



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC
OF GUYANA**

OFFICIAL REPORT

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2020-2025) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR
CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN*

11TH Sitting

Thursday, 24TH September, 2020

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE
HANSARD DIVISION**

The Assembly convened at 10.19 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Conduct of the Business of the National Assembly

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, yesterday, we did have quite a bit of exchanges and interactions. I trust that, today, we will be able to conduct the business of the National Assembly in a more agreeable fashion and be able to stay on track with respect to the time.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following paper was laid:

- (1) Statement of Expenditure for the period 1st January, 2020 to 30th September, 2020.

[Minister of Public Works on behalf of the Vice-President]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we are in the process of getting the documents to you. During the course of the morning, we should be able to circulate them.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Motion

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020

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

AND WHEREAS, the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the

Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS, estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2020 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 20-09-09,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2020 of a total sum of three hundred and six billion, two hundred and seventy-one million, two hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (**\$306,271,285,000**), **excluding twenty-three billion, two hundred and seventy three million, eight hundred and forty six thousand dollars (\$23, 273,846,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under-mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.

[Minister of Public Works on behalf of the Vice-President]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: We are at day four, Thursday, 24th September, 2020. I want to invite the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development and his staff.

Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Current Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$208,476,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I must say that you look very astute in your green outfit.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I turn your attention to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I see that there is a budgeted sum of \$9,594,000, which is an increase from 2019. In 2019, it was \$8,094,000. I am guided by the Staffing Details which show, under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, a

decrease from seven in 2019 to four in 2020. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to indicate the designations of the four contracted employees, their salaries, other benefits and, also, state what happened to the three employees who were there in 2019?

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Dharamlall]: Good morning, everyone.

Regarding the increase, an Assistant Regional Executive Officer was upgraded to the position of Deputy Regional Executive Officer. This includes their vacation allowances as well as gratuities. The reduction or the decrease has to do with a Cleaner resigning, the Deputy Regional Executive Officer, at that time, being appointed to the position of Regional Executive Officer and a Labourer whose contract had expired.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to indicate if the Deputy Regional Executive Officer, who was upgraded in 2020, which saw the reduction in contracted employees in 2019, is still on the job? If not, why?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to, once again, correct the apparent lack of knowledge expressed by the Hon. Member. The DREO was upgraded in 2019 and not 2020; that person is on the job.

Mr. Mahipaul: I did not hear clearly, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister repeat one more time, please?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, does he want me to repeat what I said?

Mr. Chairman: He is asking you to repeat because we did not hear.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am saying that the appointment was in 2019 and the position is currently occupied.

Mr. Mahipaul: The position is currently unoccupied, if I heard correctly – occupied? My question was, is the position still occupied by the same individual who was upgraded in 2019?

Mr. Dharamlall: As I indicated, the position is occupied and there is a DREO in place. That is as far as I can convey to you, at this point in time.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It seems as though the Hon. Minister does not want to answer the question. I must say that I know of the individual being terminated and I do not know for what reason.

Mr. Chairman: To Hon. Ministers and the Hon. Members asking, we had quite a bit of preambles yesterday and it caused a lot of time to be wasted. Today, I will not be as tolerant with respect to the preambles. Could we continue, Hon. Mahipaul?

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and thank you very much, for your guidance.

Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I see a budgeted sum of \$3,183,000. Before, in 2019, it was \$19,392,000. I am aware that the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman enjoyed a very cordial relationship with the REO, at the time, and I know that this line item is specific to the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), in terms of paying stipends and their benefits. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to indicate why there is a significant decrease for *Budget 2020* and if this sum was already expended or if it is to be expended?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, there has been a constitutional crisis generated by the last Government in our country in 2019 and, particularly, in 2020, because of the refusal to adhere to the *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* by the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC). The reason for the decrease is because the National Assembly was not in session and neither was the RDC as a result.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I did not get clarity on whether the \$3,183,000 has already been expended or if it is to be expended.

