North America.

I have said it before and I repeat it again, we have suffered in this regard particularly with regard to our officers who have been trained in Canada and who have been offered jobs in Canada and if I had sufficient time, I could give a whole list of the officers who have left to go back to Canada. As a matter of fact, the three senior officers of the Department of Geology and Mines, whom I think Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud was referring to, were all trained in Canada and are now all working in Canada and I would suspect at salaries higher than the salaries we could afford.

It is for this reason and others that the Government has decided to make a determined effort to have a shift in the direction of our training so that more of our young people will be trained in socialist countries where they will have a proper socialist orientation and where we would be more confident that they would be persuaded to return home. This attitude on the part of the Government, I am sure, will be heartily endorsed by our friends on the opposite side of the House. It has been asked what the position of the Hydro Power division is and I think that I have adequately answered this.

9.30 p.m.

With regard to subhead 16, Forest Surveys, this money is used to demarcate the small areas when we have to give out permissions to cut logs. With regard to Promotion of Experts, subhead 17, the reason for the reduction is that with the development of the Timber Export Board the promotion of exports is now being done both by the Forest Department but more and more by the Timber Export Board. The money in question is used to send things like samples abroad. You might ask: why have the split? At the moment the Timber Export Board carries out promotion where a sale is imminent. The Forestry Department carries out promotion by

sending samples abroad at a very much earlier stage where we are trying to introduce a particular wood and also where we are trying to get customer reaction to the wood. It is expected, however, that in process of time, more and more of this will be done by Timber Export Board. I think I may take this opportunity to mention also that my Ministry proposes later in the year to take to cabinet a memorandum with a view to establishing a Forestry Commission which would be an autonomous body and which would give greater flexibility for the rapid development of the forestry sector.

Cde. Ram Karran asked about the silviculture. This money is used for the continuation of our silviculture programme. We have three main areas where we are carrying out experiments in pine. They are the North West District, Bartica, and the Soesdyke-Linden area. In the Soesdyke-Linden area at a place called Hairuni we have a thousand acres under cultivation, at Bartica we have 520 acres under cultivation, and in the North West District we have 25 acres under cultivation. So far the various experiments seem to be going well particularly those in the North West area and along the Linden-Soesdyke Highway.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh would like to know about the Petroleum Engineer, item (15). In fact, an officer has been appointed to this post and we are at the moment looking into the whole question of the change of our petroleum legislation and the establishment of the block system. Up to now, I must confess that we are a bit behind the times as regards petroleum legislation and for this reason there is always pressure for us to give out large areas of land. We have turned our face away from this because we find that when companies come here and hold large tracts of land they cannot in any case adequately do the research, the surveys, etc. The answer to this problem, we believe, is the establishment of a viable block system and this is what the petroleum unit is working on at the moment.

With regard to the position with oil, up until last year we had the German firm of Deminex exploring for oil. We had Shell who drilled in 1975. At one particular well there

were shows of oil and gas but that well was abandoned and on a subsequent well, which Shell drilled, they reported that they had found nothing. Last year Deminex drilled at a spot some 70 – 90 miles offshore but they reported that they had found nothing and they have indicated to us that they will give up the concession. However, we have been speaking with certain friendly Governments and we have every assurance that there will be an acceleration of exploration within the coming year.

With regard to item (21) on page 87, that is, the Chemist, a chemist has been appointed. The reason for the difference in the amounts of money, between 1976 and 1977, is that he was appointed during part of the year. The post was actually created in 1976 and he was appointed in 1977. This officer has a first degree and while I would concede that the salary is not exorbitant it is a salary in keeping with other officers with similar degrees and similar experience. Any adjustments that may take place in the emoluments of officers would have to await the complete re-organisation of the Forest Department.

We are going to be pushing very strenuously through this year the use by Guyanese of other species and for this reason we are also developing preservation. This officer, among other things, has been intimately connected with the development of the preservation process which we are proposing for Guyana. I am told it is the dip diffusion process. I am no expert but I understand that that is the cheapest and, I am told, quite effective method of preserving out timber.

When I heard the very kind remarks that were being made about me by the hon. Leader of one of the Oppositions, and because these remarks are kind I would not say the mini-Opposition, I would just say one of the Oppositions, I wish that I could remain silent and accept the praise. But I don't think that he would want me to remain silent if really I did not deserve his encomiums. The fact is that because of our very serious financial situation which has been very amply ventilated in this House we have had to make certain cuts and, concomitant with

certain cuts as regards field explorations, field trips, etc., there will, inevitably, be a reduction in transport and travelling and miscellaneous expenses because they hinge upon the other things that we do.

If I had my way, of course, I would always, like the rest of my colleagues, be asking for more money. It may even turn out that we may have to come some time to this honourable House and ask. Though I would like to leave this House under the glow of approbation of my friend, I do not think it would be fair and just to this House if I did not let the members know what the facts were. I think that this brings me to the end of the current.

Head 32, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources - \$2,897,732 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.40 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 92. Comrades, the Opposition will have seven minutes to ask questions.

Cde. Ram Karran: The subheads I would like to raise questions on are 2, 7, 10, 13, 19, 20, 23, and 24. There are four short questions.

The Chairman: I think you will be the only Opposition Member who will be allowed to ask questions. You have only seven minutes.

Cde. Ram Karran: I would like the hon. Minister to give us some guidance on subhead 2, Forest Utilisation. The legend states: “To provide for the investigation into the uses of new wood species and to provide for the purchase of equipment.” I wonder if equipment relates to the other subhead which is not numbered and against which there is no provision. Perhaps in

answering the hon. Minister will tell us what has happened to this institution, the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant. Is there provision under any Head or has it been run down?

