

**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**

116th Sitting

2 p.m.

Tuesday, 18th 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 – on leave)

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

(Absent – on leave)

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

(Absent – on leave)

***Non-elected Minister**

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

*Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

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

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

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

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

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

Ministers (5)

Cde. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture (Absent – on leave)

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 Ministers**

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

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

(Absent)

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

(Absent)

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

(Absent)

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

Cde. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of National Development

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)

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

(Absent – on leave)

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

(Absent)

Cde. E. M. Stoby, J. P.

(Absent)

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 (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. B. Jagan

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran

Other Members (12)

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

Cde. I. Basir

(Absent)

(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

18.1.77

National Assembly

2 – 2.05 p.m.

2. p.m.

PRAYERS

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, as Cde. Isahak Basir is present he may make and subscribe to the Oath of Office as required by Article 76 of the Constitution

The Oath of Office was made and subscribed to by Cde. Basir.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Congratulations to Cde. Basir

The Speaker: Cde. BGasir, on behalf of the members of the Assembly and myself I congratulate you on your election and welcome you to the Assembly.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, I wish to thank you very much.

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Prime Minister for today's sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

The following Paper was laid:

18.1.77

National Assembly

2 – 2.05 p.m.

“Loan Agreement (No. 16) dated 10th January, 1977 between Guyana and the Contributing Parties to the OPEC Special Fund.” [The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Finance]

2.05 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1977

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

Assembly in Committees of Supply

The Chairman: Pages 137 and 138.

HEAD 47 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – GOVERNMENT TRAINING COLLEGE – PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,062,080 for Head 47 Ministry of Education and Social Development – Government Training College – Pre-Service Teacher Training Programme, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, I should like to deal with subhead 1, should like to

deal with subhead 1, item (1), Principal. This afternoon I should like to share the concern of a number of lecturers at the Pre-Service Teacher Training Centre who over recent weeks have expressed their concern over the 1976/1977 intake of students. When one compares the 1975/1976 intake of students with that for the 1976/1977 academic year, the pattern of recruitment of these students seems to suggest – and this has been verified by lecturers – that other practices which cannot be considered to be fair have been employed in the selection of students for this course.

If this is the case, if the tutors who have informed me about this are correct, then I think this is a repulsive situation. This is the kind of situation that makes nonsense of calls for unity. We would ask the Minister to assure this House that this is not so. If in the process of an enquiry she eventually may find that something unwholesome did happen in the intake of students for the 1976/1977 academic year will she assure this House that she will do her best and urgently clamp down forthwith on such practices? We feel that wherever malpractices and injustices occur there is going to be a role for the P.P.P.

I do not wish to repeat the issue which I raised yesterday with respect to the University of Guyana and National Service and the way students were treated at the Corentyne High School and at three other schools. If there are these practices and something unwholesome did occur, then we would really like the Minister to give this House the assurance that it will stop and that we will not have cause to bring a matter like this to the attention of the Minister again.

On page 138, subhead 8, Fellowships to Pre-Service Students. I should like to ask the Minister if she is in a position to give us the number of students who are now receiving fellowships.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 137, subhead 1, item (39), Visiting Staff. The revised estimates for 1976 showed that we used for this head \$6,000. Now we are asked to approve of an expenditure for 1977 of \$4,000. Could the hon. Minister please explain to the House who are the visiting staff? Where do they come from and what do they do? The vote has been reduced to \$4,000 this year, therefore would she please say if it is envisaged that we would not be having many visiting people this year.

On the same page, items (40) and (41). I should like to take them together. Item (40) is Substitute for Staff on Leave. One ought to have some idea of the number of persons on the staff who will be on leave each year. The establishment does not vary in numbers from year to year very much. We note that in 1975, for example, the actual expenditure was \$15,000. The column for 1976 approved Estimates shows that \$480 was approved but the sum of \$15,000 was voted as the revised estimate. Why is a more realistic figure not requested in the Estimates rather than have this big drop and then have to come back for something in the region of \$15,000 later in the year by way of a supplementary paper.

These remarks will also go for item (41), Acting Allowances. The actual expenditure in 1975 showed \$2,300; only \$100 was approved for 1976, yet the actual amount for 1976 as shown in the Revised Estimates column, was \$1,800. Now in 1977, we are asking for \$100. Surely this is an unrealistic figure. Show we not have estimates in this House that are nearer to accuracy than this?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

The Minister of Education and Social Development (Cde. Baird): Cde. Minister, subhead 1. This refers to the intake of students at the Cyril Potter College of Education, which is the new name for the Government Teachers Training College. There is a suggestion of malpractice in the selection or identification of students. It is the first time I am hearing of this. As far as I know the criteria for selection have not changed.

What bothers some people is that some students depend entirely on what they call academic qualifications. For example, we have a minimum standard for selecting or identifying students for training. Some people believe that because a person might have more than the minimum standard that that person must be selected. We do not base selection on number of subjects; we have other criteria for basing selection. We have to select the students on the basis of the kind of subject area they are able to pursue at the College for a particular year, the emphasis in that particular year, or the emphasis in relation to the needs of the country at any given time. I am not aware of any change in the criteria for selection.

2.15 p.m.

On subhead 8, Fellowships to Pre-Service Students, I am not in a position to tell how many fellowships are awarded but I think in this context “fellowship” is another name for prizes. Students who perform well academically or in social behavior are awarded prizes. E cannot make a forecast and I am sure the College will not be in a position to forecast the number of fellowships that will be awarded in any one year. It depends on the performance and the emphasis given in that particular year.

Subhead 1, Item (39), Visiting Staff. I think the question here referred to the decrease in the number of visiting staff. I am not sure what the question was, but if I remember correctly, the questioner wanted to know the subject areas in which we need visiting staff. This need is never constant. Sometimes we require visiting staff in agriculture because this is an area in which we are trying to increase the number of teachers. Over the last two years, we are working on producing teachers of agriculture, Industrial Arts, technical subjects from within the school system. People who are observant will notice that because we have intensified the professional preparation of teachers of technical and a vocational subjects in the education system. Eventually the system will yield teachers in response to demands made upon it. Technical and vocational education is now a part of the school curriculum. Agriculture is one subject in which we have a need for visiting people to supplement the staff of Cyril Potter College which deal

with over 600 students. You will appreciate that agriculture is an integral part of the curriculum and therefore one or two lecturers cannot cope with present work-load.

Then we need people for the supervision of teaching practice. The teaching behavior of the large number of students must be monitored and supervised in the classrooms when they go out to teach. Sometimes we have to enlist support of the Curriculum Development Unit or of educators serving in other sectors of the education system. This relationship with other sectors of the education system is deliberate, because we believe that the system is an integrated one in which people who work in one sector must have active experience of what is going on in other sectors. Those who teach the teachers must know what is going on in the units that prepare and organize curricula, and so on. Then there are special activities that come up from time to time. Sometimes we find that we have urgent need for teachers, say, of leather craft, and we find one person who is skilled in this craft and ask that person to hold classes for us as part of his craft work. There are a number of other areas for which we must rely on visiting staff. I do not think necessary for me to identify those areas.

Item (40), Substitute for Staff on Leave. I think it must be appreciated that education is not a once-for-all business and since educators must continue learning, there is provision for staff development which enables people in any sector of the education system to go off for training from time to time. People are entitled to vacation and study leave and so instead of encouraging them to spend time away from the Institution without doing anything profitable, we identify, long ahead of the leave time, areas in which they can be trained. When people go on leave for staff development or when people go on leave because they are ill, or something of the sort, we have to find others to replace them and it is not an easy task. It depends on whether we are able to identify long before we need them the areas for which they must be trained, the availability of places for such training. We cannot predict whether people will be ill. It should be appreciated that if there are decreases in the allocations one of the reasons could be that in formulating the Estimates we had good reason to suspect that we would not need that sum or,

alternately, we should appreciate that because of scarce financial resources, we have to be concerned about spreading allocations in relation to priorities.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, item (1), Principal. I would like to ask the Cde. Minister if she is aware of the mild scandal that recently affected the Technical Institute Georgetown. I have been reliably informed that one student who did not take the compulsory practical test was declared in the past list to have passed the examination out of a list of twenty students who took the practical test, some were declared failed because next to their names during the test was marked “absent”. I would like to know whether the Minister is aware of this and, if she is aware, whether she has carried out an investigation. If an investigation has been carried out, what is the result of her investigation? Is this some genuine fault or is the question of favoritism considered here?

Cde. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, items (4) and (5). These questions both concern staffing problems at the Technical Institute Georgetown. Dealing with item (4), Lecturers II and I, we are asked to vote \$312,667 for 1977 Estimates and the Revised Estimates for 1976 were \$254,604. The establishment in the case of item (4) is 42 so it is obvious that they did not have the full complement of lecturers. The same thing applies to item (5), Assistant Lecturers where the Revised Estimates column for 1976 shows \$43,056. We are being asked to vote \$61,165 for 15 Assistant Lecturers. Would the Minister say if any effort was made, when she was abroad recently making contacts for teachers for our primary and secondary schools, I understand this is where the Minister went to contact lecturers, if any were for the Technical Institute. In many of the institutions like the Technical Institute it is a problem to recruit lecturers to teach people who are in turn going to teach as opposed to lecturers or teachers who are going to teach people still at school. Was any effort made to do something about the staff shortages that exist in the area of lecturers?

Cde. Baird: Head 48, subhead 1, item (1). I am again unaware of this allegation and I think perhaps it would be a good thing for the hon. Member to submit further information to the proper authorities.

2.25 p.m.

Item (4), Lecturer II/I at the Technical Institute. I think with respect to the increase in the allocation, we must appreciate that even the establishment deals in terms of numbers of lecturers. There will be changes in the qualifications and status of the lecturers and this will result in an increase or decrease in salaries over a period of time. People improve their qualifications, or new people come in and that sort of thing, so even if the numbers remain constant, we cannot guarantee that the allocation will be constant because people change their status.

With respect to the Member's query about whether we sought to get technical people in the movement of overseas people, I must state that applicants responded to an advertisement and so we had to interview those who came before us and, fortunately or unfortunately, we did not identify applicants qualified in technical education. We identified people in other areas; our specific focus was on secondary education, educators for secondary schools. We did not identify persons in technical education. One must appreciate that even developed countries have the same need for services in technical education that we have. On the international level there is still a great shortage of teachers in technical education and so we will not be able to attract them very easily.

Head 48, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Technical Institute, Georgetown - \$1,129,867 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 140, Head 49, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Carnegie School of Home Economics.

**HEAD 49 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT –
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$179,724 for Head 49, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Carnegie School of Home Economics, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohammed: Just a simple question for the Cde. Minister of Education. I would like to make reference to subhead 9, Part-time Courses and Evening Class Lectures, and subhead 10, Evening Classes – Rural Areas. I find it a little difficult to understand why at this moment under this particular head of home economics the Minister found it feasible to cut the vote with respect to evening classes and part-time courses and under subhead 10 to cut the vote with respect to rural training. I would have thought that this is a subject that could be expanded, particularly in the rural areas where the people do not always enjoy facilities in this field. I am surprised, therefore, that the Minister has cut the vote in this field. I would like to find out what is the rationale behind this cut.

Mrs. DaSilva: The same subheads 9 and 10 but different questions. The hon. Member who spoke before me referred to the need. In the case of subhead 9, Part-time Courses and Evening Class Lectures, the sum of \$12,000 was approved in 1976 and only \$8,000 was used. In the case of the rural classes, the approved estimate was \$5,000 and only \$2,000 was used.

In view of the very real need for us to make full use of foodstuff grown and produced locally, as opposed to what we used to do in the past, I think there is great need for the education of persons in getting the most out of items such as greens and vegetables, the prices of which, as we all know, are high enough, and very high for the poor person with a large family.

I am not referring to the general course but the part-time courses, the ones which I have seen advertised and the ones which I have attended which concern dressmaking, advanced

dressmaking, cake making, cake decorating. It is true to say that those who are better off have freezers but then most people nowadays, except those who have very low incomes, have a refrigerator that has a freezing compartment no matter how small. Could they run a course where those who wish, man and women, can learn how to freeze things. When there is a reasonable supply of, say, greens or provisions, on the market they can make the best use of freezing so that when things are short and the prices go up they would have these foods as a stand-by.

In the rural areas where it would obviously be less likely that the people could afford to have freezers, maybe through organizations such as the women's institutes, W.R.S.M. and organizations like that, they could have in each region, or within each group, a communal freezer where the people can be taught to make the best use of provisions and greens and fruits in times of plenty, so that when there is a shortage and the prices go up, they would not suffer so much. Would the Minister please tell us if there is any possibility of this type of course being introduced?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Baird: A reference was made to the reduction of the allocation to the Carnegie School of Home Economics. I want to call attention to the fact that in keeping with the decision to regionalize activities, there is no longer any need to concentrate those activities in one place and we have found that further education classes, or as they are called, adult education classes, in all fields take place in other parts of Georgetown and in the rural areas.

I think I mentioned this before, that we are now using the facilities in schools in the evenings, out of school hours, science facilities, home economics facilities, to teach young people and older people home economics and other skills, so it is not that we are reducing facilities for this kind of training. Such facilities are spread over the country and are not concentrated, as they used to be in Georgetown. Even in Georgetown we have moved away

18.1.77

National Assembly

2.25 – 2.35 p.m.

from localizing the Carnegie School of Home Economics. We now have classes all along the East Coast, some in Essequibo and Berbice. Some people are learning to preserve food, a very good idea. As we are aware, this is one part of home economics that we need to emphasize. Some people are already doing that.

The important thing is that we must remember that if this kind of activity is to spread, it has to begin in the school; we have accelerated training in home economics in schools. It is not now considered an option. At a certain period of a pupil's life there must be experience in home economics and we are spreading the programme in such a way that the schools will produce people who will become trained teachers of Home Economics.

In our teachers' colleges we have the provision for training teachers and then we have a special course mounted for producing teachers of Home Economics. The first group of, I think, about 30 have been taught further technical skills. In the subject, and are now receiving professional training in training institutions. We are now training the second group. In the next year or so we will boast of an additional, say, between thirty and forty teachers of Home Economics who will be able to teach the subject on a larger scale in schools. But the activities have begun to spread in Home Economics, and food preservation is an important part of the programme.

Head 49, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Carnegie School of Home Economics - \$179,724 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.35 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 141, Head 50, Queen's College.

**HEAD 50 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
QUEEN'S COLLEGE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$515,072 for Head 50, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Queen's College, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: There is just one little clarification from the hon. Minister under subhead 9, Queen's College Scholarships. What is meant by 'Queen's College Scholarships'?

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, under this Head 50, Queen's College, I want to ask the Minister a question. I tried in various forms last night to have it answered, but never got a direct answer. It will come up now that we are going through the various Secondary Schools, Multilateral schools and so on. It applies specifically to recruitment of teachers from overseas. I promise I would not ask it again. Will the Minister please tell us once and for all, when she went overseas, how many people was she hoping to recruit for our schools? As I said last night, I think it was 400 teachers. How many did she actually get and would she please tell us which countries they came from and also where they are being sent. She just said secondary schools. Maybe she could give a rough idea of which schools they are at the moment.

Under subhead 1, items (4) and (5) which deals with Masters/Mistresses at Queen's College, - and the Minister a little while ago gave an explanation as to why the vote would vary – it would appear that because of the amount of money requested she did not have the full establishment in both instances. Last year when it showed that the Approved Estimate for the Masters was \$277,498 and we only used \$237,243. This year we have been asked to vote \$281,522 for the same establishment of 36. It was supposed to be 35 in 1976. Could the Minister say if she has this number this year? In the case of Masters and Mistresses, as I said, it appears again that that vote was not used up. We approved \$34,065, in 1976 the revised estimate was \$28,159 and we are now asked to vote \$34,711 for 1977 for an establishment of 8.

Incidentally, when the Minister is answering the question about the teachers, would she be kind enough to tell us how many teachers came and returned?

The Chairman: Cde. Minster.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, in reply to the question on subhead 9, what do we mean by Queen's College Scholarships, in the past the scholarship consisted of awards in terms of fees and books. Now we still give book awards. That is what we mean by that at this time.

Subhead 1, item (5), relating to overseas teachers. The hon. Member is very anxious to know what has taken place since teachers have started coming into Guyana. As far as I know, we did not say that we were going to recruit 400 teachers. The position was that about four hundred teachers applied. In the recruitment, naturally, we had to be selective and from the selection it was clear that we would not be able to get all the teachers at the same time. For one thing, in some instances people had to give notice of the intention to leave and in some instances people had to settle their personal affairs. So far – and I think this number is correct up to this morning – approximately 50 teachers are here and have been allocated to schools.

I want to, perhaps, give an explanation to the House that the reason why we have had to recruit teachers from overseas is because we had a shortage of teachers. Why do we have this shortage of teachers? We decide to release our teachers from the classrooms, especially those who are teaching in secondary schools, to get improved qualifications, to improve the quality of the contribution that they can give in teaching. We have decided to release a large number of teachers to the University of Guyana to get qualified in their respective subject areas and this release in itself, produced a severe shortage. Then, we have to expect and accept – and I think we should be proud of this – that the education system has to lose teachers to other sectors of the economy – and this is a daily happening – to economic development, to many other places. We have to do that. The education system is the only system that can provide the manpower for the other sectors. For example, we would find – and this is just a hypothetical case, but we have evidence to support this – in cases where we might have, say, thirty or more graduates in the natural sciences, from the University of Guyana or anywhere else, these people would have been

teachers; upon graduation it would be considered fortunate if six of them returned to teaching. They often take up appointments with other agencies.

Then, in development education, we are not merely running a routine system of education where the main task is to provide numbers of teachers. We do more than that. We have to cope with increased numbers and facilities, and we have to give quality education. There comes a time when you have to effect a balance between the qualitative aspect of education and the quantitative. By that, I mean we have to go into serious specialisation, in planning, for example. We no longer plan in terms of numbers of teachers and projections of students only. We have to work in the area of resource development planning, we have to make sure that what schools are there will produce the numbers and categories of workman and workwomen that are needed in the country, and that takes another kind of planning.

Such planning has implications for the kind of science curriculum used in schools, the various programmes organized and developed. It has implications for the kind of activity that our guidance unit will be engaged in. We need to find those people who can write books. We need to find people who can evaluate, who can carry out tests scientifically and so on. These competencies do not just happen. The system has to produce the people; we are at the stage where we have to release teachers from classrooms, teachers who might have been fortunate to get this sort of specialist orientation somewhere or other. We have to release them to these units to carry on this kind of development activity. The need to staff services which support a developing education system – this is one of the reasons why we have teacher shortages in classrooms.

I think that Guyana should appreciate that we have two alternatives. That is there are two lines of action. It is either we decide to take the very unrealistic and unfortunate action which leaves the children without teachers in classrooms, or we find another way of getting the teachers in, to carry on the task of teaching while we train other people. One of the things we have to remember – and that is why I said we had to select very carefully – is that although a

person might be competent professionally, we have to be sure that attitudinally we employ suitable persons.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: I wonder if I can ask a supplementary question on what the Minister has just said. I gather that some of the teachers from the last batch of 14 who recently came from the recruitment drive abroad have returned to England. Could the Minister verify this? How many have returned? From the remainder how many have already been employed? If there are still some who have not yet been employed, why have they not been employed?