Mr. Dharamlall: I will not be able to account for what transpired during the APNU/AFC's time. What I can tell you is that it is moneys to be expended or part of it is to be expended. This is because part of it was previously utilised.

Mr. Mahipaul: I must say that is very unacceptable on the basis of the accounting officer being the custodian of the Government's funds. It is quite strange that the Hon. Minister was not guided as to how much of this \$3,183,000 was expended and how much is to be expended.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, \$1.6 million was expended.

Mr. Mahipaul: It is good to know that, from line item 6211, in nine months, \$1.6 million has been expended.

If I may move to line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service, I see a budgeted sum of \$3,123,000, and it is quite the same as 2018 and 2019. May I ask the Hon. Minister, how many vehicles are designated to this programme and who are utilising those vehicles?

10.34 a.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: This programme has to do with vehicle spares and service. As the Hon. Member is asking, I am advised that there are five vehicles being utilised in this programme, at this point in time.

Mr. Mahipaul: I did ask who are using the five vehicles. Could the Hon. Minister kindly say, not the individual, but the positions the vehicles are assigned to?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I could assure you that the vehicles are utilised by legitimate officers of the regional administration and the council – the REO, Deputy REO, the Local Government Department, the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am aware that there are three vehicles assigned to the REO: a car, a Toyota Land Cruiser Prado and a bus. I am also aware that there is a vehicle assigned to the Regional Chairman and one to the Regional Vice-Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say if those are the five vehicles that are assigned to this programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: I just reported that there are five vehicles. I reported also that they are used by the Deputy Regional Executive Officer, the Local Government Department, the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Mahipaul: This is the final question on this same line item. Is the Hon. Minister aware that the Regional Chairman changed three vehicles over a period of one year?

Mr. Dharamlall: I became the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development on 5th August, 2020. I cannot account for the inefficiencies and the misuse of Government property that occurred under the Administration of the APNU/AFC.

Mr. Mahipaul: Permit me to remind the Hon. Minister that the Essequibo Islands/West Demerara Regional Elections were won by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C).

Line item 6284 – Other: Would the Hon Minister be kind enough to give a breakdown of the \$1.7 million and, please, not a lengthy one?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, I will provide a breakdown which includes... I expect that, as the Minister, every staff and the people who work will be rewarded; those who do not work but pontificate at another level, should not be rewarded by the taxpayers of Guyana. Those who have worked in the region under this programme are currently being rewarded, would include: payment for escort duties, payment of bank charges, purchasing of water for staff and the payment of stipend to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) members and evaluators.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$208,476,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$14,200,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1208700 – Buildings - Administration: I see an allocation of \$12 million. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say which building this \$12 million would be spent on, was it already expended or is it to be expended?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, the capital programmes of the different regions' resources ought not to have been expended already. If resources were expended to do capital works, it may have occurred under the last Administration of the APNU/AFC, which would have made it illegal. I intend to pursue that to find out if that was done.

Secondly, we have to refurbish many buildings. Twelve million dollars would do a lot of works in different areas on different buildings. We will install doors and stairways at the regional administration building, particularly for safety and security purposes, and walls and doors at the new wing of the offices. I am surprised that the last Administration did not install doors and walls in this part of the works. It constructed it and refused to put doors and walls in, Mr. Chairman.

The Leguan sub-office will be rehabilitated. As we are aware, the last Administration imposed deleterious values on Leguan. I had made that known to the Committee. The guard hut to shed vehicles, again, they refused to enhance lives in Wakenaam, so we have to build a sanitary block there, a toilet. Mr. Chairman, that is how the \$12 million will be spent.