Subhead 7, Industrial Wood Pulp and Wood Products Complex: There is no provision here, but is this investigation completed? Money provided in the previous year seems to have been sufficient.

Subhead 10, Geological Surveys: Will the hon. Minister tell us what progress has been made with respect to the mineral and clay deposits and what is being made to utilize them if any have resulted from investigations carried out. May I ask under subhead 13, Houses for Mines Officers, what is the reason for the Government indulging in such very heavy expenditure all through the years, starting from 1975, to provide houses for Mines Officers? I assume that those houses are in Georgetown or in the mines. After this investigation which I assume will come to an end sometime, these houses will be there as white elephants. The hon. Minister perhaps will tell us how many houses have been constructed, where they are and whether it is a programme of continuing house building in these areas.

Subhead 19, Consolidation of Tumatumari Dam: The Estimates show under subhead 23, for which no provision is made, Closure of Tumatumari Dam from which we get something like 2 megawatts of electricity. Now we notice under a new head, Consolidation of Tumatumari Dam. Will the Minister report to this House what has happened to that closure and whether any further sums of money will be required and who is building?

We have here subhead 24, Capital contribution to Upper Mazaruni Development Authority and on the previous page we see a provision for Camp Site at Tiboku Fall. Time does not permit tonight to deal with that and I hope to be able to introduce a Motion, perhaps, under which enough time would be provided to the House for debating of this question which might appear non-controversial but which is, indeed, full of material which we may well exhaust

and exploit in the House for the satisfaction of the Guyanese people and for the development of this country under hydro electricity.

Mr. M. F. Singh: I just have one question in respect of subhead 24, Capital Contribution to Upper Mazaruni Development Authority. This is in respect of \$6 million being requested for the capital contribution, Upper Mazaruni Development Authority. I merely want to ask if this amount of money can, in view of the revised Estimates for 1976 which was \$14½ million, maintain the level of work with materials. Can it maintain the level of work or will it pay mainly for wages in order to avoid retrenchment. If this money is not enough to properly continue the programme for 1977, let me then warn the Government that mobilization after a stoppage of work will be very costly indeed.

Cde. Ramson: Cde. Chairman, I have three small questions on subheads 1, 9 and 12.

The Chairman: I think a microphone is provided for your benefit.

Cde. Ramson: Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. Could the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources explain what the \$50,000 at subhead 1 will accomplish? The next question is under subhead 9, Equipment and Training. Would the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources explain what equipment and training is to be covered by subhead 9? Subhead 12, Assistance to Miners: How much gold was produced in 1976 by these miners?

Cde. Jack: Cde. Chairman, with your permission I would propose to answer the question dealing with the Mines Officers houses which Cde. Ram Karran asked about. First of all, these houses are not in Georgetown. They are for supervision and the houses are to be at Kurupung, Imbaimadai, Madhia and Bartica. There will be two at Bartica, one at Kurupung which is already built, one at Mahdia and one is to be at Imbaimadai.

Subhead 2: The amount of money for Forest Utilisation is to set up a laboratory for analyzing preservative treated timber, to train plant operators in wood preservation, to advise the Ministry on the process to be used and to provide chemicals for the wood preservation. Of the amount we have asked for, the sum of \$122,350 will be for chemicals. Some of this money will be recouped because we will be able to sell it to the producer for preservation.

Subhead 7, Industrial Wood Pulp and Wood Products Complex: Actually, this matter is now under the Ministry of Economic Development but I can tell this House that we did have negotiations with a foreign firm to establish a wood pulp complex in this country. The conditions which the foreign firm wanted to impose upon us were not satisfactory to the Government and so negotiations fell through. Since then F.A.O. has sent a team here to carry out further investigations with a view to recommending a smaller wood pulp project in Guyana and we are awaiting the result of that investigation.

9.50 p.m.

Geological Survey: To ask me to give a list of all that we have found as a result of our investigation, would take up far more than the time allotted to me. Suffice it to say that we have proceeded with our kaolin development and we have developed sufficient quantities of shell in the North West Region to adequately supply the cement industry when it is set up here and also to supply us with a certain amount of fertilizers.

Subhead 19, Consolidation of Tumatumari Dam: First of all, the dam has been closed. We have opened a new Head because the money is no longer to close the dam but to consolidate it in order to prevent the water pushing the dam, because the dam is so constructed that water can pass through. Those who have seen it will now there is the necessity for stone to be placed behind as a sort of back up and that is the consolidation of the dam which is what the money has been asked for.

The Guyana Defence Force has been assisting in doing this work, during the time when the water is low. The way in which we are carrying out this construction, does not allow us to work when the water is high. In order to do that we would have to build a copper dam and that would be a very expensive proposition indeed.

Now with regard to the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant I am really sorry that my good friend asked this question because three years ago the Central Timber Manufacturing Plant was transformed into the Forest Industries Corporation and it is functioning. We have two Timber Corporations, Guyana Timbers and Forest Industries Corporation. I think that covers everything.

Now with regard to item 24, if the question is whether the \$6 millions can do all the \$14 million did last year, the answer is No. However, we are conscious of the constraints placed upon us and the Management of the Upper Mazaruni Development Authority are engaged now in so re-deploying the resources both physical and financial that there will not be any undue delay in the prosecution of this project.

NB: Remainder of transcripts are missing