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, all the teachers who came to Guyana are still in Guyana as far as I know and all of them have been allocated to schools all over Guyana. In Wismar, Essequibo, Berbice, East Coast, Georgetown. They are filling positions as science teachers, physical education teachers and so on.

Head 50, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Queen’s College - \$515,072 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.45 p.m.

[Interruption]

The Chairman: Have the comrades finished discussing the business of Parliament so that I may proceed? Page 142.

**HEAD 51 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
BISHOP’S HIGH SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$431,424 for head 51, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Bishop’s High School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 51, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Bishop's High School - \$431,424 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 143.

**HEAD 52 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
ANNA REGINA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$16.00 for Head 52, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Anna Regina Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohammed: Cde. Chairman, I notice here that we no longer have the Anna Regina Secondary School. As I understand it, that school is now called Anna Regina Community High School. What has been done is that you change the name from “Secondary” to “Community High” School. I don’t know why this is so. What I would like to point out is that although we have the Community High School replacing the Anna Regina Secondary School, you still have the students and an inadequate number of teachers. You have the building. But what is happening now? There is the complaint that because of the absence of books time is being wasted by teachers and students in the Community High School. I would like, under this Head, to ask how soon will we get the Community High School functioning properly so that the students can continue their studies and prepare for their examinations, and so that we can have proper supervision to see that some of the teachers work here. As far as we understand, because of inadequate staff, we do not have teachers who are able to carry out the curriculum devised by the Ministry in the field of Community High School subjects and so forth. I would like the Minister to give an explanation on this change of name and these problems that have since developed.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, regarding the Anna Regina Community High School, the change over from Secondary School to High School – I am subject to correction but I think the

change took place last year – I would like to ask the Minister since we have the number on the establishment listed and we have the salary scales listed, why are we only asked to provide a token vote? Is it not possible for us to get an idea of what the salaries will be, bearing in mind that we know how many teachers there are supposed to be and what their salaries ought to be? Could the Minister please tell the House?

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, there seems to be some confusion about the function of the Community High School, the Anna Regina Secondary School and the Multilateral School. I think I brought this before the House that secondary education is not a building; it is a programme and the Community High School offers secondary education. Whatever you see under this Head, is put there to preserve the pensionable status of the teachers. When the Anna Regina Secondary School, the one we call Multilateral, was being set up, the children and teachers of the then existing Anna Regina School, which is now a Community High School, were absorbed in the new school. The old Anna Regina School was absorbed in the school. As far as my knowledge goes, we cannot accommodate more students in that school at the moment. It is partly a residential school.

The Community High School was set up in the old building to provide more secondary school places, and as far as I know the staffing has increased considerably over the past few months. We are continually reviewing the staffing needs. It is not the number of people in the school that constitutes an adequate staffing ratio. I pointed out that we have to move away from the position where you have a 1:1 relationship between subjects and persons and the Ministry is constantly reviewing this and re-allocating the tasks of the people in the school.

With regard to the Community High School programme, I pointed out before in this House, that the Community High School curriculum is a new one. People talk about relevance but I don't think they understand what relevance means. When we attempt to introduce relevant content and teaching approaches, people keep harping about textbooks and all sort of things. For the past three years we have been developing this programme. I think it is a tribute to the

efficiency and competence of the Guyanese personnel in education to be able to devise a curriculum that is relevant to the Guyanese situation. And this is what has been happening.

Some of this education material will eventually reach book form but we cannot wait until we find all the money to produce books, to put paper between covers. So these curriculum materials are being used in the schools as they are, and the teachers know this because they have been oriented to use these materials. Teachers were involved in the formulation of a programme, the planning, the content, the method of teaching, and in the use of equipment. So this practice of saying students are hampered because they don't have textbooks is beyond my understanding. All Community High Schools and even Secondary Schools will have to use material that will be devised locally and they will not necessarily appear in book form in a year's time. That is impossible, not even in two years' time. Even the Caribbean Examination will have to use material that is just rolled off specially for its purpose. Raw curriculum material however will be supplemented by texts that are approved for the purpose.

Head 52, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Anna Regina Secondary School - \$16.00 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 144.

**HEAD 53 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
BERBICE HIGH SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$244,558 for Head 53, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Berbice High School – stand part of the Estimates.

Head 53, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Berbice High School - \$244,558 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 145.

**HEAD 54 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
NEW AMSTERDAM TECHNICAL INSTITUTE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$718,222 for Head 54, Ministry of Education and Social Development – New Amsterdam Technical Institute, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 1, item (24), Part-time Teaching Staff. I would like the Minister to explain what are the other part-time courses contemplated as explained here.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, I regret that I am not in a position to give this information at the moment. Perhaps at another time I will be able to supply it.

Head 54, Ministry of Education and Social Development – New Amsterdam Technical Institute - \$718,222 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 146

**HEAD 55 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$314,501 for Head 55, Ministry of Education and Social Development – College of Education for Secondary Teachers, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: I would like to speak, Cde. Chairman, on subheads 6 and 8. On subhead 6, Educational Supplies including Equipment etc. for science laboratories, I would like

to know whether the Cde. Minister is in a position to state how many science teachers graduated from the College of Education in 1976 and whether she is satisfied with the amount that graduated. If the number is small, why is this?

Subhead 8, Field Studies for Students, I would like here to refer to a repugnant phenomenon that has increasingly become a superimposed feature to our national reality and that is related to a two-weeks' orientation course which took place at the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College where teachers were asked one morning to salute the flag of the P.N.C. I would like to know why it was not the nation's flag that the teachers were asked to salute and whether the Minister of Education does not see this as an uncalled for demand and as an undue interference with the political conscience of our teachers.

Many teachers refused at that two-week's course to salute the flag. We want to know whether she is in agreement with it. If not, we would like to know what is the policy of the Ministry of Education on this question and whether the Minister will now consider sending a directive to stop this kind of activity since it does not do well for our student teachers. In fact, it helped to create a division as was shown at that time.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, item (3) and (4) dealing with Senior Lecturer and Lecturer II/I. The Government has never had so much need as it has in this year to review its priorities and to put first things first, and surely education and health ought to be high up in the priorities. The Government has said this. Money should not be spent on non-essentials and wasted in other services. Is there any possibility, is there any hope for the future, is there any thought in the Minister's mind, in the Ministry, in the Cabinet, in the government, whoever decides these things, about upgrading teachers' and lecturers' salaries? No wonder we cannot get people to come to Guyana. Even if the Government tries to get them from overseas it can only manage to get fifty, some of whom, we understand, have left.

The Chairman: That is not a fair comment. The Minister categorically said that is not so.

Mrs. DaSilva: If the Minister said so we will accept the Minister's explanation, but we understand that it is not so. However, the point is this, how can we get teachers to come to Guyana let alone get our own young Guyanese children leaving school now to take up teaching as a profession when you look at the salary scales for the lecturers. The lowest is \$450 a month going up to \$802 a month. I agree with the advertisement on the radio which tells you why go into an office and earn \$500 and you can go into agriculture and earn more. I think this probably applies to teachers too. But we cannot have everybody going to agriculture, we do need teachers to teach our children about agriculture. Could the Minister tell us if there is any thought in the Government's mind about increasing salary scales of teachers?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, subhead 6 deals with the question of science education in the College of Education. In the first place, the programme that we carry out in any teacher education institution will relate to all students. We try to give all students some insight into all subjects. In the College of Education the matter was no different. My understanding is that there were six people who graduate specifically in science, but all students were exposed to science education.

At the moment we are establishing what we call a science museum there to accelerate the teaching of science to teachers, and even before that science museum is ready for use, you will find that there are on-going programmes for training science teachers. Because we appreciate the importance of science education, we are not restricting exposure to science education to specialists; we want to give everybody some insight into science as a subject and to the teaching of science particularly when we are moving to the position where we emphasise the difference between science for younger children and that taught to the older ones. We are going in for

integrated science in the lower forms of secondary schools. We therefore have need to educate and re-educate for science teaching. I do not think comments give a fair estimation of the position. It is not as simple as it sounds.

The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva asked that we have our priorities right. As far as I am concerned the purpose of education in Guyana is to ensure that the education experience we give our students is instrumental to the objectives of this country and I do not think we need go over that.

I think time would be better spent if we try to give an honest analysis of what is going on in education. I am sure you will see that the activities that are taking place, have potential to produce the kind of work-people we want, develop the kind of values we want for our people in the country. This I think is the important thing. These are priorities to make education serve that purpose.

When it comes to the business of salaries, I think we have to appreciate that salaries have to be in keeping with our economic situation. As far as I know, the proper authorities are discussing the issue and what perhaps could be done. But we cannot afford to forget, that salaries have to be in keeping with the general economic situation.

As regards the comment on the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College I think I must inform the hon. Member that I am not responsible for the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College. That comes under the portfolio of another Minister.

Head 55, Ministry of Education and Social Development – College of Education for Secondary Teachers - \$314,501 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 147

HEAD 56 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,138,671 for Head 56, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Curriculum Development Unit, stand part of the Estimates.

3.05 p.m.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, from items (1) to (6). I would like to ask the Minister whether my information is correct that many of the experts working within this unit have been people who were specially invited, or imported, to come to work in this unit from abroad and whether it was not considered that we may have had capable and local personnel who could have done that work. I would like to know whether these experts, since they have arrived, have now settled down to the task. I would not like to refer to the names of these persons.

I would also like to know whether the Curriculum Planners only planned for ten weeks in a term of 13 weeks. Why is it that not all 13 weeks have been planned for? I would like to know whether this is so and if the Curriculum Planners only planned for ten weeks of a particular term? I would also like to know whether the work of the people of this unit is indeed being interfered with by personnel from the Ministry of National Development and whether they have arrived at some sort of decision where the personnel from the Ministry of National Development would no longer interfere with the work of the comrades who are looking after curriculum in their areas.

Subhead 6, Courses, Workshops, Pilot Projects, I would like to find out what are the pilot projects the Minister has in mind. Subhead 7, Publications, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether she feels that the publications that come out from this Ministry really reflect the realities of Guyana's life, the peoples that exist in Guyana or whether there is any aspect of discrimination as many teachers have approached me about it.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, this is indeed a very amusing situation because the hon. Member does not seem to realize that the Curriculum Development Centre is about four years old and it is staffed entirely by Guyanese. The Curriculum Co-ordinator and all curriculum Officers are Guyanese and have worked in the Guyanese system and have special skills for curriculum development. So, the staff is entirely local and although I said it is a bit amusing, I think it is distressing to learn that in this House we have Guyanese who do not acknowledge the sterling contributions of their fellow Guyanese in this very important field of curriculum development – producing learning material for our own people.

Now, if one were to go to the Curriculum Development Unit, one would find that all the material there would be interesting even for adults. We have found that this has proved very interesting even to adults, providing information about Guyana. I am surprised to hear that the hon. Member would want to question that because it is pellucidly clear that the material deals with the Guyanese situation. We began in the early years with supplementary readers for very young children. Readers which will give children some stimulus to want to read. It was informative, it was amusing, entertaining and so on. Now, we have moved to a very serious position. We still produce supplementary readers but we have moved to a serious position and I have said repeatedly – I think in this House too I have alluded to the production and the use that will be made of the Timehri Readers, the first basic reading books that Guyana has produced for primary schools. We have produced the Guyana Map Theory for primary schools and we have the material ready for publication of Mathematics For Secondary Schools. It might be of interest to point out that Mathematics for Secondary Schools was spearheaded by the Faculty of Education, University of Guyana, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The other two sets of books, the readers and the Guyana map project came from the Curriculum Development Unit.

In addition to the teachers who have been given permanent appointments there, we have distinguished Guyanese who have come back to Guyana to give of their service. I would not name them. I do not know if the hon. Feroze Mohamed considers them aliens because more and more we are attracting our Guyanese who are able and competent to come back to work and those Guyanese have been playing a significant role in all areas, in our Test Development Unit, and Curriculum Development Unit and they have a lot to do with the production of those materials.

Now, the pilot projects referred to include, among others, reading projects, mathematics projects and social studies which will include political education.

Head 56, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Curriculum Development Unit - \$1,138,671 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 148

**HEAD 57 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
GUYANA INDUSTRIAL TRAINING CENTRE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$207,369 for Head 57, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Guyana Industrial Training Centre, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 57, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Guyana Industrial Training Centre - \$207,369 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 149 and 150

**HEAD 58 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
PROBATION AND WELFARE SERVICE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$743,715 for Head 58, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Probation and Welfare Service, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, page 150, subheads 13, 15 and 19. The Probation Service is very important. I would like the Cde. Minister of Education to indicate what new plans there are for this service. I think the whole Probation Service needs re-orientation. What we have at the moment is the colonial hangover where the Probation Officers' duties are restricted to Court cases when someone is found guilty and sentence is to be passed against him. The Probation Officer has to investigate, at that stage, the person's background and present it to the Court. I think we need more than this.

I have indicated subhead 13, Grant to Discharged Prisoners' Aid Committee. I know that this Committee is functioning and I think the hon. Minister of Education is aware that this Committee meets prisoners a few days before their actual discharge, finds out their particular areas of interest, what kind of work they were doing. If they were carpenters they probably would give them a hammer and a saw.

3.15 p.m.

This is not, to my mind, tackling the problem. Even the Prime Minister has been expressing concern about crime and the crime rate and what can be done to stamp out one of the serious threats and dangers of choke and rob. In my view, we need more than that. Giving them a hammer and saw does not end the case. They might go out and sell it immediately and, in fact they do that. And then they are moved again into the areas of crime.

Taking into account all our economic weaknesses, the fact of unemployment and so on, we must be able to separate the hardened criminals from the others – I am optimistic; possibly even they can change, if the right work is done. But there are those who lapse because of conditions and circumstances, who are put with the hardened criminals and subsequently, if not

taken care of, they add to the already high rate of, I say, criminals, delinquents, and those who are in the habit of committing crimes – offenders. In the circumstances I think there is need for this whole department to be looked at again. It has not changed over the years. The structure remains the same.

Essequibo Boys' School. I wish to ask the same question. What we need in the Probation Service is more follow-up work. You talk to a man, you give him something, you leave him. In fact, that should be treated as a case. A jacket should be opened and that case should be followed up to see if that man has really rehabilitate himself and, indeed, if he needs more assistance in rehabilitation. We have said that we are pursuing the socialist path and in pursuance of that path, we must try to remove the stigma attached to individuals who may have been in prison. Hence, I think it ought to be part of the probation service to seek to re-integrate those who have served sentences in our prisons in the country.

I want to make the point that there is an increase in delinquency. The Probation Service must move to the areas, literally and physically, where they exist to see what actual work can be done. We must move away from the paper work where a delinquent is found only when he is arrested and charged by the police and taken to the courts. When the magistrate or judge orders a probation report, the Probation Service comes in at that stage. As in medicine, we talk of preventative and curative. I am thinking of the preventative measures in the area of delinquency and crime. I am convinced that this area is not receiving the attention it deserves. For that reason every annual report that comes out from the office of the Commissioner of Police speaks of increase in crime and concern. In fact that report does not reflect the true position of the crime rate in Guyana because there are large numbers of persons who become victims of all types of assaults and robberies and they never go to the police station and report.

I wonder if the Minister would indicate what thought is being put into this department, what new we can expect, how this service can become more useful. It is a useful service; I am not against the Probation Service, but all I say is that we have to move out from the

sophistication it was in over the years and get it to move to the people so that we can help in the rehabilitation of the young. As we see, this head is listed on this estimate, it concerns the rehabilitation of the young. As we see, this head is listed on this estimate, it concerns the rehabilitation of those who have got the attitudes and tendencies or who by circumstances and conditions commit crimes. How can we help in preventing crimes by changing those who have been involved constantly? I call therefore for this Probation Service.

There is another area where the Probation Service can work. Members have heard of Alcoholics Anonymous and I think it was in the news last night that a magistrate either fined or sentenced people to imprisonment for bush rum. This is another area where the Probation Service could be of tremendous help to the people as a social aid service, where these things can be investigated. We can save a number of homes and we can save a number of individuals from themselves. I want to call therefore for further extension of this service.

Sentences for bush rum will not help. We have always had sentences. We have always had high fines but there is still the tendency to commit the offence. If people can learn by the provision of a certain type of activity to keep away from bush rum or even from liquor that is available normally on the shelves, I think that can help more. This is the type of proposal I wish to put to the hon. Minister and to ask her what is her thinking on this matter, what is the thinking of this Government, and what are its plans in so far as this service is concerned. Let us move out from that state of sophistication.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, further to the remarks made by the previous speaker regarding the Probation Services with particular reference to the Onderneeming Boys' School and also to the Belfield School run by the Salvation Army, this is on page 150, subhead 15, does the Minister have available any figures that she can give us to support what the previous speaker has been saying in relation to the cases of the boys and the girls who are discharged from these remand homes each year? Can she say how many went out last year, how many had to come

back again to the boys' school and to the Belfield Girls' School? We wish to know how many were discharged on probation, and how many had to return.

Could the Minister explain to this House some aspects of the type of training that was given to these young people apart from teaching them to be a carpenter, a dressmaker, or what have you? What moral standards are taught to these young people, how are they fitted to bring themselves back into the community and to live with other people?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Baird: I appreciate the concern of Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud about the rehabilitation of deviants within our society. The Probation and Welfare Service is in the process of being re-organised. For one thing, I think nearly a year ago, we received a very enlightening report as a research project on deviants in Guyana and that report is being studied. One committee has been set up and one other committee is to be set up to look at the findings of that research and put up recommendations for the improvement of the Probation Service.

One of the problems we face is to find social scientists with insight to advise on action, but when the Probation and Welfare Services was transferred from Home Affairs to the Ministry of Education, this was the purpose – to emphasise social development. We are particularly concerned about the re-education of the person, giving therapy to the person so that we bring that person back into society.

We have one example of this. This is a development in the re-education of deviants. We have at the Sophia Centre a number of young people who are on probation. They are receiving the kind of experience that we hope will re-educate them; I think it is working because our records show we had in the first group, I think, over 40 of these young people; the number has risen to 89 young people on probation, and we have had only one case in which a young person reverted. It is a comprehensive programme in which we attempt to change attitudes and

values making them ready to function in society; and we use the kind of approaches that we hope will appeal to these young people. It is really a programme of re-education and not a matter of forcing them to change.

3.25 p.m.

We find that the young people themselves are responding to the treatment. Most of them appreciate that part of their failings was due to the fact that they were not in a position to take advantage of the opportunities for work and education in the society; we are now giving them this kind of experience. A very important change is that they themselves are becoming so disciplined that they have reached the stage where they can plan their own work. As soon as this is practicable we assign them in keeping with their interests, to tasks in places like Guyana Gajraj, to places of their choosing, to the hospital and so on; it is very refreshing to observe that they are making good use of the opportunity.

This is really only one small movement in the business of restructuring the probation service and this is the kind of experience we hope to give others. We hope that in the next two months we might be able to make public the findings of the Committee and to announce what other provisions we are making for dealing with the young people. We do realize that it is necessary to appeal to them to give them experience which will make them change, and not to isolate them from the community. Some effort is being made and the Sophia Centre is one example of the kind of experience we are giving young people, changing them and integrating them into society. Some of them have gone back into some of the further educational apprenticeships, Some are working as apprentices, they are also active in the creative arts. They are making their own musical bands and becoming an active part of the society.