I would just like to inform you that these moneys will be well spent because, just a few months ago, the last Minister within the Ministry of Communities, responsible for housing and water, built her office for \$13 million because she refused to use the office of the previous Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to layover to this Committee the details of the \$12 million in writing?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would not. I have already made it known to the Committee what these resources and sums allocated are for.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if I am being unreasonable to ask for the document to be laid over so that I can have a copy of the detailed breakdown. After all, we are talking about \$12 million of taxpayers' money; moneys that you and I, Sir, paid.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you asked the question, the Minister answered in totality and then you followed-up with a supplementary for it still to be laid over. One would expect that when one asks questions, one makes copious notes.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am guided, Sir. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$14,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$394,450,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many bridges were already maintained with the sum of \$14.4 million, how many are to be maintained and also the location of the bridges?

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking for a layover too?

Mr. Mahipaul: Pardon me?

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking for a layover too?

Mr. Mahipaul: No, that can be read out.

Mr. Dharamlall: There are three bridges: a timber bridge at Parika main drain; a timber bridge at Look Out; and a timber bridge at Ruby. The distance to be maintained for the bridge at the Parika main drain is 24 metres x 4.2 metres; at Look Out it is 15.2 metres x 3.6 metres and at Ruby it is 14 metres x 3.6 metres.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: There is a sum of \$238,739,000. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say the amount of work that was already done under this line item and are there works for the remainder of 2020?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are ongoing works and they are done on a month-to-month basis. I have an entire list which I can read out one by one. Weeding and cleaning Georgia collector drain; new line irrigation, Berger side-line;

Windsor Forest/Vreed-en-Hoop collector drain; Ruby/Parika; West Tuschen, East Tuschen, Middle Walk Tuschen, La Jalousie, Windsor Forest Middle, East side-line, Zeelugt, a-line main drain centre-line main drain, b-line tail wall; Ruby/Boerasirie, Middle Walk Kashmir, B-line tail wall to river; Naamryck Estate; Parika/Hydronie [*inaudible*], Ruby k16 to k18; Parika West irrigation; Bonasika trench; Aliko drainage canal; Middle Walk, Nismes; Middle Walk, A-line, Windsor Forest; Ruby/Orangestein; West Windsor Forest; Zeelugt Middle Walk; East line, La Jalousie; East Salem and West Salem, Kashmir irrigation; Salem main drain, Ruby/Parika; SD8 Kamuni to Potosi; SD6 Kamuni, SD9 Kamuni; Georgia escape channel; SD10 Kamuni, SD5 Kamuni, SD4 Kamuni; Nismes side line, north; Nismes side line, south; La Retraite, North 1, La Retraite, North 2, La Retraite South; Kamarang to Jabar; Kashmir side line; Parika/Look Out [*inaudible*]; B-line irrigation at Hubu; C-line irrigation at Hubu; Maripa/Larimakabra Hog Island [*inaudible*]; Maripa main drain extra; Morasi main drain; Maripa new cross canal; Clay Block to Four-Mouth, Belle West; A-line to B-line Maripa; Belle West western drain; Swan Street and Versailles trench, centre line north; and so forth.

It is practically the entire region. It is something that is ongoing. It had started many years ago, almost a decade ago. This is something that was started by the People's Progressive Party/Civic.

I know, for a fact, that many farmers were complaining, in the last five years, about the quality of works that were done, and that resources were paid out but a lot of works were not done, though some may reflect that they were actually done. It is something that we will have to pursue later to find out if the works were done and if payments were made.

I know that the Hon. Member who asked the question was involved in supervising some of those works. I have been made to understand that there was a Community Development Officer (CDO) from the Ministry assigned to the Regional Information Officer who was supervising the drainage and irrigation (D&I) works. That in itself was, also, a massive anomaly, in the administration of the region, under the APNU/AFC.

Mr. Mahipaul: For clarity, I must say as Regional Information Officer that I never supervised any drainage and irrigation works. I simply went to get my picture so I can write my story.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Sir.

10.49 a.m.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am happy, also, that across the entire region, works were done by the APNU/AFC Administration, as was cemented by the Hon. Minister.

Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this honourable Committee, what other infrastructure was maintained for \$16.5 million and are there any to be maintained within the remaining three months?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am advised that works have to be done especially on river sluices in the region. The last Administration used Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) measures as an excuse not to get them done.

As you are aware, Mr. Chairman, over the last month, many river sluices were breached, just weeks after APNU/AFC left Office and the PPP/C assumed the governance and Government of Guyana. It is obvious that a lot of the works that the APNU/AFC did in Region 3 were of substandard quality.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$394,450,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$57,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1300800 – Agricultural Development – D&I: There is a sum of \$57 million for the construction, extension and rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation structures, which I know include the construction and control structure and revetment at Morasi, Good Hope and Hogg Island; the rehabilitation of ramp and landing at Bendorff and revetment at Henrietta, Leguan; and extension of ramp and landing at Hubu. Could the Hon Minister indicate if these works are completed or ongoing?

Mr. Dharamlall: I, once again, would like to emphasise to this Committee that every cent that we spend, under the PPP/C, will have parliamentary approval and oversight.

The last Administration, as you are aware, in an entire year, practically spent billions of dollars – more than \$160 billion– without parliamentary approval. In this case, the \$57 million is before the National Assembly for approval. We brought it here and it means that none has been spent already.

I am at a loss as to why the Hon. Member will indicate such. Again, I would be forced to ask the Regional Executive Officer to conduct an investigation into expenditure in Region 3 to find out whether the last Administration used moneys that were not appropriated and that were not constitutionally due to be spent.

The construction of a reinforced concrete (RC) control structure at Morasi, East Bank Essequibo, will improve irrigation for at least 80 farmers and 5,000 acres of farmland. As you are aware, Mr. Chairman, the last Regime did not really help farmers in this country, especially rice farmers and cash crop farmers.

The ramp and landing at Hubu will improve the irrigation system for more than 48 farmers and 3,800 acres of farmland.

From the ramp and landing at Bendorff, more than 120 farmers and over 4,000 acres of farmland, specific to rice, ground provision farmers, cash crop and cattle rearing, will benefit.

Rehabilitation of the revetment at Henrietta, Leguan: I had indicated, earlier, that the last Government had practically decimated agriculture in Region 3, particularly in Leguan. The revetment will serve to protect the drainage structure from eroding. This structure drains over 4,000 acres of farmland. It will benefit over 60 farmers and 125 residents.

The revetment at Kawall Koker in Hogg Island will protect the current structure from eroding. It will drain over 3,000 acres of farmland. It will benefit dozens of farmers and, equally, dozens of residents.

The reinforced concrete control structure at Good Hope serves as erosion protection and, again, it will drain 4,000 acres of farmland, benefitting dozens of farmers and residents. I would be happy if the Hon. Member can make a note of the impact, because a lot of times projects were done, in the past, for political optics rather than to have a great impact on the needs of farmers especially.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am aware that those projects are APNU/AFC projects and I am happy that the \$160 billion, to which he alluded, is moneys that was spent by the APNU/AFC on the people of Guyana. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I think we have exhausted the questions for this particular head and I would now like to put the question.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$57,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$153,351,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the \$44,398,000, under this line item, was already spent or if it is to be spent? If it was already spent, what are the roads that were maintained and, if it was not, what are the roads to be maintained?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to indicate, again, that any moneys that were spent without parliamentary approval is illegal, unlawful and unconstitutional. There is no boast about spending \$160 billion without parliamentary approval and without the constitutional provisions appropriated to such expenditure.

Again, I am going to ask the region to conduct an investigation as to how moneys were spent in the region, prior to this Parliament, and what procurement procedures were involved. I am worried, as are many are in this Committee, that there was great corruption by the APNU/AFC which spent billions of dollars. We intend to spend resources, according to the provisions of this Parliament, so that whatever works have to be done will be done according to the law. I cannot account for the illegalities of the last Regime.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could we get to the question?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, sorry.