With respect to the Essequibo Boy's School, there are a lot of problems there because, naturally, we have to find the kind of personnel to cope with that situation. As hon. Members know, the intention is to absorb some of the people there into the New Opportunity Crops which

is designed to take care of deviants. This is a very sensitive area and I think it is taking a bit of time because we want to be careful that action is going to be meaningful. We have to be very careful in the identification of the people that we put in charge of the re-education programme.

Head 58, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Probation and Welfare Service - \$743,715 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 151, Head 59.

**HEAD 59 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
BYGEVAL/MAHAICA SECONDARY SCHOOL – MULTILATERAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$442,604 for Head 59, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Bygeval/Mahaica Secondary School, Multilateral stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: With your permission, Cde. Chairman, I would like to deal with multilateral schools, since it will no doubt save some time, rather than go page by page and school by school. I am speaking on subhead 1, Headmaster. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if she subscribes to the report that was made by the World Bank Representatives who came here in November. They said that at least four departments of the multilateral schools are not properly utilized. For example, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Science, Arts and Crafts. We would like to know if this is so why has this situation been allowed to develop, particularly at the multilateral schools where these are the subjects that particularly give a difference to a Multilateral School.

I would like to draw the hon. Minister's attention to item (10), Audio Visual Technician II. We understand that multilateral schools have a lot of equipment, supplies and instruments. But the problem here is that whilst we have the equipment and these supplies, we do not have

technicians who can operate the equipment and supplies. As a result of this, most of the equipment is in disrepair. The pieces of equipment are not looked after and are not being utilized to the detriment of our students. In fact, the simple ones are the ones used by the teachers but we do not now have the necessary technicians to operate these things and the students, therefore, do not enjoy the benefits of these Audio Visual materials. I understand further that we only have one person who is engaged in this work to train persons and some people say he himself would have need for further development if he is to do the work properly.

Subhead 7, Maintenance of Grounds. This is also something which is fairly general. Again, I would like to know whether my information is correct. I notice that we are allocating money for the maintenance of grounds but my information is that these grounds are not really maintained. I would like to know, therefore, whether the Minister has any information otherwise. For example, at the Mahaica Multilateral School there are three physical education teachers who cannot use the grounds because it is not properly maintained and, therefore, they are not able to do their work properly. The same thing applies to subhead 11, Maintenance of Vehicles. For example, there is a tractor at the Mahaica Multilateral School that is engaged in transportation purposes mainly. There is no land and despite efforts being made they cannot acquire the land, so the tractor is being utilized for transportation. I think the farmers can make much better use of that tractor.

The same thing happens in New Amsterdam. There is no driver, as far as my information goes, because there is no land where the tractor can be operated. The farming community really need these vehicles. These are little problems that are general. We appreciate that the Multilateral Schools have just come into being and they may be affected by some of these problems, but we would like the Minister to pay keen attention to the development of these schools because it can lead to serious problems if not checked in time.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the hon. Minister a question under subhead 10, Evening Classes – Early School Leavers. I would like to tie this in with subhead 6,

Electricity, and talk about the activities that go on in the multilateral schools in the evening. I am thinking, particularly, of this one at Mahaica. Could the hon. Minister say what criteria is used for renting or loaning of these multilateral schools to organizations not specifically connected with the school, for example, the Parent-Teachers Association. I am referring particularly to the one I know about at Mahaica, which is used for the activities of the People's National Congress. We have no objection to the P.N.C. using the school once it is not needed for any other activity of the school. We want to know if any other organization, such as the P.P.P. or the U.F. applies, would they be granted permission to use the school? Furthermore, when these people use the school – the P.N.C. Groups are the chief ones – do they pay anything to help defray the cost of electricity? The cost of electricity is going to go up and they burn a lot of lights during their activities.

3.35 p.m.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister Baird.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, I prefer to make a general comment on multilateral schools. I think it should be appreciated that multilateral schools became operational late 1974 early 1975. I think any reasonable person will appreciate that all the programmes will not be fully developed at this point in time. Some multilateral schools began with children in the lower forms and it will take some time before there are children in the upper forms. Some multilateral schools began as complete schools. For example, Anna Regina Bladen Hall. You will find in these schools very vibrant agricultural programmes. All the equipment will therefore be utilized.

I have not seen the World Bank Report. When representatives come they have to see the Minister and reports are seen by the Minister. These alleged reports have not reached me. I have had discussions with representatives and I can assure members that they expressed great

satisfaction with the functioning of the schools. In some multilateral schools it is true that all of the programmes have not been fully developed, say, agriculture. We have a problem, a national problem, as members must be aware, Government is attempting to cope with these problems in the areas of bus transport to provide the facilities for maintenance.

In education, we are specifically trying to deal with the problem and I think I mentioned that there are on-going training programmes for that, representatives of the firms that supplied us with the equipment have come to Guyana at least three times to carry out the training for people in these schools and such training is on-going. Then the intention is, and we have an agreement with an international organization to mount training programmes locally and some abroad. That fact was mentioned yesterday in this house. I do not think it is fair to allege that the multilateral schools are not functioning properly. Some of them are not fully operational because of the reasons I mentioned.

Now, with respect to the Early School Leavers, members will notice in all multilateral schools, because these are documented here, and in many other schools that are not listed in these Estimates, further education goes on for early leavers, young adults and so on. The subjects vary according to the needs of the community and the interest of the people. I would not be in a position to specify what goes on in any one place. It will vary because we have moved from the position where educational activities are predetermined. This has to be done in relation to what is needed at a particular time. I do not know that in some areas people favour activities, say, in home economics and perhaps some of them like to specialize in preserving food and so on. Some people have expressed a desire to be exposed to what we will call positive child rearing practices and so on, parent/child relationship and a wide range of activities.

I think the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva wanted to know if we rent multilateral schools. We do not rent any schools. I think in this House, in the presentation on the take over of schools, I specifically said that we will allow people, organizations and others, to use schools on application. This has always been, and will continue to be, the case as long as proper safeguards

are given and taken. This was specifically stated. She mentioned and referred to the P.P.P. They will tell her that they have been given the use of schools on application, as long as we are assured that the property will be protected. Members have to appreciate that when we give schools indiscriminately, there are likely to be some unfortunate results. Schools are used for many purposes. We are delighted that schools will be used but we have to be very careful to ensure that they are left in a condition that will not militate against their use when required for morning or afternoon sessions.

I think it would be fitting to advise the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva that Parents/Teachers Associations are connected with schools; they are a vital part of the school programme. I think she did not know they were connected to schools. She listed this kind of association as one agency that perhaps was not related to school programmes.

Head 59, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Bygeval/Mahaica Secondary School – Multilateral - \$442,604 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 152 and 153.

**HEAD 60 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
ANNA REGINA SECONDARY SCHOOL – MULTILATERAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$661,390 for Head 60, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Anna Regina Secondary School – Multilateral, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 60, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Anna Regina Secondary School, Multilateral - \$661,390 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 154.

**HEAD 61 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
BLADENHALL SECONDARY SCHOOL – MULTILATERAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$525,660 for Head 61, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Bladen Hall Secondary School – Multilateral, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 61, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Bladen Hall Secondary School – Multilateral - \$525,660 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 155.

**HEAD 62 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
NEW AMSTERDAM SECONDARY SCHOOL – MULTILATERAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$472,640 for Head 62, Ministry of Education and Social Development, New Amsterdam Secondary School – Multilateral, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 62, Ministry of Education and Social Development, New Amsterdam Secondary School – Multilateral, \$472,640 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 156.

**HEAD 63 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
CHRISTIANBURG/WISMAR SECONDARY SCHOOL – MULTILATERAL**

18.1.77

National Assembly

3.35 – 3.45 p.m.

Question proposed that the sum of \$433,650 for Head 63, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Christianburg/Wismar Secondary School – Multilateral, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 63, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Christianburg/Wismar Secondary School – Multilateral - \$433,650 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 157.

**HEAD 64 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
RUIMVELDT SECONDARY SCHOOL – MULTILATERAL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$443,538 for Head 64, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Ruimveldt Secondary School – Multilateral, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 64, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Ruimveldt Secondary School – Multilateral - \$443,538 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.45 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 158.

**HEAD 65 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
PORT KAITUMA RESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$445,348 for Head 65, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Port Kaituma Residential Government Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Harripersaud Nokta, if it is one question.

Cde. Nokta: Cde. Chairman, I notice under subhead 1, item (17), provision for twelve kitchen maids for this one school. I should like to ask the Minister whether this School needs twelve kitchen maids. Secondly, I should like the Minister to tell us how many students are enrolled in this School at present, and how many students are resident in this School.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Baird: The Port Kaituma Residential School is a school that is being built. There is a school at Port Kaituma, a primary school and the residential school is still under construction. It is a secondary school that will attract children from a certain catchment area, approximately 300 children altogether from Matthews Ridge, Arakaka, Port Kaituma, St. Anselm, Sebai, Lower Kaituma, Annie Creek. It is a school that will serve children of secondary school age children from those areas; it has dormitory facilities. The dormitory, I understand, is complete. At the moment, a secondary section of the school is in progress. They are using a part of the primary school building. As soon as classroom provision is complete, the total secondary school population will move over into the school.

This is an estimate because we expect the school to be completed during this term, or in the next three to four months, so we had to make provision for the operation of the school.

The estimate of twelve maids I am sure will be reduced over a period of time. It is the practice now – that in residential and educational institution children will participate in cleaning activities.

Head 65, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Port Kaituma Residential Government Secondary School - \$445,348 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 159.

**HEAD 66 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
KWAKWANI RESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$12 for Head 66, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Kwakwani Residential Government Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 66, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Kwakwani Residential Government Secondary School - \$12 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 160.

**HEAD 67 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
MABARUMA RESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$12 for Head 67, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Mabaruma Residential Government Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 67, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Mabaruma Residential Government Secondary School - \$12 – agreed to and ordered to stand Part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 161.

**HEAD 68 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
ST. IGNATIUS RESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$12 for Head 68, Ministry of Education and Social Development – St. Ignatius Residential Government Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 68, Ministry of Education and Social Development – St. Ignatius Residential Government Secondary School - \$12 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Comrades and Hon. Members, we have got two Divisions and eight minutes. I do not know how you will allocate it, but I am prepared to give four minutes to the Opposition in respect of both Divisions and the Government to answer in four minutes. Page 162.

**DIVISION XXV – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,500,000, for Division XXV, Ministry of Education and Social Development, Primary and Secondary Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, Primary, Nursery and Secondary Schools. I would like to ask the Minister whether she has had the opportunity to see the Ocean view Primary School which is a sore to the sight and whether she can tell us how soon the Ministry will be in a position to fulfil the promise made by the Prime Minister in 1973 on a meet-the-people tour of giving the people in that area a primary school which can take care of the students properly.

Subhead 9, furniture and Equipment. I would like to ask whether the Cde. Minister is aware that because of the lack of facilities in the Leonora School there are many cases of four children sharing a bench and desk prepared for two. How soon will the Leonora Government School be supplied with more furniture so that the children can be properly seated and accommodated?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, one question if you can put it in.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, can the hon. Minister tell us if it is envisaged by the Government that there will be an interchange of pupils, say those from Kaituma going to Kwakwani and that sort of thing, when all the Government residential schools are completed?

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, the Ocean View School. I think there is a problem of identifying a site. As soon as a site has been identified, the school will be constructed. I really do not understand the question about the Government residential schools, if there will be an interchange between Kwakwani – **[Interruption]** As far as I know interchange among pupils always takes place but this is not part of the organization of the residential schools. There is an interchange which goes on constantly between schools. Schools from Georgetown go to New Amsterdam and so on. There are residential schools because they will accommodate children from outlying areas. The point is that in those areas many children had to come to Georgetown for secondary education so it will be much simpler and more realistic to educate them in their area. That is one purpose of having residential schools.

Division XXV, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Primary and Secondary Schools - \$3,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.55 p.m.

DIVISION XXVII – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – SECOND EDUCATION PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,500,000 for Division XXVII, Ministry of Education and Social Development – IBRD/IDA Projects – Second Education Project, stand part of the Estimates.

Division XXVII, Ministry of Education and Social Development – IBRD/IDA Projects – Second Education Project - \$2,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: Comrades, I am informed that after the suspension we will do the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice. It is however proposed that should we finish the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice before 10 o'clock we will proceed with the Ministry of Labour. It means that if we work from 4.30 to 6.30 we will come back at 8 p.m. and start the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice again. If it is finished before, we will go ahead with the Ministry of Labour. I think that was the agreement yesterday.

Perhaps this would be a good time to take the suspension. The Sitting of the House is suspended for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Comrades, we have a problem here. I can adjourn the House but it is the Opposition which would not have the opportunity of asking the questions. May I suggest that perhaps we may do the Ministry of Labour as the Minister of Labour is here. We had indicated that we would do that. I merely throw this out as a suggestion. If you do not agree, I will adjourn and come back at 8 p.m.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, this is no fault of the Opposition. The Opposition has been making every endeavour to comply with the agreement so far. This period is set aside to do the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice and we are ready and willing to proposed. What is worse is that we are not hearing anything from the Government side.

The Chairman: I think you know that the Speaker is ready, willing and able to carry on. Cde. Leader of the house, may I have some information form you?

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Chairman, as we all know, we were supposed to start with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice. As the Minister is not here, may I with respect suggest, as the other Minister whose Ministry is to be taken next is here, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, that we proceed with those “Heads” now instead of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Chairman: This is a matter completely for the Opposition. If they do not agree, I propose adjourning until eight. Cde. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, may I hear what you have to say?

Cde. Ram Karran: I am in the same position as my colleagues who are not in a position to debate or to query the Ministry of Labour at the moment. The spokesmen for the Ministry of

18.1.77

National Assembly

4.30 – 4.35 p.m.

Foreign Affairs and Justice are not quite ready. Under the circumstances, I think we would be unable to proceed with the Ministry of Labour.

Cde. Ramsaroop: May I ask for a short suspension of ten minutes?

[Cde. Wills took his seat.]

The Chairman: Cde. Wills, I think you owe this House some apology for coming late and giving us a great number of problems.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Cde. Wills): Cde. Chairman, I know that you are aware that I hold the opinion that Parliament is the highest Court of the land. I know too that you are aware that I would not have been tardy in arriving here were it not for the urgency of other problems. I wish to assure you that the few minutes I am late were not by design. This kind of malfunctioning does take place sometimes. I was told 4.30 but apparently I should have been here at 4.15. I do apologise if I have wasted the time of the House and I am very, very sorry indeed to cause so much tribulation.

The Chairman: Pages 19 and 20.

HEAD 2 – SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$869,674 for Head 2, Supreme Court of Judicature stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subheads 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The questions I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice deal with the alarming situation where large numbers of persons are incarcerated and indeed - -

The Chairman: Which subhead are you speaking under?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am speaking on subheads 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10. They are inter-related; I will tell you how Cde. Chairman so that you will see why I ask the questions this way.

The Chairman: Subhead 4 is Transport and Travelling; 7 is Law Library; 8 is Uniforms; 9 is Expenses of Jurors and 10, Expenses of Witnesses.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Specially subhead 9 and 10, Expenses of Jurors and Expenses of Witnesses.

4.35 p.m.

If one looks at the vote one will see a reduction of the vote for jurors, and if one looks at the vote for expenses of witnesses, one will also see what is taking place. The point which I wish to make is, I understand that the Cde. Minister will help us, that normally five judges sit in the Supreme Court to deal with cases and the votes provided for witnesses as well as for the jurors are not adequate to allow the sitting and functioning of five judges. The result is three judges, I am told, will sit during the Criminal Sessions because of inadequacy of the provision of funds to get the witnesses and to get the jurors etc., to get the court functioning to deal with the large backlog of cases.

At the conclusion of each session of the Criminal Court, a judge takes evidence as to how many prisoners remain in the jail and I recall very clearly one of the judges expressing alarm that

so many people are there without trial. When one peruses the Constitution that, to my mind, is a denial of a fundamental right. I have no doubt in my mind this afternoon that the Cde. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice will share that same opinion that to delay a trial is a serious thing.

There are people who have been in the jail for years. There are persons who are outside of the jail who are on bail and who have not been given trials. I think in this year 1977 one of the areas that we would wish the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice to tackle immediately is the question of the delay of trials particularly for those who are in the jail and, indeed, for those who are even outside of the jail, because if someone is outside and he wants to leave the country, he cannot leave. In some cases probably people's passports may be in the custody of the police. It is a restriction.

If a man commits an offence, we know the maxim, he is held to be innocent until proven guilty, but nevertheless the process is such that he is restricted, he is denied some of his liberty and we ought not to sit in the highest forum of the land without expressing our views on this matter.

I shall be grateful if the Cde. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice can tell us what will happen during this year, whether there will be an increase in the number of judges in the criminal court or a reduction; secondly, what plans have been set in motion to expedite hearing of all these outstanding cases so that we do not continue to have this alarming state of people being denied their right.

Under the vote Law Library, subhead 7, there is a reduction from \$35,478 to \$1,500. That is ridiculous. We know that judges sit on the Bench and they are at the mercy of the Bar. One hears them say: "You have cited that book, the other book, you have cited that page, I do not have the references, will you be kind enough to lend them to me." And what is more, if several judges reserve decisions, to come to their judgement, the question of authorities in the cases is vital. We would like to have a good law library. I am sure the Cde. Minister shares

this view. We do not have what we really should have in the highest court of this land, both the Supreme Court and the Appeal Court. I think this is a fantastic cut.

We support cuts in those areas where you can cut, and there are many other areas which can be cut, but in those areas which affect the administration of justice, we cannot give our support because we are deeply concerned with the administration of justice. We would like to see those enshrined provisions in the Constitution honoured and upheld in this country and all these mechanisms when looked at in totality can contribute one way or the other. I say these provisions that I have referred to, the cutting of votes, can indeed bring that about. In this case specific reference is made to \$75,300 for jurors in 1977, whereas in 1976 we had a provision of \$100,000 and we had \$38,000 in 1976 for witnesses. In fact I understand that this vote even last year prevented some effort in the Supreme Court, to get witnesses, because money was not there.

There is provision for travelling and allowances. I take it that that provision is for the judges. They have to travel to Berbice and they have to travel to Essequibo. I suppose there is a question of subsistence and all of that, and if it is not adequate it would mean there would be a restriction also in the movement of the judges to the rural areas, to the country of Berbice, or of Essequibo. Could the Cde. Minister tell us exactly what will happen during the course of this year in view of these big cuts in these provisions and the fact that last year there were problems because there was shortage of funds?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Page 19, I will use items (16) and (24) to make a point in respect of staffing. If we look at item (16), Registry Officer, we will note that the sum of \$58,560 was voted but that has been revised to \$18,759. If we look at Court Reports, item (24), the sum of \$35,580 was approved. It was revised to \$21,840. I want to ask the hon. Minister what is the position generally in regard to staffing in this very important law administration agency of the country, the Supreme Court of Judicature.

I have had several complaints of serious under-staffing in this Supreme Court Registry, and I have had complaints about the time having to be spent in the Registry due to the shortage of staff. Obviously, there are vacancies for registry officers. If there are vacancies that are not filled and there are not enough bodies, the work of the department must necessarily suffer, and efficiency must necessarily decrease. What is being done to remedy this situation?