Mr. Chairman: I think the Hon. Member had asked a question. Could you repeat, Hon. Member?

Mr. Mahipaul: I simply want to know where the roads are located that were maintained or which roads are to be maintained.

Mr. Chairman: That is if they were not maintained.

Mr. Mahipaul: If they were not.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. That is what I thought.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, please permit me, I have to be clear.

Mr. Chairman: You are permitted, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: All expenditure prior to the approval of this Budget were illegal. The Opposition spent the moneys illegally. I cannot account for what happened in the past. I am telling Members what will happen in the future. We will have to account for roads in Stewartville, De Kinderen, Zeelugt, Old Scheme; Den Amstel – yes, we are doing roads in Den Amstel – Hydronie, Bushy Park [*interruption*].

[*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.*]

We will be doing roads in Vergenoegen and Sisters Village as well. We will also be providing building materials as part of this endeavour.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am happy that I heard Den Amstel and, equally so, Zeelugt and Tuschen.

Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: There is a sum of \$29,842,000. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us the location of the bridges that were maintained? If none were maintained as yet, what are the locations of the ones to be maintained?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report to the people of Region 3 and to this Committee that, under this programme that we intend to pursue, no bridges were maintained by the last Administration. These are new maintenance works that would be done. They are: repairs to revetment, change piles, beams and decking at Zeeburg; repairs to revetment, change mudsill beams and decking at Wakenaam; repairs to revetment, change mudsill beams and decking at Railway View, Met-en-Meerzorg; repairs to the bridge approach at Anna Catherina; revetment, change mudsill, beams and decking at Hague Front; and similarly at Hague Back; Belle Vue, West Bank Demerara (WBD) and Canal Number 2. This will impact thousands of acres of land and thousands of residents and hundreds of farmers are going to benefit directly from this.

Mr. Mahipaul: I was a part of the consultation in 2019, for those bridges, and I am happy that they are in *Budget 2020*.

Line item 6255 – Maintenance of other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister say if the \$16,984,000 was already expended and, if not, on what infrastructure is it to be expended and their locations?

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, I would like to reiterate that none of this was expended already. The PPP/C Government will repair fences, change posts, change the Regional Democratic Council stores and crane, the guard hut, land filling and landscaping at the sub-office in Wakenaam, and similar works in Leguan.

11.04 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, you would notice that I keep referring to Leguan. Apparently, the last Government had no regard for the people of Leguan. There would be repairs to: a fence: changing of posts lots and chain link mesh at WD 35 La Grange: similar works would be done at WD 37 La Grange: and the Government Quarters in Leguan, again. The Windsor Forest Community Ground will also have those types of works.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$153,351,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$69,352,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1100400 – Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister say if the \$34.9 million was already expended on bridges and where are the bridges located?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, on your advice, the Hon. Member keeps asking, under Capital Expenditure, whether works were done. I keep saying that if work was done, it was illegal and it happened under the APNU/AFC. I will repeat, once again, if work was done prior to this Budget, under Capital Expenditure, it was done by the APNU/AFC and it was illegal.

There was a bridge that was completed since 2019 and it was not fully paid for. We would have to... [**An Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible)*] Yes, since 2019, *pampers*. We will have to pay for it. The resources will be placed in this budget to pay for it. We will also construct heavy-duty bridges at Hague Front and at Prem Nagar, Met-en-Meerzorg and a footpath at Bell Vue.

I could also go into the details and the impact.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am, again, happy to know that these bridges are in the Estimates. These are bridges that the APNU/AFC have put into the Estimates.

Project code 1400600 – Roads: I see \$34,411,000 budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to indicate where these roads will be constructed and, also, if any moneys were already expended on which roads?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will be constructing a crossroad at Cornelia Ida Housing Scheme to improve access for more than 300 residents. We will be constructing Middle Road, Windsor Forest, which will improve access for in excess of 500 residents. The current condition is a deteriorated double bitumen surface treatment (DBST) carriageway that has to be reconstructed. Roads would be done at Cornelia Ida Community Centre Ground, where the young people as well as other residents are going to benefit massively.