I know, for example, in the field of court reporters there may well have been problems. Maybe the hon. Minister might let us appreciate some of these problems. I myself used to work in this Department for approximately eight years, as I have said before to this honourable House and I do know that in respect of the expertise for court reporters that has always been a problem. Indeed I think it is a problem with Parliament here also as regards reporters. If it is not a problem here, maybe the hon. Minister could borrow some of the reporters from here, but I do know it is creating a serious problem with the judges on the whole that you have not been able to have enough reporters to service the judges. Justice delayed is justice denied, so that court reporters can contribute to this denial of justice.

I am wondering whether this shortage of staff might even have had something to do with the very caustic comments which judges and other law enforcement officers have made recently, in respect of documents disappearing. One hears judges asking: “Where are the documents?” They can’t be found. They have disappeared. Disappeared where? Well, they have just disappeared. How could they just disappear? One wonders what is being done in respect of remedying this situation where judges have had to make such profound pronouncements about the disappearance of documents in the course of trials.

4.45 p.m.

Across the age, sir, I certainly would like to re-echo the sentiments and the remarks of the former speaker in respect of the cutting of votes. In this vital area of administration of justice,

we will see under Other Charges that almost every vote has been reduced. I do not see how you can pull down subhead 9, Expenses of Jurors, from \$97,000 to \$75,300. Jurors are needed to carry on the administration of justice. If you reduce to such an extent the vote for jurors, how then will courts be able to function without jurors? Is there some way it is proposed that they might function other than in the traditional system? I really do not know how we can effect these savings. It is a good try, but let us be realistic. I do appreciate that this is austerity year but an austerity year has to be viewed also in terms of the realities of the situation.

Quite apart from the expenses of jurors, I also want to agree in respect of the law library, subhead 7. The law library, as we have heard, spent last year \$35,478 and a mere \$1,500 is put down for it this year. I am not sure that this would be able to pay for the ordinary periodicals that the law library would normally subscribe to. The Chancellor has said that we do not have to follow slavishly the decisions handed down by courts outside Guyana, but at least our jurors should have the opportunity to read these decisions. That is why I say that \$1,500 is a ridiculous sum to spend. I know comparisons are odious but I would say that even the library in the Attorney General's Office is getting more than this. If we look in this book – and we will come to this shortly on page 50 – we will note that \$8,000 is listed as the amount requested for 1977 for the private library in the Attorney General's Office. This library – and I am sure you, sir, as a lawyer will appreciate the point – is used by practitioners. Generally, they pay an annual fee for the use of the law library. It is a general library and it should be available to all practitioners. If they pay, as they do pay, an annual fee then it is wrong for us not to have them supplied with the proper up-to-date references.

If, for instance, one lawyer, because of his affluence is able to quote some particular authority because of his private law library, then another lawyer who is not as affluent, or who may not be affluent at all, should be able to go into the law library and get that same book and look at it, study it to see whether, perhaps, part of it is being quoted and another part is being omitted. To my mind it is vital for us to keep this law library up-to-date. If we are going to give the Attorney General \$8,000, how can we give this general library \$1,500? It is not fair.

Subhead 11, Editing Law Reports. There again the revised amount for the year 1976 is the same as the amount approved, \$2,880, and the amount put down for this year is \$50. Let us be realistic. Either we put down nothing or we put down a realistic amount. We all know that \$50 cannot do in respect of editing law reports. Take it out altogether. Either we put in a realistic sum or we take it out altogether and let us not put anything at all inside it. Indeed, I did raise the question of the whole business of Guyana Law Reports with the Minister when we were discussing the 1976 Estimates in December 1975 and I remember very particularly the hon. Minister promising to look into the whole business. Maybe he has looked at it and there is some particular reason why the \$50 is there. Maybe he will be able to make some special arrangement with somebody for a remuneration of only \$50. Very commendable, if that is so. In this year of austerity, yes, I will accept that. I think that is all under this Head.

Cde. J. Jagan: I want to make reference to subhead 20, item (16), Entertainment Allowances. The amount voted is \$24,600. We have been regaled with the fact that this an austerity Budget and I see cuts in various directions. But invariably there seems to be no cuts in such items which are certainly non-essential. I would like the Minister to give us some idea why the sum of \$24,600 is necessary under this Head. I cannot imagine a social function costing more than \$1,000 and that would give us about 24 social functions in a year. I understand that such amounts are not permitted to be cut. If, by statutory provision, you cannot cut it at least you can reduce it and not spend it. That is the best way of doing it. As I examined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Justice, I have been adding up some of the figures and I find that this Ministry on the whole –

The Chairman: Could we leave that until we come to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We are dealing with the Supreme Court Head.

Cde. J. Jagan: All right. Page 21, item (9) –

The Chairman: Cde. Janet Jagan, we have not reached page 21 yet. We are doing pages 19 and 20. Cde. Minister.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Cde. Wills): Cde. Chairman, there is an expression we often use in the law. I am quite sure you are aware that one should not approbate and reprobate at the same time. When one looks at the totality of the criticisms so far, one gets the impression that there is a certain breach of that maxim, a maxim which I readily concede is more honoured in the breach than the observance. I am being told by one Member of the Opposition – a very good friend of mine – that we should obey the Constitution and I am being told by another Member of the Opposition that we must disobey the Constitution, and one has to sail between the Scylla and Charybdis of legality and illegality to sort of make practical common sense out of the position. The Constitution says that certain emolument and allowances for Judges are fixed and can only be changed by consent of them all. If we would impose our will on them – and I would, if I were a dictator and had my way – I would ensure that sacrifices are spread all round. But you have to have consent and we cannot break the Constitution. I do not think and I would be very fair to the critic on the other side – that the critic appreciated fully that we were being asked to do that. I share the underlying motivation to the sentiments that if there is austerity one must not create pockets of ... I agree with that. But, unfortunately, it is not legally possible so to do and I take pride in the fact that I myself like always to obey the precept and cannons and dictates of declared law.

On the general criticisms, first about the law libraries, I am glad this has been raised because there is a certain malaise which is a part of our society and the lawyers are not exempt from it.

4.55 p.m.

Somehow there is not a uniform habit of reading in Guyana, a uniform habit of reading in depth. Cde. Speaker, you go around and you find people of different persuasions and different

affiliations and they pretend an affinity to certain subjects and topics, say, socialism and they have never read it; ... Have never even read they apostles of socialism, how they translate what socialism is to be about but they prefer to give opinions about it. This is with the lawyers too. This is not to defend the law library position. I will come back to the defence of the Law Library position. But I do wish that we could focus on more reading, more habits in reading and enquiry in general not only the law but in general. Perhaps many of the difficulties we arrive at would not necessarily come to our doors.

In the legal profession it has been my experience that after people are qualified they come back to this country. At least in my day they had to come back. Nowadays, you can go to the University of Guyana and other places and strive to live in the society by an almost parasitic avoidance of reading and by a sort of dangerous support to law, legal norms and legal practice. My friend who is a lawyer, my very, very good friend and I do not include him in the category of malcreants but I wish to make here and now an appeal to lawyers to read more and get more conversant with the conditions of society that make law or the reformation of the law and effect the application of law.

It is no use filling the law libraries with redundant tortologous books on Victorian England which have no relevance at all, to my mind, to any decent precept of socialist principle or any other principle for that matter, merely to say that we have a library which can be compared with Bodlerian or some fancy library somewhere.

First of all the habit of reading is missing and even where it does exist the previous position to look for tones and books, which have no relevance whatsoever, in an alarming situation. Having said those things, I concede that we can do more in respect of law libraries in Guyana.

The problem is how to orient the practice of law with the present modern day prevailing conditions in Guyana. We have been trying in the Ministry of Justice by bringing down

lecturers from all over the world. We have had lecturers from Britain, America, the Soviet Union and we propose to have from elsewhere to get people familiar with the formation and application of rules to deal with problems in societies, with rules which can lead to the transformation of societies in accordance with dominant political convictions.

We hope to make a transformation of the library system in the law to make it not so much an oasis for those who wish to regale themselves with ancient literature in the law but rather a fountain and a well for those whose enquiring minds can be utilized; whose skills can be utilized in the long run to be of assistance in the transformation of Guyana according to our developmental needs and our ethics of distribution. All these plans took place when we were faced with an economic crisis and a conscious decision had to be taken whether we should rush and do willy milly *ad hoc* things and fortuitously hope we may strike a few good points, or whether we should prepare plans to consolidate, buy and then stop. We have chosen the latter. If in the short run there will be a lack of the kind of books that should be read, we apologise for it because in the planning stages we always have this malotrian as it were before the ... of our plans are made evident.

The cut in the library allocation is not only a reflection of austerity year but a reflection that we are taking conscious decisions on what kinds of books, what kind of authorities we should put in the library to give assistance to lawyers in the transformation of this society.

On the question of law editing and the apparently ludicrous figure being allocated thereto, I think my friend gave the answer and I see he has not forgotten his legal mechanics of evidence and confession. He criticized and he gave the answer. I don't think he requires an answer because he gave it.

On the question of the Court Reporters I shudder to think that he meant that any reporter can become a Court Reporter. The point is this: reporting is not just a job which anyone can do and anyone who has experience in reporting can do any kind of reporting. If you were to take a

sports reporter and ask him to go to the United Nations Assembly, for instance, or go to a meeting in Europe or any place else where leaders and Governments meet and report on that, you may not – there may be exceptions – get the benefit of the full talents of that reporter.

In other words, there is specialization in reporting too. The tools may be the same but the techniques of the specialization require a different kind of reporting. So that it is not sufficient to say if we are short of Court Reporters we must get my good friend Hamaludin or George Baird and what have you and carry them up to the Court. To be fair to my friend he could not have meant this. To have meant this would have been monstrous in conception and monstrous in execution. But the thing is it requires a special kind of skill when those latinised phrases are used and those heavy sentences and those involved and intricate forms of dialectical reasoning which lawyers seem to resort to. One needs a reporter who could easily follow what is going on, transcribe quickly and be of effective use to the administration. It is a question of skill. We do not have enough of such skilled persons. Developing societies often suffer from this lack of skilled persons to do a particular job. Now I confess my friend did not mean this. There is a shortage. We do not have enough and it is something we are looking at and we are trying to correct it. We appreciate the general criticism that there is a shortage. I readily confess this is so.

If I might return now to the question of security of documents: That is a problem. I myself during the year went down to look into the security aspects of the Deeds Registry and those departments which are tenable from the law and I looked at them and came up with suggestions and the thing is being taken in train. I assure my friend – I see he is still my friend, I call him my friend – that the matter is being looked at and I promise that effective action will be taken to ameliorate the situation especially in respect of security of documents and things of that kind.

There were some general questions, the important one about goal delivery. They have this concept brought from the time when the Normans could not run England properly because of

communication and because they had not sufficient Normans, as it were, to rule in the quest of power and to run Saxon England. It was a question of power and the defusion of power. Judges would go out on assizes and take the goal delivery in Nottingham, Deeds and you have to say how many men are in goal and why they are not there and the concept as used as related to England in those days in feudal time, we have retained; we have to try now to bring it into modern focus.

5.05 p.m.

The thing is this. There is a distinction – and I say this in all seriousness – between freedom and licence. When the word “freedom” is used, it does not mean licence. I may be free, Cde. Chairman, to speak within a certain measure, subject to your jurisdiction, whatever I choose in this House without fear of punishment, but even then I can be limited to your jurisdiction. I have no licence to say whatever I wish and I may be free to do something on one occasion but there are restrictions legal, social or otherwise, which prevent me. I merely say this to introduce clearly in the minds of those of my audience here that it is not sufficient to have a vague sense of what is freedom and not examine whether by freedom we do not mean licence to do whatever you wish, whatever way you wish, and whatever time you wish and everybody else’s right must be subjugated to your desires, your aspirations.

It was never meant by those philosophers, *soi disant* sociologists that freedom must mean that, “Look, if you are in a certain position that the Constitution enjoins then you must hurry quickly, forget all the practical administrative duties to regularize your return to constitutional normality.” There are no degrees of freedom or absence of freedom. The point is that we have a large number of cases and a cumbersome criminal law system, of which all lawyers must know, to give speedy justice. It is true, and quite true, as is said in the case of Grand Junction Canal and Dime, I believe that is the case you referred to, that justice delayed is justice denied. And that is true. But what is meant by that is that an inordinate delay of justice is justice denied. There is bound to be the delay of justice. If somebody disgraces the precincts of this Parliament

and kills somebody here, how could anybody here say let him be tired right away, sentenced today and so forth? There must be some delay, the question as it is implies that there must not be inordinate and the real platform of the argument should be: “Is there any delay inordinate?” According to persuasive and personal feelings and personal predilections you can argue what is inordinate or not. The point is we always inject provocative phraseology and emotionalism when we come to what should be objective arguments. These people who are in goal, some of the have not had their cases resolved for many reasons. Some of them, their counsel have been chief instruments of delay, and I am ashamed to say this because until recently practiced at the Bar, but there still exists the system whereby a defence counsel might not have been paid sufficiently or at all so that he seeks the postponement and the procrastination of the case until the relatives find some kind of money, until he is satisfied in a certain financial capitalist way before he lets the trial proceed.

There are other aspects of which defence counsel are guilty. They are guilty of taking on more cases than they can personally handle and asking for ridiculous and inordinate delays by postponement and, of course, the accused who is the central factor in all he has to have the resolution of his problem delayed.

That is one kind of delay you get, and you will find if you examine it that is the chief form of delay in the cases. **[Interruption]** And to be quite frank – and it is a situation I feel strongly about – there seems to be sometimes in the desire to have a stately almost Edwardian, I would not say Victorian approach, to the dispensation of justice, a sort of 1926-1914 approach if you like slowness and stateliness in trials. We are told, as a form of reationalisation, to make quite sure that all the norms are observed and to make quite sure that no opportunity is lost to the accused whereby he might benefit and things of that kind. I do feel strongly that trials can be expedited without this constant relationship to norms that are antiquated, outdated, unfit and unsuitable in any modern society and, of course, dangerous to developing society.

And there are other factors too. When you have a large number of cases you cannot appreciate one man's liberty more than the other's. A man who has been tried twice and got what they call in the American slang or jury disagreed and another man has not been tried once, whatever the crime. But are you really entitled to say that because you were tried twice but you were entitled to an earlier opportunity of trial than the other man who has never had his trial come up, that kind of factor operates? Other questions of trial, you will find that witnesses, the very public out there, have no appreciation sometimes that they are an important part of the machinery of justice. That is they do not attend court as witnesses and they have the Police searching all around for them, if they do not do their civic duty within the judicial system, that they can cause delays and even denials of justice. Because the people for whom justice was made were the community. I do not accept Lord Hugh's suggestion that the accused is the centre of justice, it is the community. This over-emphasis borrowed from something Bentham said in 1860 is certainly not relevant to 1976. It is the community's interest that has to be protected, and an over-emphasis one way or the other is not consistent, I believe, with modern norms of justice.

The question is raised about passports and denials for travel. The principle underlying all forms of governmental action in any society has to be the principle of efficiency; how effective can a governmental rule or regulation be? It is no use passing a law, making a rule, creating a situation and you cannot carry it out. It is no use any judge or Parliament saying, this Parliament for that matter, saying, "We rule that X should own Alaska", and we do not have the machinery to enforce that rule.

So that on this principle of efficacy, if a man is under bail why should he be given opportunity to leave the country, and avoid jurisdiction and waste all that time when you processed him and awarded bail and had his charge brought up, you waste all that time, money and energy, why should you not make it effective that when the trial comes up he is here and ready. He may be an honest man – and there are honest men – and he may be that kind of man

for whom you entertained every hope that he could turn up for his trial and come back to the country. But you cannot make a rule for the few, you have to make a rule for the majority.

5.15 p.m.

If the chances occur that the majority would leave the country, go to Surinam, go to Canada as they want to; some go to India; some go to Africa, America, all over the place and would not come back, then we should be the laughing stock of the world to have made laws under the Constitution and not have taken steps to have those laws made effective under the principle that I enunciated, the principle of efficacy. I am afraid that there may be other criticisms that have been made in the speeches so far. If I have missed those criticisms and made no reply to them, it is not necessarily because those criticisms are unwarranted and unworthy of answers, not necessarily; it is just that sometimes even though I believe I have an elephantine and prodigious memory, sometimes I forget too.

Head 2, Supreme Court of the Judicature - \$869,674 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 21;

HEAD 3 – MAGISTRATES

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,110,451 for Head 3, Magistrates, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: Subhead 12. Cde. Chairman, I wish to ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that the Rice Assessment Tribunal, for which we are spending \$38,000 this year and for which we spent last year roughly \$61,000 is not functioning satisfactorily and that a large number of litigants, small farmers, who depend on it to have justice, are denied their rights.

What action does Government propose to take, if the hon. Minister is so aware, to ensure that this tribunal, particularly with respect to Essequibo and Essequibo Islands, is put back on its feet so as to be able to function in the proper way?

Mr. M. F. Singh: Just two short questions. Subhead 8, State Witness Expenses. This is similar to the question I asked with respect to the expenses of jurors which I am sure the hon. Minister did not intentionally not answer but the question is simply: Will this amount be enough to carry out the functions as they have been traditionally carried out under this Head? We note that the usual amount approved has been \$76,000 but this has been cut down to \$45,000. In fact, what was requested last year was \$51,419 so there is a reduction of \$31,000 with respect to State Witness Expenses. How will it be possible to keep down expenses under this Head? I do not know whether you can do without summoning witnesses. I doubt whether at this stage we can eliminate the summoning of witnesses. Until we overhaul or change our system completely we are left with the traditional system and with the traditional system I know that none of us can predict with any certainty how many witnesses will be summoned, how long they will give evidence for and how much we will have to pay them but if we look over the years there has been a certain level of expenditure and that level would seem to indicate that \$76,000 which has been traditionally voted is a more realistic sum than the \$45,000 which is really reducing it by \$31,000. So, how will this sum of \$45,000 work or is it that we are merely putting it down and then, if necessary, we will come back here for supplementary provision? Maybe that is the case.

Subhead 12, Rice Assessment Tribunal. I want to just add to what the last speaker said and say that I cannot see how we can possibly survive in a respect to this tribunal on \$38,000 when in fact the sum spent for 1976 was \$66,585. How can we survive with only \$38,000 against the background of what the last speaker said, that there is a very great backlog of cases? There are lots of cases unheard. Rice farmers are suffering as a result of this backlog of work and if we are going to vote less money to these tribunals, I cannot see how they can get through

the backlog of these cases in order to be able to give farmers the justice that is intended that they should receive by the setting up of these tribunals?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I want to pose some questions, conscious of the fact that I am a layman and I will look forward to answers that would be precise and clear. They are simple and I am not without experience in the courts to know how they function; I have been around for some time. I want to deal with subhead 2, Transport and Travelling and though the Minister can lecture, I want a simple answer if I can persuade him to give that. On subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, in 1976 we actually voted \$100,000 and we spent \$146,342 and in this year, 1977, \$85,500 is to be voted. Let me just explain the mechanics of that, the practical application of it. One, there are courts that are meeting everyday, Georgetown, Providence, possibly New Amsterdam. But then, there are country courts and magistrates are paid subsistence and other allowances to go to these courts. If this vote is allowed to remain there it would mean that the magistrate would only be able to go to Statutory Courts, take Mahaicony for instance. The Cde. Minister is not without experience; the magistrate takes call-over; he does one or two cases, depends on his “speed” and then he fixes special courts to hear cases and in the country courts it is criminal, civil jurisdiction and the holding of preliminary enquiries. I want to say that the criticism here to my mind is even more real than in the Supreme Courts because we will find that in the Magistrates’ Court you will have a back log increasing to a height that we might not be able to reduce it back and for this reason, I think that this particular vote is very unrealistic and I know I speak very practically on this point. I would ask the Cde. Minister to say what would happen in that instance.

With respect to subhead 12, Rice Assessment Tribunal, I want to add another point, not the same one. This amount can only do to pay the people for the year and if the Cde. Minister checks with his advisers I am sure he will find me, if not correct, almost correct. If this is so, where will money be found to pay subsistence to other people who are involved in the mechanics of the sittings of these courts, taking into account the point made by Cde. Ram Karran that there are a number of cases and the cases involve the small farmers? The people who are taken to curt

are the landlords or even if it comes vice versa, if the landlord brings a tenant for non-payment or for possession or what have you, this is more what he was trying to enunciate, the whole question of socialism and coming to grips with the situation. Probably the whole question of the security land tenure will have to be looked at. More than that, that would be vital and fundamental because the Act, as it is at the moment, still allows too many loopholes whereby the small farmers are being screwed.

In the circumstances, Cde. Chairman, I ask the Cde. Minister first of all, to have a second look at the Rice Farmers Security of Tenure Act because the farmers are indeed suffering and they need help; they need more than the sympathy of this House; they need something positive to be done so that they can be protected because they are the ones who are producing for us in so many fields in agriculture, be it provision or rice or what have you. I say this vote will put them in a bad way. One comrade said the thing was not functioning efficiently. My suggestion is it will not function at all.

5.25 p.m.

Those are the contributions I wish to make with respect to this Head.

The Chairman: Cde. Wills

Cde. Wills: I have a dilemma because having just listened to a very good lecture from my friend and his practical experience in the magistrates' Courts, and a lecture on the importance of land security, he has enjoined me not to lecture. But I do not apologise for my style of speech. There is a fundamental criticism in all this, if I may say so. We are being told on one hand, and the same approbating and reprobating point I made at the start, you are spending too much, but when it comes to the Justice Ministry, you are spending too little. That is what is happening here. You are spending too much. And all I am hearing is that in the Justice

Ministry you are spending too little. Well they cannot approbate and reprobate at the same time. That is what I meant at the start.

If I might answer the criticisms that were brought forward, there is a large area of agreement between myself and the last speaker, as there always is. I agree with him that the security of land is a fundamental thing, it must be looked at carefully, and it must be jealously regarded, as they say in law. That I agree with him. I agree with him that the importance of the position of the small farmer as a unit of production in the society, in a society which needs to be more production-oriented, is a very important thing, not only for politicians and sociologists but for everybody in the community. So I agree with him.

I therefore assure him, and the other speakers on the Rice Assessment Tribunals, that I shall look into that very carefully to understand for myself. And the general picture is true. They should meet more often and there is a backlog. I myself shall look into the question of why the backlog exists and shall take such measures as I see fit to expedite the hearing of these matters so as to ensure security among the small farmers in the districts.

On the question of witnesses spoken by my good friend – I won't say ex-lawyer, my friend seems to be piling up his "ex's". I hope one day he will not become an ex-politician. I am told that that has happened already but I disagree with that –

Cde. Chairman: Cde. Wills, please answer the question.

Cde. Wills: Yes. The first speaker said: You are cutting down witnesses' money in the magistrates' courts and that would affect certain things. I am asked to answer that. It is very simple. There is something we call, when we do mathematics, the theory of interacting variables. It is not just the number of witnesses. It is how far they have to travel and what evidence you require for the particular case. There is no such thing as arithmetical jurisprudence. There is no proof by the numbers of witnesses. Proof is by the probative value

even of one witness. So it is not because you lower money from \$100 to \$50 that, (a) cases would not be tried, or (b), the substance of the trial would be affected. There are a lot of interlocking variables. I do not think, to be quite kind to my friend, he addressed his mind to those other factors of variability. He did not.

I am personally satisfied that the fact that the vote has been cut in that way will not affect the substance of the kind of trial we have and the frequency we have. In fact, I think within the scope allowed me by the Ministry of Finance, I can even try now to take corrective measures to expedite trials. Proof is not a question of multiplicity. Proof is not arithmetic. Proof is not the numbers and availability of witnesses. **[Interruption]** that is implied in the criticism.

To answer the very last point, to say that over the years a certain level was maintained and if that level is reduced it necessarily means that the level of justice or the number of trials will be reduced, it does not take into account the fact that you may have learnt from the experience of the year, and not only that, every year has its different emphasis on the kinds of cases that go the magisterial way, because the magistrates' courts are in the fore front, the population goes there more often than not, and the big offence is the traffic court.

The thing is, we have the figures and statistics and we know where the emphasis in 1976 and 1977 will be, which is not necessarily the emphasis in the magistrates' courts in 1975 and 1974. So that is another variable not considered and I assure him that the fact that the vote is cut does not necessarily and will not in this case lead to a diminution in the number of cases or a dropping in the standard and quality of justice.

Head 3, Magistrates - \$1,110,451 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 28.

HEAD 6 – OMBUDSMAN

Question proposed that the sum of \$33,939 for Head 6, Ombudsman, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, just a simple question from this Head. Under article 54(4) of the Constitution, the Ombudsman is obliged to send a report to Parliament, which will be laid in Parliament, because that I will interpret is when the submission actually takes place, but since 1970 no Ombudsman's report has been submitted to the Parliament to say what he is doing. For six years there has been no report. We recognize the importance of this office to allow an opportunity for people to complain but while that opportunity is allowed, people ought to know what is taking place after the complaints are laid.

We have information that complaints were laid particularly in one case the Non Pariel Co-operative Society, and up to now we do not know what is happening. In fact, if we were getting our reports we would be able to see not only that –

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, I shall not allow a discussion on that.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Could the Cde. Minister tell us why no report from the Ombudsman was submitted to Parliament for the last six years?

Cde. Ram Karran: May I enquire whether there are vacancies under this Head, how many vacancies exist under this Head, and what they are, and whether these vacancies, if any exist, are responsible for the malfunctioning of this department?

Mr. M. F. Singh: Just to supplement the question of the last speaker I myself was worried about the question of staffing particularly when I look at item (4), subhead 1, Secretary

to the Office of the Ombudsman, and say that even though \$6,672 was in the approved estimates, the revised amount is only \$3,336 leading me to believe that the office is either vacant or has been vacant for some time, or was not filled during the entire year 1976.

One may even wonder whether perhaps for such an important post as the post of Secretary to the Ombudsman, this salary scale is not in fact too small. We know the kind of salaries and allowances that a Permanent Secretary gets who functions under a Minister in a Ministry. This is an Ombudsman he has a lot of functions. It is an important position and I would expect that the Secretary to the Office of Ombudsman will be in the nature of a Permanent Secretary, I am wondering whether perhaps \$6,672 per year is not too low a salary for the Secretary to the Office of the Ombudsman who I say, is really in the form of his deputy in the Office.

5.35 p.m.

I would like to ask generally whether this may not be one of the reasons why this post has not been filled, because the salary is unattractive for the kind of responsibility that is attached to it. I want to ask the Minister, additionally, whether he is satisfied generally with the adequacy of the staff in this office. Maybe that contributes towards the fact that reports do not come forward to Parliament.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Wills: I did not say that my friend likes to avoid and confess. Cde. Chairman, I do not appreciate the remark, whether the post was vacant over the last year or so. There is a distinction between what is vacant and what is vacuous. An argument can be vacuous and a post vacant. Further I say not. The kernel of this problem has been posed by my good friend, Cde. Ram Karran. There are a number of vacancies in the Ombudsman's office. First of all, the post of Secretary in the Office of the Ombudsman is vacant. There was a person acting there

until August 1976 and there is no one since then. Then you have the Administrative Assistant post which is not filled. The post of Clerk Class III legal is vacant at present; the post of General Clerk is vacant at present. So that the number of vacancies in regard to the unit that has to function leads me to the conclusion that this job cannot be adequately done.

On the question of failure to report, that is the answer. There is the legal argument as to whether there is an obligation or discretion to report, which I shall not go into here. But the point is that the Ombudsman has been affected by the lack of back-up supporting staff and that is the cause of whatever dilemmas have accrued to us today.

Cde. Ram Karran: May I ask the hon. Minister what efforts are being made to satisfy these vacancies within this year?

Cde. Wills: The thing is this: I do not like the way the question is asked. You will note the question is asked without reference to the profit motive, to how much salary is there. When other persons ask who may be more capitalist-minded, the first thing you get is: How much are they making? Is it big enough? Is it attractive? That I respect. That means that there is a communion between my approach and certain people's approach. But I am a believer in national unity.

I am looking at this question how, as to how to get staff for this office. It is a question of skill, it is a good move, mind you. Fewer people today are interested in doing law per se than in the old colonial days when it was a status symbol. There is a difficulty in recruitment. Some of them prefer the flesh pots of the metropolises, London, Washington, New York, Toronto or what have you. We have that difficulty. We are looking at it. We are also short-staffed in the Attorney-General's Chambers. We are short-staffed all around. It is a general shortage of good legal officers and so we are trying and we shall leave no stone unturned to see what we can do. I assure my friends of the Opposition.

Head 6, Ombudsman - \$33,939 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 31.

HEAD 9 – PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$212,051 for Head 9 – Public Prosecutions, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 9, Public Prosecutions - \$212,051 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 45 to 47, both pages inclusive.

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$11,039,568 for Head 16, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Jagan.

Cde. J. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, page 45, subhead 1, item (18), Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Accredited Representatives. I would like to ask the Minister if there is an accredited representative to the Government of Chile or if we do have diplomatic relations with Chile. It is a question I have never really heard properly answered. I would appreciate an answer.

Item (27), Entertainment Allowances. I do not wish to bore the House but we do have an

austerity budget and I would expect to see austerity. I am not suggesting that there be no entertainment allowance but I do think that the allowance provided here of \$620,000 is really much too high for a country that has an economic crisis, a country where in the Budget we are cutting down on a lot of important items. I had mentioned at another time the grave reduction in such important things as diet and drugs in our field of health and here we have an increase from last year's estimate. But let us compare the \$620,000 for entertainment with the allocation in 1973 which was then \$300,000. We keep climbing upwards and I would suggest that we start using the pruning knife there.

I have said this before and I shall say it again, that this question of status and keeping up with the Joneses does not go down well overseas and that is what it is all about. It is about our missions overseas. I think that the other countries of the world have far greater respect for the relatively poor countries who do not try to keep up with the Joneses, who do not put on a big show, but lead very simple austere existences. I am not saying cut it out entirely; I say cut out all the frills and I think we can cut it down considerably and at the same time enhance our status. I have seen it many times and I know there is far greater respect.

Item (30), Education Allowances. This is for our staff overseas. I notice that this sum is climbing at tremendous proportions. I am not a good mathematician but the rate of rise is probably as high as the rise in our cost of living. All of our comrades who have today to spend 75 per cent more on transportation, more for flour, bread and chowmein, must find it astonishing that the 1974 allocation was \$48,700 and now the amount of \$170,000 is being spent. The legend states: "Increase in School Fees abroad." Where are our missions abroad? We have missions in the United States of America where, to my information, primary and secondary education is free. I may be wrong but I think in Canada primary education is free. I am not sure if there may be relatively nominal fees for high school. England is the same, India the same; in Cuba I am sure they would not have to pay anything for education. In Caracas and in non-English speaking countries I can see that there is probably a problem. Unless the children

of your staff overseas learnt the language – Spanish or what have you – they may have to send them to an English language school.

The question arise: Where are the children of our overseas staff going? Are they going to private schools or public schools? I use the word “public” in the sense of schools that all children go to. I should imagine that the children of the overseas staff go to the regular schools or is it that we are building our new elite in that group? I cannot see any reason for such an astounding increase in education allowances. I would suggest that we try to trim down these things.

On page 46, subhead 10, Rents, Rates, Insurance Premiums etc. The vote is \$2.2 million. I notice the legend says “Increase in Rentals, Establishment of New Missions.” Perhaps the hon. Minister can tell us what new Missions have brought our amount up. In 1974 it was \$1.2 million. We are going up by another million dollars. Leaving aside the residences overseas for the Ambassadors and dealing with the staff under the Ambassadors, I understand that we are still putting our staff in what we call the highest rental accommodation. I understand in many Missions that the staff below the Ambassador do not want to live in the higher rental premises provided for them. They would prefer to live a simpler life but yet we have the foolish attitude about status.

I understand that in certain countries we are looking in the highest rental areas for all the buildings that we are renting and I think that the extra million dollars should be reconsidered because I do not think we can afford it now. And I again hearken back to the fact that we knocked off \$1 million indietary for our hospitals and yet we put on \$1 million for rental. I cannot see the justification in that.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, in spite of the castigations of my hon. And learned friend whose nimbleness of intellect I readily admit I will not be able to match, I say that the majority of the subheads under this Head 16 show increases, in the last column. We note on

page 47 that the increases total \$924,160. I would like to say that before I was talking about monies not being enough and the drastic cut that were reflected. I know my hon. and learned friend did talk about approbating and reprobating but the point I want to make here is that in this austerity year in almost all, if not all, the other Ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture which we were discussing yesterday, much less money is being voted. The vote for the Administration of Justice which we just discussed, witness expenses and all the rest, all have been cut. And, instead of any appreciable cuts here, this Ministry shows nearly \$1 million dollars in increased votes. Take for example item (22), "Overseas Non-representational Staff, the last column shows an increase of \$394,994 and the legend says "Increase in staff.

The last speaker did refer to subhead 10, Rents, Rates, Insurance, Premiums etc. The legend says "Increases in Rentals; Establishment of New Mission." You will note again on page 47 subhead 38 Cost of Remittance and we see that that is an increase of \$114,436 and the legend says "Establishment of New Missions." Why is it that this Head has not contributed also in this austerity year? Why do we have to establish new Missions this year according to what the legend says? Why can't we wait until later when we can really afford it. Maybe we have to establish a Mission in Moscow. Why don't you take the staff from Washington and send it to Moscow? Maybe you would prefer to do that. The only problem about that is if we do take staff from Washington and send them to Moscow. I note in the revenue column that Moscow is not giving us any loans but if we look on page 8 under revenue we will see under external loans U.S.A.I.D., they are giving loans. U.S.A. is giving us \$4.25 million. I do not know how we will establish our priorities. I would like very seriously to ask why is it that this Ministry could not have contributed also to this austerity year.

On page 46, subhead 16, Expenses of Guyana Boundaries Commissions. This item is continually appearing. It is shown in the Approved Column 1976. In 1977 the same amount \$10,000, was voted. I note on page 44 of my copy of the 1976 Estimates that the hon. Minister had told me in 1975, when I asked whether these bodies were really active, that it was intended to further activate these Commissions in 1976. I did not read of any signs of this further

activation will the hon. Minister bring me and this honourable House up to date as to the activities of these Commissions. Did they meet in 1976 and will they meet in 1977?

Just to make a small point. I note under subhead 34, Contribution to International Commission of Jurists, on this same page 46, that nothing is intended to be voted here. Nothing is being asked for. Have we permanently stopped contributing to the International Commission of Jurists or is this only a temporary thing? I know we did invite them here. They did produce a report. We did publicly accept that report, so I would like to know what is the position.

The Children: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Wills: Cde. Speaker, I will answer these questions but will crave your indulgence to be patient with me, because as I run through all that Members said, I notice that they completely ignored the function of foreign Affairs, totally and completely. In that circumstances, it would be necessary for me to say something so people who make remarks like keeping up with the Joneses and nonsense of that kind can understand. Nonsense

The Speaker: I won't have you making that kind of remark. The Member is entitled to make her remarks and you are entitled to make your remarks but with propriety.

Cde. Wills: I therefore apologise for saying it was nonsense but I still feel it has no substance in fact. I understand from the Oxford Concise that that is the meaning of another word I used just now.

5.55 p.m.

Now, first of all, on the Boundary Commissions. Boundary Commissions are not ends in themselves, they are means to diplomatic ends. It depends on what you intend to do with them,

when you intend to do them, whether the circumstances are ripe for the utilization. There is nothing in vacuo. There is meeting of this committee down there. Why haven't you gone? A Boundary Commission is an instrument of diplomacy and therefore whether it is used or not used it must be taken in conjunction with the necessity to use it at a given time. I will say about one of them, right now, that we have been in contact with the Brazilians and we will be meeting the Brazilian Boundary Commission, the joint Commission, in March. A date has been set for that ins. No date has been set for the other two. And I am sure this House would prefer if that kind of decision-taking were left to the circumstances as they evolve rather than some abstract notion of "fix a date and go" and you don't know what you plan to say, what the circumstances are, how you evaluate and what have you.

On the general question of the block vote for the Ministry, I think I was told by one critic that he showed an appreciation, small though, and it certainly did not reflect, this is the criticism, the kind of austerity cut that one would expect in this year an austerity. That was the general tenor of the criticism.

First of all, in 1976 we opened a Mission in Cuba. Therefore, there was bound to be increased expenditure. Secondly, if the House agrees with me, as I see the concept of foreign affairs, they will see that in 1976 and 1977 we would need increased activity in foreign affairs, increased staff and therefore increased numbers of personnel being posted overseas with children requiring education and housing and what have you. One of the aspects of foreign affairs which I would like to stress is that the first defence of any country in our position is foreign affairs, aggression, wars, what have you, start in people's mind before they get to you and you have to go there and change it, and for the whole of 1976, I believe, the record of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in handling the threat of destabilization and dealing with enemies, hostile or potential, has been so good that I feel very strongly that the criticism of the amounts to the spent is not commensurate with an obligation and a sense of national duty. I feel that should be reflected in the amounts. **[Applause.]**

The increased cost of overseas living – come of the critics here, not some all, have travelled. I think it is an unfair thing, Cde. Chairman, to the people of Guyana not to let them know what the rate of inflation is like in the outside world and how hard it is to live outside if you have to live permanently or temporarily as officers. Rents, rates, education, they have all gone up. They have gone up all over the world and that has to be reflected in our Estimates.

It is not sufficient to suggest that there is some fixed things overseas, but you have inflation here and therefore why has this gone up there? You are just being wicked and squandering. That is not true, there is inflation outside. Even in the United States of America, which is supposed to be the big bastion of democracy in an economic sense, had inflation, last year; there was recession, economic dislocations and what have you. You would expect that to be reflected in our Estimates. There is no stand-still. The days when people believed that the earth was flat and things were standing still and all you had to do was to follow Newton and crawl two lines and do a two-dimensional or three-dimensional thing, have passed. That ended when Columbus set sail. We know that the world is round and revolves and we are interdependent and there is inflation on elsewhere.