There is also a road in Nismes that was completed since 2019. It is obvious that there was poor management in the last Administration. That is why there is a rollover for a road project which was done since 2019. It is obvious that may have happened closer to Christmas when the former Administration wanted to spend moneys without proper oversight. The retention on that road will be paid now, almost one year after, all because of the inefficiencies and maladministration of the APNU/AFC. We, now, have to clean up all of their dirty work.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am aware that there were consultations in La Parfaite Harmonie, in 2019, for a series of roads to be included in the 2020 Budget. That proposal was made to the Ministry of Finance. Could the Hon. Minister say why these roads were not included in project code 1400600?

Mr. Chairman: I am just a bit confused. Is the question why it is not included or does this sum include it?

Mr. Mahipaul: My apology, Sir. Does this sum include the series of roads in La Parfaite Harmonie?

Mr. Dharamlall: This sum includes the retention on the Nismes road that was completed over a year ago. It includes the construction of a crossroad at Cornelia Ida Housing Scheme, the rehabilitation of Middle Road, Windsor Forest and at Cornelia Ida Community Centre Ground. I would like to assure the residents of Region 3 that all roads in all the communities are going to be rehabilitated by the People's Progressive Party/Civic.

Mr. Mahipaul: I was waiting for that. It is on the record.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$69,352,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$4,105,538,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I must tell you that this mask is really good, as opposed to the blue one. I will like to thank my Hon. Minister for providing me with this mask. It is really good to breathe in.

Mr. Chairman: What about the Chairman?

Mr. Mahipaul: Hon. Minister, the Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Hon. Member.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Some \$30 million is budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say if the bridges that are aligned to the schools were done? If they were done, where? If they were not done, where would they be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: Bridges are part of public infrastructure in every region. The intention of this Budget is to ensure that bridges in various areas are paid for. If the Hon. Member wants, I could share or read out the list. I will share the list.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to also share the list for line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, for which there is a total of \$76 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: Between August and December, works will be done at the Education compound at Plantain Walk and East Schoonard, West Bank Demerara. There is a special education needs school there. Works will be done at: the Early Childhood Education Centre at Leonora; the West Coast Demerara, Education compound; and the Department of Education at Plantain Walk. There are other areas too. It is a healthily long list and I could make it available.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: My last question. Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: There is an increase to \$73,436,000. I am enquiring if this is to purchase drugs and medical supplies for all of our school facilities across the region.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, this issue of drugs and medical supplies has been the sore point of the last Administration, since practically billions of dollars are unaccounted for. I shudder to think that resources were spent early in the year and the region, at that time, still could not account for it.

I could tell you that the enrolment in nursery is 3,536; in primary it is 11,359; and in secondary it is 6,080. I have a list: hand sanitisers, methylated spirit, Limacol, cotton wool, band aid and rubbing alcohol. We will have to buy very basic things for schools, which should have been in the system already. Vicks, ice packs, ankle support, knee support and many other things we will now have to buy, under Drugs and Medical Supplies, to ensure that our schools are in a better condition when compared to two months ago.

There is no reason for them to be embarrassed about it. If you did not do it, then we will do it. Many things which you have not done, we will do. I do not know if moneys were spent to do it and no work was done. We will figure it out.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$4,105,538,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$96,629,000

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$96,629,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$2,010,610,000

Mr. Mahipaul: I have one question, in the interest of time, under line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister say if the road that leads to the Health Centre at La Parfaite Harmonie and the one that leads to the Health Centre at Tuschen are considered in this \$11.1 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would have to get the Regional Administration to enquire.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Sir.

11.19 a.m.

Mr. Mahipaul: I would appreciate if the Hon. Minister could layover the breakdown of the \$11.1 million.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member said, yes.