I feel, Cde. Chairman, it is wrong and it is unfair to the Guyanese people to make any criticism which would imply that costs have not gone up overseas and therefore we don't have to make allowances for those costs in our Estimates. That is the strong point I want to make. And because of our defending concept of foreign affairs we are going to have to increase staff overseas, increase people in Cuba, in Brazil, Venezuela, Jamaica, all over the place. Increase staff is increased cost in the effort to defend the country. It must be reflected in the Estimates. I feel that very strongly, but, as I said, the difference is in how you see foreign affairs and how you see the whole concept of foreign affairs.

I am not sure whether there was a bouncer thrown in asking what new Missions will be opened this year.

The Chairman: There were two specific questions: whether we have any relations with Chile and what new Missions will be opened.

Cde. Wills: We have intentions. Understand that our constraints are financial and personnel ones. But we intend to open, first of all, in the Soviet Union and we intend to open in Nigeria. That is the limit of our intentions for the year because of financial constraints. Those are the intentions. That will cause increased costs and we will understand then why we have to have that kind of estimate. I don't think the criticisms really were as carping as they might have been. I think that most of the critics appreciate this might happen and therefore they expect to bring this out in this debate.

On the other question of the relations with Chile, the position is this: that there were relations with Chile and it was brought to my attention since I came into office, that somehow diplomatically that has not been removed. I took steps and those relationships have now been removed.

Cde. J. Jagan: May I ask the Minister an additional question? Precisely when were relations with Chile terminated?

Cde. Wills: That date is required. I will have to ask the critic to let me get it for her, but I can tell her that it was some time in November – December. I can't be exact, but it was brought to my attention and it was done. They know who brought it to my attention. I was not aware of it and I took steps. If you want national unity let us level with each other.

Head 16, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, \$11,039,568, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 49 and 50.

HEAD 17 – ATTORNEY GENERAL

Question proposed that sum of \$456,413 for Head 17, Attorney General stand part of the Estimates.

Head 17, Attorney General, \$456,413 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 51.

**HEAD 18 – ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICIAL RECEIVER**

Question proposed that the sum of 4120,830 for Head 18, Attorney General – Official Receiver stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Subhead 1, item (7), Assistant Trust Officer. I note here, sir, that the sum of \$3,936 was approved for 1976, but nothing is shown in the revised column for that. This leads me – I am talking about vacancies – to presume that the post is vacant.

Let me ask a general question. What vacancies are there and what is the position generally? I know that the Government brought legislation which we approved in this House and the legislation made it possible to appoint to the tops post either a solicitor or barrister. Before, by law, you could have appointed only a solicitor, but it was changed in this House. So what has been the position since that change? It must have bettered the situation as regards staffing. So what is the position now?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

6.05 p.m.

Cde. Wills: First of all, Cde. George, the State Solicitor is on leave and Cde. Graham is acting for him. The post of which the Member spoke is vacant. I did not follow the third question the Member might have asked but that might be my fault and not his. I do not think he really asked the question; he just asked one question and then made a sort of general statement.

The post of Trust Officer, item (6) is vacant and there are vacancies. I spoke already about the general nature of recruiting people for the Ministry of Justice, A.G.'s Chambers, Deeds Registry, it is a general difficulty we are having which we are looking at.

Head 18, Attorney General, Official Receiver - \$120,830 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 52.

HEAD 19, ATTORNEY GENERAL DEED REGISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of 4204,573 for Head 19, Attorney General Deeds Registry, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M. F. Singh: We have come to the last page in respect of this Minister and I would like to say that in December 1975 when we were -- [**Cde. Wills:** “The Ministry’s last page; that is not my last page”.] The last page in the Estimates in respect of what the Minister is dealing with. You see sir, even though we do have these difficulties what I would like to say is that in December, 1975, when we were discussing the 1976 estimates and I did not have the benefit of so many other people on this side of the House, I raised the question of the re-writing and/or repair of the records books in the Deeds Registry. I said that it was urgently required and the Minister undertook to go into the matter.

The point I want to make is that the Minister did in fact go into the matter and I would like here to publicly commend the Minister because immediately thereafter work commenced and I understand that this work is continuing and it was vitally needed because the records were in fact falling to pieces.

I think it is important for us to appreciate and to understand here that as far as this Minister is concerned if we do make a valid criticism and it is constructive, he does act on it and I would be the first to concede that there has been a salutary revolutionary change in the Ministry – [Applause]. Since the assumption of office of this hon. Minister. That is what I would like to say in closing. Even though invectives have been directed at me, nevertheless, I would be the first to concede that there has been a salutary change under this Minister and I commend him for this particular business of looking after the books in the registry.

The Chairman: May I thank you on behalf of the Minister and I think the applause was for the use of the word “revolutionary”. [Laughter]

Head 19, Attorney General, Deeds Registry - \$204,573 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: It is ten past six. We will proceed now with the Ministry of Labour.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, we had a discussion with the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and he agreed that we should break off at this point and return at 8 o’ clock to do the Ministry of Labour. We have no objections.

The Chairman: I am the one who is suffering all the time, having to listen to everything. Why should we bread off? We have twenty minutes more. Let us proceed.
Pages 188 and 189.

HEAD 78, MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Question proposed that the sum of 41,078,632 for Head 78, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Belgrave.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, page 188, items (14), (15) and (17). I would like to ask the Minister if he is satisfied with the performance in relation to the employment of the officers in this department taking into account the socialist goals and objectives of the Government and seeing that within 1975 and 1976 you have had the same staff arrangement, eight, fourteen and five, and taking into account the large number of disputes that you have had over the past year, 1976 and also taking into account those disputes that are unsolved at the moment because of the difficulty to get the officers from one area to the other and particularly some disputes that are now about two or three years old and unserved.

I make reference to a particular dispute that the Minister knows about in relation to an arrangement between a particular employer and some workers whom the Minister of Home Affairs knows namely some Port Policemen, who have been rejected by the Police Service Commission and also rejected by the Labour Ministry to be represented by the trade union movement who are ridiculously underpaid and who work under terrible conditions. This is to the knowledge of the Ministry; it is three years old and because of the inability of this particular department to service it, these matters are left pending.

I also take into account that the Minister should look at this question in relation to the spread-out areas where workers are now involved, particularly where the employees of this Ministry have to be hustling whenever a dispute arises. Does he feel that the staff arrangement for 1977 is adequate?

On item (20), Labour Research Officer, I would like to ask the Minister what work is being done by this Officer and if work is being done by this officer, has it been published? If it has not yet been published, I would like to ask the Minister if he is prepared to tell this honourable House how early the work of this Research Officer is to be published, taking into account the situation mentioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, inflation as it is. We must accept the fact that there is a lot of work to be done in the ground field where workers are concerned. Is it a fact the Ministry has knowledge that there is supposed to be a cry now with relation to the inadequate pay in relation to some Government employees? \$5.50 a day is still the minimum wage target. This officer who is supposed to be doing research should now be able to come up with something to solve these basic problems that exist where workers are concerned. If his Ministry has this knowledge or this information, I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell this honourable House how early this work will be published.

6.15 p.m.

Take page 189, subhead 10, Expenses, Manpower Research, can the Minister tell this honourable House what is the result of the last research? I see here voted in 1976, \$14,004, which was revised to \$6,000. I see here for 1977 a vote amounting to \$10,000 but the public does not get accurate reports in relation to what the money voted has been spent for. Can the Minister tell this honourable House that he is prepared to place before us a report in relation to the last manpower survey of 1976 and also can the Minister assure this House that if it is his intention in 1977 to carry out a similar survey, that a report will be made available as early as possible so one can know the state and position in relation to the working class, because we are in a confusing position.

In some cases it is said that the unemployment is 8 per cent and then a contradiction comes up a little later on and another Minister tells this honourable House unemployment is about 15 per cent. But we have been doing our own survey and we seem to be right in the figure that unemployment ranges between 25 and 30 per cent.

We would like the Minister to convince this honourable House that the survey carried out with the funds of the people is carried out in the right manner so that we would be able to have adequate information whenever this is being done.

Subhead 19, Workers Education Unit. This is a sore question and I would like to ask the Minister some questions, hoping that he can give some answers. In the Head for the Ministry of Education, there is a sum voted in the current expenditure for \$131,000 as a grant and then on the capital expenditure there is a vote for \$30,000. It says in the legend “for additional facilities”. I would like to call on the hon. Minister of Labour to examine particularly the Workers Education Unit in relation to the programme that is expected to be carried out particularly as the Ministry of Education is expected to make a grant of \$131,000.

I will ask the Minister is the Ministry of Education is prepared to work in co-ordination with other socialist bodies to ensure that the lecturers who are used in the Critchlow Labour College are in keeping with our socialist development. I should also like to ask the Minister to examine the textbooks that are used. I know as an actual fact that the Workers’ Education Unit has been upgraded with a few textbooks in relation to socialism but I would like to ask the Minister to examine the possibility of making the library available with all the relevant socialist documents because that unit is confused. And not only the unit is confused. I submit that the individuals who are there running this department are very much confused on what is socialism.

I hope that the Minister will take this point because I have heard several lectures, I have heard several lecturers, and several topics at the Critchlow Labour College. At one stage there was the Minister talking about the class struggle in a socialist country, and there was another lecturer giving the orientation of voluntary democratic socialism, a complete contradiction of what was being said by the Minister and what was being put over to the workers who attended that lecture. I would tell the Minister, because it is vitally important that if it is our intention to use an increased sum of \$10,000 on subhead 19 for the Ministry’s education unit, then it is obvious that it must be in keeping with the ideas, the aspirations of the Government, in relation

to socialism. If that cannot be done, I am convinced that we will be having a confused society and all in all we will not be able to meet that objective as anticipated.

I would like to ask the Minister also under that subhead if it is his intention to use on the panel of the Workers Education Unit other persons who are equipped with socialist knowledge because you cannot lecture on socialism unless you know the basics, unless you know the values, the principles in your mind, and I am satisfied that we can do a great deal if the Workers' Education Unit is used by lecturers who have a socialist orientation. Is the Minister satisfied that those lecturers used over the past year or two have socialist orientations? If the Minister is satisfied that this is so, I will ask him to re-examine the position. If the Minister is not satisfied, I can openly advise him that in the People's Progressive Party, its members have that orientation and they are prepared to make available those persons with the ability, the qualities, to lecture at the Critchlow Labor College on the topic of socialism.

Cde. Chairman, I made a little error back subhead 10. I would like to ask the Minister, because this is in keeping with pronouncements by the Prime Minister, if he is prepared to examine the manpower research programme. I did ask the question but I did not go in depth into it, to look at the aspects where workers in this country are badly underpaid. This manpower research can bring this out. Can he expedite some work in this field to ensure that come 1977 the minimum wage bracket will move from \$5.50 to \$10 per day

Cde. Dalchand: Page 189, subhead 14, Supervision of Weighing of canes on sugar Estates. Here Government is spending a large sum of money to pay cane scale supervisors. These people are employed to check the weight of cane supplied by workers and farmers to respective sugar factories. Sugar workers were able through their consistent struggle to have the right to elect weighers of their choice. The cane farmers throughout this country who contribute at least 12 per cent of sugar production are not being allowed this privilege. The Ministry of Labour has employed selected people to check the weights of farmers' cane and we find that these people are not acting in the interest of the farmers. I want to ask the Minister if he will tell

us how early he will correct this situation and allow the cane farmers of this country to elect cane scale weighers of their choice.

6.25 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, page 188, dealing with the Factories Division, subhead 1, items (24), (25), (26) and (27). It covers the Factories Officers. Would the hon. Minister tell us in view of the present situation which has been brought upon us by the reduction of the subsidy on flour and the subsequent increase in the price of bread – I presume that does have to do with this Minister as the price control officer has to check. There are questions coming up now if the weight is not correct according to the price. But that does not have to do with this Minister. What has to do with this Minister in the Factories Division is the checking of bakeries to see that they comply with the Factories Regulations. There are only four of these Factories Officers. I do not know if they are getting any help from the Labour Officers. But the complaint is that the bakeries, especially those that are not in the Georgetown area, the bakeries that are referred to by registered bakers as “Jerry” bakeries, have the advantage over the registered, well-known bakeries in Georgetown and maybe the big one in some of the country areas, whereby they are liable at any time to have the Factories Officers come in, and rightly too, to check to see that they are baking within the correct hours as prescribed by law. Big bakeries feel that it is unfair where these small bakeries are not complying with these regulations. They are breaking the law simply because the Ministry does not have enough officers to do the inspection and the recognized ones are being penalized. Could the Minister say whether he is aware of this condition and whether any steps are being taken to do anything about it.

Page 189, subhead 10, Expenses, Manpower Research. We have been asked to vote \$7,000 this year. Could the hon. Minister say – one of the previous speakers talked about

people being underpaid – what is going to be done to help domestic servants, whatever you care to call them, those who assist people in their homes with the cleaning and caring of children? We did have an investigation, the Campbell Committee. I have spoken about this before and I think the Minister told us that that report has been shelved long ago because it is not relevant now. Is anything being done about domestic help? Are these people getting any consideration? They are the most grossly under-paid workers in this country. I am not talking of those who work in the homes of the hon. Ministers and in homes like theirs. I am talking of exploitation where advantage is taken of these people paying them low wages. They accept the jobs because they can get no other type of work. Could the hon. Minister please tell us if anything has been done for this particular category of workers, to ensure that they receive a better standard of living?

I suggest that the Minister should talk with his friend, the hon. Minister of Finance. He cannot for obvious reasons, because of our financial position particularly in this austerity year, do anything to relieve the position of working married women who have their salaries added on to those of their husbands and thus are pushed into higher brackets. He cannot do anything for separate assessment for married women. I always bring this question up every year. One day we may get it. We cannot do it now because we do not have the money. Obviously, we have to collect more money by way of income tax. All these working women must have some kind of domestic help at home. They may not be in the category of Carnegie-trained, higher-paid domestic help, such as Ministers, Ambassadors, or people like that may have. But the ordinary shop assistant may need to have domestic help in her home so that she can go out to earn enough money to help, in this austerity year, to balanced the budget.

Could the hon. Minister not speak to my friend, the hon. Minister of Finance, and see if the salaries paid to the domestic help can be tax deductible? It may help the person concerned. It would not push it up into as high a bracket as happens now when the husband's and wife's salaries are assessed together it would be some sort of relief. Also, it could be a means whereby

domestic help could get a higher wage. Could the hon. Minister please let us have a few words on that?

The Chairman: Perhaps this is a good time to move the suspension.

Assembly resumed:

The Speaker: The Sitting of the House is suspended until 8 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 6.30 p.m.

8 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, I think you wanted to say something.

Cde. Ram Karran: I was about to ask the following question when you took the suspension this afternoon. May I ask the Minister first of all what vacancies exist in this Ministry as reflected on page 188. I refer to item (16) to ask the Minister what are the functions of this Productivity Officer.

May I turn over to the next page and identify subhead 9, Contribution to International Labour Organisation and ask the Minister if Government is signatory to all Conventions of the I.L.O. If not, which are those in abeyance and the reasons for not accepting them. May I refer to subhead 10, Expenses, Manpower Research, and ask the hon. Minister if under this subhead it

is proposed to establish the degree of unemployment and underemployment in the country? If not, what efforts are being made for these statistics to be brought up to date?

May I refer then to subhead 14, Supervision of Weighting of Canes on Sugar Estates? The amount of \$100,000 is being provided for Supervision of weighing of canes on Sugar Estates and allied to the question asked by my hon. Friend at the back, I wish to ask another question. First of all, is the sum re-imbursable from the sugar industry? Secondly I wish to reinforce the question asked by my friend: Does Government anticipate holding election with respect to the two supervisors, two of those representing the Government and those representing the farmers since all these people are engaged in an exercise in establishing the accuracy of weight from which the workers' pay packets can be jeopardised one way or another?

May I ask on subhead 19 what plans the Government has with respect to the Critchlow Labour College, whether it is proposed to reintroduce this grant which was there in 1975.

Cde. Fowler: Cde. Chairman, page 188, item (16) Productivity Officer, I would like to ask the Minister why only two Productivity Officers could serve the workers' participation system. Also, page 189, subhead 19. I would like to ask the Minister also what is the total grant given to the Critchlow Labour College and how many workers were trained by the Workers Education Unit in 1976 and in what fields.

8.05 p.m.

The Chairman: Cde. Carrington.

Cde. Carrington: Cde. Chairman, I must first say that all the questions asked are very constructive and in the interest of the workers. I am more than happy to answer these question. If I may take the last set of questions first.

Cde. Fowler would like to know, in the first place, how many workers were trained by the Education Unit of the Ministry of Labour. But if you will note the questions asked by other speakers on the Education Unit. I think you would see it is fair to take this opportunity to answer those questions in conjunction with Cde. Fowler's questions.

The Education Unit of the Ministry of Labour was set up mainly to supplement the work done by the Critchlow Labour College and is working in collaboration with the Critchlow Labour College, the Trades Union Congress and the unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. A Committee is formed for the specific purpose of seeing that the programme is in keeping with the wishes, policy and ideology of the Government and the Trade Union Congress. For the year 1976, we have trained 1,206 Trade Unionists and workers involved in industrial relations, political education as well as workers participation and social security. These workers are drawn from many trade unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. One of those trade unions is the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union which is able to benefit from the education programme of the Ministry of Labour. Two seminars were conducted from the G.A.W.U. and I may refer to the question of socialist education set out by the Ministry of Labour Education Unit.

Cde. Belgrave would like to know about the lecturers taking part in such lectures, seminars, discussions and Conferences. I am sure that the G.A.W.U. will give account of the two seminars we ran on their behalf. At those seminars, we the Leader of the Opposition lectured to the workers, as well as other trade unionists and myself and the Labour Division of the Ministry of Labour also lectured to those workers.

We are not specific on subjects because trade unionists from the various trade unions like G.A.W.U. take part in these seminars and they are free to select their own subjects depending upon the type of organization. At these seminars a number of political leaders from the People's National Congress address these workers from time to time. I am sure you will agree with me that once any leader from the P.N.C. addresses the workers they will be receiving socialist education.

The Education Unit will expand its work in 1977, as we intend to upgrade the level of training and education for workers. In all of this it is clear that the Government, by supplementing the T.U.C.'s programme, intends to bring the workers into their true position. On the question of workers' participation, not only do we have seminars on the subjects, on the philosophy of the subject but we have just organized a management training school for workers. We are of the view that it is worthless to send the workers to be members of Boards and to work in some schools without knowing the principles of management and the various practices of management. For that reason workers are given time off for training in management.

A question was asked by Cde. Fowler on the Critchlow Labour College and a similar question was asked by Cde. Ram Karran. The grant from the Ministry of Labour has been discontinued but this puts the Trades Union Congress and the Critchlow Labour College in a better position since that was just a grant and a stated amount. At the present moment, the College is completely financed by the Ministry of Education. The College is now in a position that it does not have any need to ask for funds from any other organization overseas or otherwise. It will get assistance from its affiliates but it is given the assurance that the Government is ready at all times to finance the entire programme at the Critchlow Labour College.

Now, if I may go on to the question of the cane scale supervisors, or if I may start with Cde. Belgrave's questions. In the first place he wanted to know whether the Ministry was adequately staffed. He questioned the number of officers on page 189. On 188 he questioned the position of the Wages Inspector; the Productivity Officer and other Labour Officers. He wanted me to say whether the staff is now adequate. Ministries of Labour, all over the world, will tell you that their staff is never adequate with an expanding economy, increase in population, increase in the work force. At all times it would be necessary to have more officers to see that there is justice done to the workers. But, for the time being, we feel that the staff is adequate in that we have increased the number of agricultural assessors.

Formerly when we had agricultural assessors on the sugar estates in an area where we get strikes and more industrial relations problems than any of the other industries; we had those officers zoned by districts or regions. Instead we have today a labour officer or an agricultural assessor on every estate to ensure not only that the workers can go to those officers to have their matters settled directly on the estates but from time to time they can settle disputes which would result in a strike. We have increased the officers in an area where the problem is greatest. Also some time ago, in 1975, we increased our staff by employing 5 wages inspectors. Formerly, the inspection of wages was done by the Labour Officers and we found that these officers should be mainly concentrating on industrial relations matters, settling disputes, conciliation and arbitration and we found it very difficult at times for them to handle questions of wages inspection.

8.15 p.m.

If I may explain the purpose of the wages inspection as referred to by Cde. DaSilva. That is to ensure that orders set out by the various Wages Councils are carried out by the employers. So their job is to inspect the different wages back and salaries for workers in industry. Also it is their job to assist the factories inspector referred to by the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva in such places as the bakeries. We increased our staff over the past two years mainly because we felt that it was inadequate. I would say that the staff at the Ministry of Labour at the present moment is adequate taking into consideration the need for stringencies in this austerity year in Guyana.

The hon. Member also asked a question about the Manpower Division. He wanted to know what the research officer was doing, whether he was preparing reports on statistics on employment and where are those reports. This Officer heads the Manpower Division of the Ministry of Labour and is not only concerned with unemployment or employment statistics. His job is to look at wages trends through the collective bargaining machinery, to see how the unions negotiate and in what areas of negotiations. We do carry out manpower surveys from time to

time, but a national manpower survey – the last one was done by Dr. Francis – would take quite a lot of time and now we are trying to update it.

The manpower surveys I am talking about is with respect to various industries, for instance, the bauxite industry, the sugar industry, perhaps the transport industry or the rice industry, there will be surveys on the manpower requirements in the various industries. There will be also manpower surveys for the purpose of skills.

The work of this Section of the Ministry is not merely to find out about employment or underemployment situation. Many of these facts and figures, the analyses are found in our annual reports which are put on the Table in Parliament from time to time for the purpose of Members of Parliament and I am sure that if the Member goes to the Ministry of Labour he would see many of those reports as presented by this particular Division. I would agree just the same that as in other Ministries and in other countries there are shortages of certain specialized workers, certain skills, mainly in the field of economics. This Section of the Ministry has for some time not been having enough economists and statisticians. Just the same, the work is being carried out by those who are there to the satisfaction of the trade unions which come from time to time for figures on negotiations, on collective bargaining and on different approaches to their work in the trade union field.

If I may go back to the question of the Critchlow Labour College and the question of textbooks. As you know, Cde. Belgrave has been supplying me with a lot of books from Russia and other socialist countries. I take them from time to time. What we need to do is not to accept books from the United States of America, from the U.S.S.R., Bulgaria or Yugoslavia. What we are doing as part of the exercise of the Education Department of the Ministry of Labour is to examine the different discussions and workshops and we are now preparing textbooks to suit the Guyana situation. As you know we are in a transition and we are still using the type of Western collective bargaining system; we shall have to find a way of introducing the socialist approach to the collective bargaining gradually by examining what is taking place in other

countries to see what is best suited for Guyana. That is our approach to that matter. We are not taking things, lock, stock and barrel here, we want things suited to the Guyanese situation.

Cde. Ram Karran, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised some question on cane-scale supervisor and so did the other Member on the Back bench. This is a question which always comes up at Estimates time and I think it would be necessary for me to spend some time going back into history. There was a time in the sugar industry when the workers complained to the Ministry of Labour that they needed to have someone check the weights of their canes on the scales. We realized that this was not only in their interest but in the interest of the industry. A number of strikes over the years were called mainly because of defective scales. The unions could not find a representative, they could not pay for representatives. Both the G.A.W.U. attempted to do this, but they did not have the funds and so the Ministry of Labour again come to the rescue of the workers and appointed cane-scale supervisors. At that time the industry was not ours, so we couldn't dictate to the industry. Therefore the Government paid cane-scale supervisors, just eleven of them. They had to work around the clock, they were appointed by the Government and they were on duty all the time. In other words, they could be called from their homes any time in the night to check the scales. We found that this was not in the best interest of the workers. These workers made sacrifices during that period. *[Interruption.]* They were appointed, I said, by the Government and paid by the Government.

Then we decided to improve on the situation because the industry works twenty-four hours and we thought it best that we should have a worker or a representative on every shift. But you would agree that it would have been unfair at that time to dismiss the appointed representatives of the Government who were representing the workers and were satisfied with that situation, so we kept them on and we had election for eleven cane-scale supervisors of which the G.A.W.U. won all eleven, defeating the M.P.C.A. They accepted that.

The other question was cane-scale representatives for the peasant cane farmers who the Government feels also have a right to representation on the scale. The only organization we

knew then that had any authority or any connection with the peasant cane farmers was the National Cane Farming Committee appointed by the Government. The Ministry of Labour therefore asked that Committees to either select, elect, or appoint representatives of the peasant cane farming and so all the representatives came from that body and are still coming from that body. That is the composition of the groupings of representation on the estates for the cane-scale supervisors.

8.25 p.m.

I am getting a request from the G.A.W.U. for a change in the system but we know the system has been working well, the proof is in the pudding. The number of strikes on the estates for the purpose of scales has reduced almost to nil. [Cde. Ram Karran: “You want strikes?”] We do not like to be threatened. The intention of this Government as well as the Ministry of Labour is to see that there is peace in the industry and threats do not help the situation. We can discuss the question when the time arrives and if it is necessary we can see what accommodation can be made in the situation but the Member needs not threaten us now about strikes, we have become accustomed to strikes. For strikes do not only hurt the Government, they do not only hurt the industry, but they also hurt the workers.

Cde. Chairman, if I may turn to the question asked by the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva in respect of the bakeries, there are inspections of the bakeries from time to time. The Regulation provide, if I am correct, that the Police should make these inspections. We are setting out now to amend that law where it would be mainly the Ministry of Labour to make those inspections. Up to now we are still trying to find out why – we have even read some of the history dating back to Critchlow to find out why the Police came into this situation of inspecting bakeries. We hope to change this situation. We are making inspections but some time ago there were quite a number of meetings of the Bakeries’ Association and these very Gerry men with regard to their situation. We do not want to put them out of work but I agree that they are undercutting the

other bakeries. So, we tried to see if we can get the Association and the Gerries together to work out some system.

The Guyana Labour Union represents the majority of workers in bakeries and that union has also been involved in these discussions but over the past months representatives of the Bakery Association have been busily engaged in flour and the price of bread etc. so I have not been hearing much from hem. But we can look at this situation.

On the question of domestics, and the Campbell Committee Report – this question was asked by Cde. Jagan – we are very concerned about the domestics and it is because of our concern that the Campbell Report was not shelved. It had to be carefully examined because it was the view of many at that time that the wages and conditions recommended by the Campbell Committee would have put many a domestic out of work because we felt then that many civil servants and many officers who employed domestics would have preferred than to take a snack to work or buy a meal in town and they and their wives could go home in the evening and cook a meal as is done in other countries and we to avoid this situation. We had to have it carefully examined.

A similar situation happened in Jamaica and they had problems with the minimum wage for domestics and so we referred that report to an advisory committee appointed by the Government, a committee appointed specifically to look into the conditions of work of women and we thought that they were the best body to examine the Campbell Committee Report.

They have examined it and what we discover is that further recommendations required further legal examination again because when we thought we could have implemented the conditions just by orders, our legal advisers advised us that it will have to come to Parliament. So, they are preparing the papers on the advice of our legal and technical advisor in the Ministry to present it at some stage to Parliament. It is not that the domestics are forgotten, they are very

much in the mind of the government and I do not think that any other Government has paid more attention to the affairs of women than this Government over the past years. That is a fact.

Cde. Ram Karran would like to know if there are any vacancies. There are vacancies. Our Chief Labour Officer has just resigned and so there is a vacancy to be taken up by the successor. There is a vacancy for the Chief Employment and Productivity Officer and there is someone acting already in his place. You will agree that just as in any other Ministries, from time to time there is retirement but I would say generally there is not a large number of vacancies in the Ministry at the present moment. There are vacancies in other sections but not in the Labour Division to the extent where it would interfere with the work. Also, we have to look at increasing the staff and vacancies because, as the hon. Member knows, the Labour Code Commission is asking a careful examination of the industrial relations system in Guyana and what they will come out with depends upon the discussions taking place there. The People's Progressive Party is represented there, also T.U.C., C.A.G.I., the People's National Congress and the Ministry of Labour. Perhaps when they come out with their recommendation, it may require more officers, it may require less, because part of the terms of reference of the Labour Code Commission is the establishment of an Industrial Court. As is known, in most socialist countries, there are industrial Courts and we hope to have an industrial court at some future date in Guyana to see that there is justice for the workers. The Labour Code Commission's work will determine whether we will have more officers. We will have a code that will be easily serviced by the workers themselves and so avoid intervention by the Ministry of Labour because we do not like to intervene; we should only be called. Once management and workers can get along in any industry, the Ministry of Labour is doing its job.

Now, on the question of the Productivity Officer, the Member would like to know who are the Productivity Officers and what they are doing. Cde. Fowler did ask the same question; why only two? Well, workers' participation in Guyana is new as in many other parts of the world. It is a new dimension, it is a new perspective for industrial relations and so we feel at this stage we need not increase this particular section with too many officers. Their job is just

like that of the Labour Officers or the Factory Inspectors – to service the workers' participation system, to train and to see that the meetings and discussions at various levels of industry are carried out. In other works, we are not leaving it to industry to run the system of worker participation but these officers will go from industry to industry or from concern to concern and check on the minutes, discussions, to ensure that the system is working.

These workers also teach management at the Critchlow Labour College and you can note their designation "Productivity". That is what workers' participation is mainly about – to get higher production and productivity because if the workers want more wages and better conditions, there is one sure way of making such demands and that is by increasing the level of production and productivity and so that is what these Productivity Officers are presently doing. We intend to increase the numbers; we have just asked GUYSTAC to appoint their counterpart in GUYSTAC to look at workers' participation in GUYSTAC.

On I.L.O. Conventions, I would say, all of them or most of the important I.L.O. conventions have been ratified by the Ministry of Labour. There are now three which will come to Parliament very shortly and we are examining them. We are now examining the conventions on seamen. I am not in a position to say exactly those Conventions that are outstanding but we have a very good record. [A comrade: "Plantation workers"?] Yes, that is one of the Conventions that we are presently examining. Also the Seafarers Convention, Labour Inspection, and Agriculture.

8.35 p.m.

I think I answered the question on unemployment statistics. This particular section is not only there to provide statistics on unemployment. An examination is presently being made because we are satisfied that the unemployment situation has changed. Our report showed 12 per cent about 12 months ago, but since then we have decided to carry out another survey, and I will say why. In some areas we cannot find people to work, there is a shortage of skills, there is

a shortage of even weeders, scythe men, and shovel men. You cannot get carpenters; you cannot get mechanics; you cannot get plumbers. **[Interruption]** If you can get me a hundred now, I will find jobs for them. **[Interruption]**

The Development Programme has just absorbed all the skills. This is a fact and so we are determined now to carry out another survey because we are satisfied from a bare examination that unemployment is right down to about 6 to 7 per cent. One can see in the press every day that private individuals are advertising for people to work and so this survey would show exactly the position. We want to know because there are many other programme to go and we would be happy to know the facts in order to know in what direction we should go.

I did cover for Cde. Ram Karran the question of selections of the cane-scale supervisors and he wanted to know whether the money paid by the Government to cane-scale supervisors is reimbursable by Guysuco. Yes, it is reimbursable. We get back the money. He also wanted to know about the Critchlow Labour College. As you know, we have very good relations with the T.U.C. There is no other Government in the Caribbean, I would say, that has as good relations with the central T.U.C. as this Government, because they are satisfied we are working for the same goals, the same objectives. We are working in the interest of the workers, so do not be surprised if you see us walking arm-in-arm because we are working towards the same goals. As a result, we have decided to finance the Critchlow Labour College and it is for the T.U.C. – to give an idea of the kind of independence and autonomy, not as in the other countries – it is for the T.U.C. to decide what will be the kind of structure, what will be the kind of organization for the Critchlow Labour College now that the Government is financing the college outright. I hope I have answered most of the questions.

Cde. J. Jagan: Could I ask a supplementary question arising out of what the Minister said? Could I ask the Minister the names of the members who made up the advisory committee on domestics, the committee that was appointed after the Campbell Committee? When did this Committee report, and is this report available to this House?

Cde. Belgrave: I did ask the question in relation to the possibility of legislation concerning the minimum wage bracket. I thought I would have heard the Minister making mention of that.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Carrington: On the Campbell Report and the Committee appointed, it was not a committee appointed to look into that question specifically. I said earlier it is an advisory committee which is part of CASWIG.

The Chairman: What Cde. Jagan asked is if you could give her the names of the members of that committee and say whether the Report has been submitted.

Cde. Carrington: I am in no position at this time to give the names of the members of the Committee. I can supply that in writing to the member. The People's Progressive Party was invited to serve on CASWIG and this Committee is advisory to CASWIG as well as to the Government. It was appointed as a part of CASWIG. Their job is not just to look at the Campbell report but to look at conditions generally for women. They visit the estates from time to time. I am sure the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva paid some visits with that very Committee because she is a member of that Committee; they visit various industries to see the conditions under which women work and that is the committee the Campbell report was referred to. Their report to the Ministry of Labour I would say at this time is not for public consumption since the law officers are still examining their recommendations further, but as soon as we complete that we will be bringing it to Parliament.

On the question of a minimum wage being made law, this would also be a question to be discussed with the trade unions. As I said before, we have very good relations with the trade unions. Some of the trade unions have tabled a Motion, and when the Motion comes to us we will treat with it accordingly. As I said, we are waiting for the T.U.C. to say what they want. I

am not talking about the amount. They have said the minimum wage should be \$10. You asked the question of making the minimum wage law. That is another question.

Right now the Government is paying \$5.50 and there are many other concerns that are paying less than \$5.50 because there isn't a law, but when you decide to make the law you have to carefully examine that because there are minimum wages in many industries and for other categories of workers prescribed by the various wages councils. Those are minimum wages for particular industries, for particular categories of workers. That is law. We have made those law and most of those minimum wages set by Wages Councils are in keeping with the Government's minimum wage. The T.U.C. must make the necessary recommendations. The trade unions must bargain collectively. If we decide upon a minimum wage, many times the minimum wage becomes the maximum. **[Interruption]** The point is that any discussion on a minimum would not be decided by the Government. It would be decided by the Government and the T.U.C. when the time comes because we do not want them to say we are putting them in a strait jacket. **[Interruption]** We are not talking about the amount.

The Chairman: Cde. Carrington, you have made that point already.

Head 78, Ministry of Labour and Social Security - \$1.078.632 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

8.45 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 190.

**HEAD 79 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY
EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE SERVICE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$93,766 for Head 79, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Employment Exchange, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, in relation to this department, I will deal with items (1), (2) and (3) as one. A lot of malpractices have been reported in relation to this Employment Exchange Department. Persons who attend the Exchange for employment are discriminated against. One report which met me is that a sum of money was asked for in relation to a particular job that a person had requested. If the Minister is aware of these practices, could I ask him what action he is contemplating to take in that particular department? If he is not aware of it, would the Minister assure this honourable House that he will investigate this department.

This is the only area where workers who are unemployed seek the necessary assistance for work. They attend the Labour Exchange Department several days. Some consider that they have been wasting money coming from different parts of the country areas to get their cards stamped and also to see if work is available to them over a number of months, and they have been doing this in vain. It appears to me from the Report and the attitude at the department that this Report is accurate. I just asked the minister is he is not aware of it to investigate and ensure that such a department is pure and gives the worker the opportunity so that he can attend there and, if work is available, that he will be able to seek that employment without being coerced into paying sums of money out of his pocket so as to obtain employment.

Cde. Ram Karran: I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he can explain the action of an organization called the W.R.S.M. which had recently been reported in the newspapers.

The Chairman: Which subhead or item?

Cde. Ram Karran: I am speaking on the Employment Exchange Service.

The Chairman: There is no such item. Please attract my attention to it.

Cde. Ram Karran: Subhead 1. (1) Manager, Employment Exchange. The Manager of the Employment Exchange, I assume, is responsible for the recruitment of Labour. It has been drawn to my attention that an organization which is known as the W.R.S.M. has been used in recruiting labour for Government Departments. If that is so, perhaps the Government might decide, now that it is drawn to its attention, to scrap this department if we have competing services offered – I do not know under what conditions – by other organizations.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, I do not think that has any relevance to what we are discussing.

Cde. Fowler: Cde. Chairman, page 190, subhead 4, Purchase of Seamen's Identification Documents. I would like to ask the Minister what is the position of the Seamen's school and the issue of Seamen's Identification Documents.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Carrington: Cde. Chairman, on the question of malpractices raised by Cde. Belgrave on the other side of the House, it is a fact that in any system you find some good workers and you find some bad workers. I am satisfied, as Minister, that all of the officers at the Employment Exchange, so far as my knowledge goes, are honest and hard working and I am prepared to defend them anywhere until it can be proven otherwise. If Cde. Belgrave can prove me otherwise by submitting the names of the persons, the time and the date where these persons offered money, and it can be proved, I give this House the assurance that I would advise the Public Service Ministry to take the necessary action. If the absence of such information or facts, I deem every officer at the Ministry of Labour to be honest and hard-working.

I do not know anything about the W.R.S.M recruiting. One of the things I know that you may be mistaken about is the question of mobilization. Every arm of the People's National Congress is involved in the mobilization of the people of Guyana. The hon. Member may be

mistaken. I wonder if Members know what is the meaning of mobilization. It means to get people together for productive purposes. So the hon. Member may be mistaken. They do not recruit anybody. The W.R.S.M. is a Revolutionary Women's Organisation to mobilise women.

On the question of the Seamen's School, this is a new section of the Ministry and it is intended to avoid discrimination in the employment of seamen, recruitment, placement, to ensure that they are certified and qualified in other words. They have their certificates, whether they are A.B.s or ordinary seamen or boatswains but the issuing of the identification certificate will be done shortly. This is a new system because seamen, in addition to their passports, in keeping with international convention, should be issued with a seamen's certificate. They are all prepared, they were all vetted by the legal officers and the whole system will be put into operation by the next two months.

Head 79, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Employment Exchange Service - \$93,766 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 191.