Dr. Smith: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: I see a total of \$825.8 million for 2020. Could the Hon. Minister please tell this honourable Committee, how much of these funds were already spent from January to 31st July? I am simply asking this because, as we know, the entire healthcare system has been plagued with a major lack of drugs and medical supplies. It has been worse, especially in Region 3, from January to 31st July.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I did not hear the question very clearly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, could you please repeat for the Hon. Minister?

Dr. Smith: Under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, could the Hon. Minister please tell this honourable Committee how much of the \$825.8 million was already spent from January to 31st July?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report to this Committee that the last Administration did not use moneys to buy drugs and medical supplies for the people of Region 3. We will now have to begin the procurement of these items. It is obvious that the spike and problems we have in the management of the COVID-19 is as a result of the inherited problems from the last Administration. It did not buy drugs and medical supplies in Region 3 for the period January to August, 2020, whilst it was occupying, illegally, the seat of Government.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$2,010,610,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$110,786,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy that the APNU/AFC Administration spent moneys on the people of Essequibo Islands-West Demerara. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, would you like to make a similar statement?

Mr. Dharamlall: Certainly, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much. I would like to reiterate, for the record, under health, that the last Administration did not spend a single cent on drugs and medical supplies for the people of Region 3. We have to make that known to the people of Region 3. It did not buy even an Aspirin, a Panadol or a Lomotil for that Hon. Member across there.

We intend to extend the pharmacy bond. We intend to extend the Imaging Department at the West Demerara Regional Hospital. We intend to extend the Emergency Unit at the Wakenaam Cottage Hospital. We have to buy a boat and engine to service the riverain area. We will have to procure some wheel bicycles and other bicycles – this is part of the therapy that we provide – and a portable X-radiation (X-ray) machine. I know Region 3, in the last five years, had massive issues with X-rays, ventilators, crash carts, paediatric crash carts, cardiac monitors – imagine we have to buy that now – and electrocardiogram (ECG) machines.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, it would not be that long.

Mr. Chairman: We are now at the one-hour mark for this head. We started at 10.25 a.m.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$110,786,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: On your behalf, I say thanks to the staff of the Minister for taking us through that Region. Hon. Members, we have done well. Within one hour, as allocated, we have completed this head. Let us see if we can do better for the next head.

Agency 74: Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica

Current Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$258,643,000

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could the Hon. Minister state the emoluments of these two positions and when the persons were employed?

Mr. Dharamlall: There was the appointment of a Procurement Officer. The salary is \$102,058. There was the re-categorisation of another Procurement Officer at a salary of \$93,631.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: There is a total of \$21 million. Could the Hon. Member be kind enough to breakdown to this Committee how much is for the Office of the Regional Chairman and, of course, the Office of the Regional Vice-Chairman?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, this entire budget line item is basically allocated to the Regional Democratic Council. It is for stipends for Regional Councillors, their travelling and subsistence, the conducting of statutory and special meetings of the RDC and the Rice Assessment Committee (RAC), statutory meeting of different committees of the RDC, refreshments and the other amenities that come with the Office of the Regional Chairperson.

Ms. Philadelphia: A follow-up: I do not think that the Hon. Member understood my question. I asked if he could give a breakdown, specifically, of how much money is for the Office of the Regional Chairman and what sum is specific to the Office of the Regional Vice-Chairman. I did not ask him to list which category will benefit from it.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, please let us be reminded of the acoustics.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, for those of us who are aware, line item 6211 is under the oversight of the Regional Chairman of any Regional Democratic Council. So, the Regional Chairman will determine how that is spent.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: Could the Hon. Minister explain to this Committee, what happened to the staff, to reduce the number from 15 to 14 and the date of his or her last employment?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would proffer an answer because I was unable to interpret the transmission of that question. It is the transition of a Clerk II General to Public Relations Assistant (PRA) and to also accommodate the 2019 salary.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I see there is a sum of \$5 million. What does that entail?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, these resources cater for minor external plumbing works at the Enmore Sub-Office and maintenance of a chain link and timber fence at the Timehri Sub-Office. It also includes installation of handwashing sinks at Grove Craft Centre and Enmore and Timehri