HEAD 80 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,447,435 for Head 80, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Social Assistance, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to speak specifically under subhead 5, Old Age Pensions, subhead 6 Public Assistance and subhead 7, Grants to Religious and Charitable Organisations. Will the Minister kindly indicate to this House when it is proposed to reduce the means test or to increase the means test? It depends on how you look at it so that it will take in the people he had anticipated when he mentioned this to the T.U.C. conference some time ago, that is in

September last year. I would like to ask the hon. Minister what action he proposed to take, possibly under subhead 6, Public Assistance to augment the princely sum of between \$5 and \$7 that is given to workers who retire at age 60, who are told that they must wait until they reach the age of 65 before they can draw their pensions under the N.I.S. Is it Government's intention to improve on these amounts, namely, \$5 and \$7 a week so that these people may be able to continue living until they attain the age of 65? Alternatively, will the Minister say how early legislation will be enacted to reduce this age to 60 so that contributors to N.I.S. might be able to obtain some reasonable sum after resignation or retirement?

8.55 p.m.

The Chairman: Of course Cde. Ram Karran you know in Parliament the age is 40.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am very grateful to your Honour for reminding me. Perhaps the hon. Minister will think in terms of reducing it to below that.

May I ask the hon. Minister if he will name the organizations listed in subhead 7, Grants to Religious and Charitable Organisations that share the sum of \$52,800 and if he will indicate the amounts allotted to each of them.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to speak on subheads 5, 6 and 8, Social Rehabilitation. Some of the questions regarding subhead 5, Old Age Pension were raised by the hon. member Mr. Ram Karran. We are very interested to know when the Minister will reduce the qualifying age from 65 to 60. Comments were made at the 23rd Delegates Conference of the Trades Union Congress in September last year the Minister talked about free travel on all government ferries and transport. Now it is time for the Minister to answer. I

think it was the hon. Prime Minister who spoke about the issuing of free passes for the ferry for old age pensioners.

I noticed the publication that appeared on the ferry but no reference was made to this. Could the Minister tell us if anything is being done about this. What is going to happen with regard to the bus service? Last year I helped some old people to fill forms out for the passes on the bus services. Could the Minister tell us how soon it is hoped to bring this into effect?

Cde. Ram Karran dealt with Social Assistance. We had the hon. Member Mrs. Bynoe talking about women and the removal of the stigma of illegitimacy, we had the State Paper on Women when we talked about common law husbands and wives. As it stands now the means test is \$32 for a couple. They must be legally married. What happens to a couple who are not legally married, a couple living together as common law man and wife? Do they get any assistance? Do they have to comply with this law to get the \$32.00 It states that they must be legally married. In this day and age when we are trying to be more realistic regarding the general conditions that exist in our society – we are not condoning immorality or anything like that – but a fact is a fact and we have to fact facts. We want to know what consideration is being given to these people?

The other question is under subhead 8 dealing with social rehabilitation for which we have been asked to vote the usual \$60,500. I believe this is, or was, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Dorothy Bailey. I am not sure if she is still the chairman because she has not been very well as everyone knows. What has happened with social rehabilitation? Could the Minister tell us something about this? What progress is being made for social rehabilitation and what is being done particularly for our elder citizens like the people at the Uncle Eddie's Home. For example, we are going to have a home at Beterverwagting. What is being done about these people? They may be old but it does not mean that they are dotish and stupid or that they cannot contribute. We need every Guyanese to help to build our nation.

What is being done with these older citizens? How can they contribute to the advancement of the development of Guyana? In this context I have asked before - maybe I will be allowed just a little leeway to put it over again. Maybe it is not strictly for the Minister of Labour. We have many services in Guyana like the Lions, Rotarians, St. John's, the Red Cross. What are we doing to make the most of our handicapped people? To utilize what skills they have, apart from contributing to the National effort, would be good for them. They are earning a living.

From remarks I heard last Christmas maybe we will not have any toys this Christmas. Last Christmas high prices were asked by those who sold toys they had in stock from the year before and high prices were also charged for toys made by organizations sponsored by the Small Industries Corporation. I do not know how people could afford toys for their children. God alone Knows. Can we do anything through the social rehabilitation organization to get people in cottage industries in their homes making toys in keeping with the pockets of the people who are going to buy them?

Something should be done to see that the mark-up is reasonable. They talk about the mark-up of the capitalist sharks. What about the mark-up of the people sponsored by the small Industries Corporation. The mark-up is very high. I saw a silly little duck about 6 or 8 inches long made from a piece of wood. The outline of the duck, with a nose and an eye and a bit of paint on it was selling for \$3.50. It could not have cost all that even with the store's mark up and the materials and labour. What are they doing to see that people have social rehabilitation? That can be one of their fields of operation. Now is the time to think what we are going to do. When Christmas comes, regardless of what we say about de-emphasising Christmas, Guyanese of all parties all colours and all religious persuasions still go for Christmas. We will never de-emphasise Christmas.

Cde Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 5, 6, 7 and 8. Subhead 5, Old Age Pensions. I want to call on the Minister to reduce the age for old age pension from 65 to 60. The Minister is

not without experience of old working people, people who have retired. When they reach the age of 60 and thereabout they are incapable of doing anything and for them to wait until they are 65 it becomes possible that they will die before they reach the qualifying age of 65.

The second point I wish to make is that the Local Board of Guardians were appointed by the Minister some time last year and names were published in the Official Gazette. In frequent meetings of the majority of these Boards, one has to understand how Social Assistance is given. First and foremost in the rural areas – and I have visited particularly the West Coast Berbice, I have taken the names of a number of old people who have applied. I went to the office, I collected forms and I helped those who did not know where to collect forms and how to apply. When a person reaches the age of 65 he has to apply. The form has to be delivered to a single officer who is stationed in that area. What I have found from my travels throughout this country is that the public can hardly find out when and where the officer can be found. Generally, the officer is supposed to be stationed at the office of the district Commissioners. But even to find the officer in each of those offices is extremely difficult. I have got names of some of the officers who cannot be found. I will tell the Minister privately. I don't want to name any of them here.

The application is put in; the office has to investigate then report; he takes that report back to the local Board of Guardians and if it is in Georgetown they report to the Commissioners who function for Georgetown. They have a little more jurisdiction than those in the rural areas. I have found people who have applied and who have reached the age long before the date of application, and on December 23 when I spoke to those people from the West Coast Berbice – Blairmont, Sir James, Bath Settlement – they said their applications has not been investigated because no Social Assistance officer spoke to them. And this is the complaint throughout the country.

9.05 p.m.

What is worse is that they have put in their applications, every month they have to report to the centres of payment. When they go there, this is how it goes, “Chief, you bring the back?” “Come back next month.” I have spoken to people and I am willing to produce evidence to the Minister of Labour, because I want him to look very sympathetically at these cases where the people have been going month after month without being told if their applications have been approved or not.

Having called for the reduction of the age to 60, I want to propose the reconstitution of all the Local Boards of Guardians throughout the country. This is a social service, and it ought to be non-political in every sense of the word, and persons who have served over the years in the social field, be they P.N.C., P.P.P. or U.F. or even if they belong to no political party, those persons should be given an opportunity to serve in those social services. In fact we know of past commissioners who deal with these types of matters in Georgetown. We know the number of people. I myself served for one term and we know what is involved, and we know what the laws are.

What the Minister has to bear in mind is that the laws which govern both social assistance and old age pensions, are older than those of us, far older, and if you are talking about something colonial, those two should be scrapped and our Parliamentary Counsel be called upon to frame new legislation. When you look at the power of the Chairman you can see that that power was legislated for people not in our time and in our era but for people in those periods that were colonially oriented. One man does what he wishes and what he wants. The whole system cannot function properly because the Chairman is compelled in Georgetown to approve of all payments by signature. And what is worse he himself does not investigate them, he has to act on a list supplied to him by the particular officer. That person used to be the Chief Social Assistance Officer. So you can see the problem that exists in this area.

The means test. Only recently, I heard, it might have been published, but I have not seen much publicity on an increase of the means test. I think it is from \$16 to \$35 to be specific. My first reaction and the reaction of the People's Progressive Party is that we are against the means test. This is our first reaction, there should be no means test at all. People live to an age and they are entitled to it. There are one or two to be old people who are very wealthy. I am sure they will not apply. And even if people who owned houses and large areas of land, and have brought themselves down, they have degenerated to that level, the Board or Committee would be justified to reject those applications. My first reaction would be to abolish the means test completely. But if the Government is inclined at this stage to place a means test, \$35, the Minister will agree, is far too small.

This is not an appeal that started tonight, this appeal has been going on for years, I think it is time that these people enjoy a happy life. I remember reading in the Press where the beggars have formed an association in Trinidad. I am not talking about beggars, I am talking about people who have served whether in sugar, bauxite, or in various other fields, don't have any advocates, and those of us who make up this Parliament, everyone of us ought to become the advocates of these poor, destitute, virtually dispossessed people, in our community. I want very strongly to appeal on their behalf and if we need reorientation of people I think we need to get those social assistance officers – I am not going to bother with the administrative staff in Georgetown – those who are working in the country areas, to reorient them very quickly. They are charged of discrimination of all types. I am not saying that these charges are justified but they can be investigated. All sorts of charges are made against them. I want to avoid that type of contribution because I want Members to look at this matter with sympathy for the people concerned.

I want in contributing and in appealing for our old, our destitute, that the Minister tell us tonight what plans the Government has for the resisting of the Palms. I am sure that there is some thought in this direction and that the Government was to find a new site. We do not want only to lock them up in the Palms. I am sure the Prime Minister would want to move to that

point when those who are in the Palms will not go out every Friday begging. Most of them do that. We want to get beggars off the streets and if we are not in a position at the moment to tackle the problems in totality, at least we can offer care to those who have been admitted to the Palms by the Board so that they will reach a point of some sufficiency where they do not have to go out on Friday mornings and beg on the streets. We must move, if we are pursuing socialism, to remove beggars off the streets. We can start with those who are occupying the Palms.

Cde. Chairman, the amount given to the people is not much, I think they get about \$15.50 as old age pension if I am right. That is not enough. So, first of all, you have a means test barrier, and secondly, you have a small sum. It means that these people will have to live on that small amount. I understand the concept of aiding. I am not telling the Government that it will have to finance them completely, but what I am saying is even taking it in that sense, that sum is too small. So I am not telling you to do that now but you can reduce the age and then move subsequently to provide more in the Estimates whereby they can be given more than the present sum received both for social assistance and old age pension.

Social assistance, the sum I think is about \$6.50. That sum is also small, and needs to be reviewed. But, Cde. Chairman, what is worse is that area is that some people who need social assistance do not get it; these are the people who are in prison. I understand the practice is that you have to be there for a certain period before you are entitled to apply. I wonder if at this time of our development we are going to consider that that again is not the making of this Government, that is the making of the colonial Government. If the sentence is a three-month or six-month period you are not entitled, you cannot apply. The family punishes. We cannot take that position now because children have no right to punish. The people are in Prison and their wives apply for social assistance. We do not want them to be part of the delinquent problems that we have already but we want to tell them that society needs them, the community needs them and we must move to aid and help them.

9.15 p.m.

I have got an example where a man had one hand and his application – he does not fall under the Old Age Pension Ordinance. He applied for social assistance and his application was recommended by the district doctor, the G.M.O. of West Coast Berbice. I have the comrade's name – and up to when I spoke to him in the latter part of December, he was not told anything and his application was not approved. As far as he is concerned, there was no communication.

In winding up these thoughts that I want to put very effectively to the Government through the Cde. Minister of Labour and Social Security, I want to ask him that time and places where these officers can be found should be announced regularly on the radio and published in the Press. Secondly, when an application is received, whether for old age pensions or social assistance, that application should be expedited and thirdly the applicant ought to be written to, informing him or her that the application has been approved or has not been approved. They should discontinue this practice of having the people go every month to see whether their applications have been approved or not. This is so at almost every place.

If you take the Community Centre where the Chronicle Steel Bank is in Campbellville – not very far from where I live – I have spoken to the people who have been paying as recent as today. But more than that, I think all these centres for payment should be provided with security on the day of payment, particularly at Campbellville. Those old people, when they are paid, are fearful to walk out from that point to Sheriff Street to get a vehicles or to go into Campbellville or wherever they live around that area. I have not seen any to date and I think there are payments there. I am sure there is no security. I want to urge all these points in the interest of these old people who need help. I think it is our duty to help them and I want to ask the Minister to look at this matter with sympathy and concern.

The Chairman: Cde. Fowler.

Cde. Fowler: Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister under subhead 8, Social Rehabilitation, why was the Harris Committee appointed to investigate the Social Assistance Department? When will the Committee submit its report and is it concerned with free travel for pensioners and a better system of payment for social assistance and pension. Also, Cde. Chairman, I would like the Minister to say how much rehabilitation work was done in 1976.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Carrington: Cde. Chairman, earlier I had said that the questions asked in the Labour Division were constructive and I would say that the questions asked in the Social Security Division of the Ministry have also been constructive. I want to thank the Member first for bringing a number of these matters to my attention. I know he has been very interested in this particular field for many years but I want to say he is a bit out of touch in some respects as shown by his questions this evening. I would like to refer him to the question asked by Cde. Fowler that there is a committee appointed, headed by Cde. Harris of the Legal Department. The purpose of that committee is to investigate and to take evidence from organizations or individuals for the sole purpose of improving the system of payment, the levels structure of the Social Assistance Division of the Ministry of Labour. Like the comrade, we are not happy; we feel that there should be and there could be improvement in the system. I think the comrade knows as a fact too that there are certain constraints at times when the Government or a Minister or the Ministry want to do certain things.

Some time ago, there was a recommendation from the Ministry that we should discontinue the payment of social assistance in its present form; that we should pay through the banks or Post Offices where the recipients can collect their money at their convenience. This was not possible then because both the Post Office and the banks said they did not have staff and the necessary organization to take care of this large monthly payment. Since we have established the Co-operative Bank, we feel that it is opportune now for us to appoint the

Committee and so we have the Harris Committee which is investigating and every Member here is free to go before the Committee and make suggestions and recommendations.

If I may say, in the first place, though the pension which is now \$15 throughout the country is low and social Assistance can be considered as low, over the past two years, this government made two increases in the old age pensions and Social Assistance. We are now placing emphasis not so much on social assistance but on rehabilitation. This is a new Division of our Social Security Division. I will come to the Social Assistance Officers later on. We have found that many people prefer to be given rehabilitation rather than Social Assistance. You give them 415 and it does not really help. We have given them rehabilitation of up to \$500 to people to put them back on their farms, in their little businesses. Carpenters who do not have tools and farmers who do not have equipment, have been given assistance. So, we have found that the Rehabilitation section of the Ministry has been contributing immensely to the Social Security in this particular area.

Just the same, we have increased the means test and this is in keeping with a promise we have made to T.U.C. but, still, we are not satisfied about the situation and so this Committee is investigating throughout the entire country: the North West, Berbice, throughout the entire country, and they usually have meetings in Georgetown every Saturday morning so members of the public can go to the Committee.

We have made referenced to the Palms and what we hope to do about the Palms to replace it. The Palms is now a Geriatric Hospital; it is no longer “The Palms”. It does not really take care of the aged; it takes care of sick old people and so it is now a hospital. The Ministry of Labour was never satisfied with “The Palms” as a home for the aged and so we have embarked on a programme of setting up a number of homes throughout the country. We have in mind the most modern types of homes, similar to that of Uncle Eddie’s Home. We have an architect in the person of Cde. Henry and he has drawn up some plans. They would not be two-storey buildings; they will be flat bungalow types so that the old people can go out on the lawns

and be shaded and so on. We plan to erect one at Beterverwagting. And, you must have read about the Committee headed by Cde. Luckhoo. They raised \$65,000. We hope to start another programme and I hope that Members will contribute to aid in the erection of this new type of home for the aged. The Palms is not with us any more.

9.25 p.m.

On the question of rehabilitation, the Comrade asked about the one headed by Cde. Daly, we have different levels of rehabilitation. We have just organized and are about to establish a national rehabilitation committee. This is where we have national disasters and so on but then the rehabilitation committee is serviced by an investigation which is a smaller committee in the Ministry of Labour serviced by the social assistance officers, and I may inform you that we have just decided to change the title.

They are now called social security officers because, agreeing with you that the system is old, it is colonial, and many of the officers have come to feel that their job is just to pay social assistance. We start off by letting them know that they are really social security officers, that they must do social work. We are hoping if the system is agreed to, that we would pay through the banks or through the post offices. When the Harris committee reports, these officers will have a change to do more social work.

It is a fact we had some problems with the Local Board of Guardians mainly because, colonial again, the Chairman had to be a public officer and for this reason when the Chairman is moved out of one area, the Board cannot meet; if he is transferred, the Board cannot meet because the law says it must be a public servant. We have changed that.

On the question of the Poor Law Commissioners, it was only on Thursday morning I had a discussion with the Chairman of the Poor Law Commissioners and I informed him that the time had arrived when we must change the law but since the law officers are very busy, he and his

committee must understand that we need not change the law because the Minister has certain responsibilities. They all agreed. The law is old fashioned and we intend to change it because we are not in charge of the Palms any more. I agree with you that that needs to be changed and we will change it.

I want to let you know further that we are not satisfied with the work of some of the social assistance officers because of the system which we intend to change. Just as I said I would not vouch for the people at the Labour Exchange, I will not vouch for some of the social assistance officers because I had cause to call in the police to investigate certain matters and if the police investigations lead to proof; they will be put in the right place. We have no problems where that is concerned. If a civil servant is heard working and honest, from each according to his ability, he will be rewarded. If his ability is going to put him in prison, let him go there. We are looking at this and the committee is investigating. As a matter of fact, you will hear more from the committee on our investigations, but we are setting out, as you have suggested, to restructure the entire social security division of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. We have some new officers appointed, we have introduce some new designations and new work because in a socialist Guyana we must expand in this particular area of social work.

The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva asked about the question of the \$32. It is a fact that when the officer investigates matters like these we can cover them under social assistance if we find that their cases are ready. I am saying we are in the transition and there are lots of things that are done in the more developed countries we just cannot afford. At some time we will amend or abandon our means test. I have letters every day that some people who are really receiving social assistance, some people who are receiving pension, should not be. People have lands, they have cattle, when they are investigated. The pittance can go to somebody else. Here is where I do not fully agree with you at this stage because people will exploit when the system is developed much more.

On the question of free travel, the Government has already agreed on this, that there will be free travel for pensioners on the ferries, on the Government transport buses, or even in the private buses. The Government will pay those private concerns for the travel on those people. One can suggest and put forward these proposals or have them agreed on, but one has.....being worked out in a special section of the Ministry organized for that purpose. You will see within the next three months or so that old people will be travelling free of charge.

In the social security area, I am very thankful for the suggestions made by the comrades in these areas but any attempt at discrimination against the old people, any dishonesties and malpractices that can be identified, can be proven, feel free -- Not because you are in the Opposition you must wait until you come here to say it. You can call on the officers, you can call at the Ministry of Labour, you can call on the Minister of Labour and bring that information to me and I will take action. It is from a member of the public that I got certain information that caused me to take action on a particular officer. He is in boo. He is not in jail. He is cooling off. This answers the question on social security which I am very happy to answer and generally I wish to let you know we are doing everything possible to improve this position.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, I think you forget the questions asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Cde. Carrington: If I am correct, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked about the number of organizations that are receiving assistance. They are many and they are well taken care of. They are the Archer's Home, Salvation Army, Chase's Home, Dharm Shala, Uncle Eddie's Home, the Institute for the Blind, The Red Cross. Other organizations from time to time receive

NB: PAGES ARE MISSING FROM THE TRANSCRIPTS.