sub-offices – of course, this is part of our COVID-19 measures – and weeding and cleaning of the 1,560 square area of the compound.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line items 6284 and 6294 – Other: What heads will fall under these line items?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6284 – Other: this includes purchasing of drinking water; washing of the office amenities; escort duties by the police; stipends for the Regional Tender Board Members; stipends for evaluators; stipends for two University of Guyana (UG) attachment students at \$60,000 per month, for nine months; public relations services, including printing of the regional magazine; and purchase of amenities for the regional boardroom.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line 6116 – Contracted Employees: There is the removal of five contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister explain why this is so and when they were removed?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, there were some anomalies in the management of the public service, during the last Government, as our Minister of the Public Service had indicated. This provides for salary increases and benefits for one Community Development Officer (CDO) at \$104,967 per month and one Typist Clerk at \$83,311. It also includes payment of gratuity, vacation allowance and National Insurance Scheme (NIS) deductions. These officers are above the age to be placed on the pensionable establishment. That is why one would find it how it is.

Mr. Ramsaroop: A follow-up: Comrade Chairman, there are the contracted employees. I said that there was a removal of five contracted employees. Why was this so and when were they removed?

11.34 a.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I indicated earlier about the way in which it was managed. There were those who were transferred from contracted employees to the pensionable establishment in the last Administration. This will take account of what has happened. This is similar to the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, who was a contract employee at the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and is now on pensionable establishment.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to give us a breakdown, quickly, as to what would be obtained under training in this line item?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Hon. Minister is not noted for ‘quickly’.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I am very dutiful and I take my job seriously because, as Minister, I have a great responsibility. I have to ensure that whatever I say represents the facts. The provision is for training for the Neighbourhood Democratic Councillors (NDC), especially in the areas of procurement and financial management. This is part of the overall training that we would usually provide and we will provide and enhance it. It caters for the procurement of items for the execution of training at the different regional craft centres and training for the regional staff in other disciplines as well.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$258,643,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$10,000,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project code 1208800 – Buildings - Administration: There is a sum of \$4 million for the construction of sanitary blocks. Could the Hon. Minister tell us where these blocks will be constructed?

Ms. Dharamlall: Again, the last Government left all of the toilets out. I do not know what was happening. This is for the construction of a sanitary block at the Regional Democratic Council’s main office at Triumph and another at St. Cuthbert’s Mission.

Ms. Philadelphia: I heard the Hon. Minister said the construction of a sanitary block in the RDC office compound at Triumph. If my memory serves me correct, there is a sanitary block at that office. Am I to understand that, in catering for the labour force there, the existing sanitary block is inadequate so there is need for another sanitary block or, maybe, is this for another location?

Mr. Dharamlall: Actually, we are taking the administration of this country to a higher level and the respect that we have for senior citizens, was solely lacking in the last five years. These sanitary blocks will cater, specifically, to the needs of our elderly and senior citizens who visit the office for different services.

Ms. Philadelphia: I recognise that the Hon. Minister did not sleep well last night, and so, every time a question is asked of him, he keeps saying to us ‘the previous Administration’. I asked a specific question about whether there would be an improvement and he did not answer the question. He went on to tell us that the Government is improving the lives of senior citizens and the question was not answered.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not understand the preamble. I did not know you had the capacity to determine who sleeps well and who did not. I would like to know if you could tell me about myself.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am confident and I am confirming that services would be improved, and where services were non-existent they will now be existent.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$10,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$397,659,000

Mr. Ramjattan: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: I see \$175 million is allocated. Could the Minister indicate to this Committee the major areas where this amount for drainage and irrigation would be used?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report that, for all 17 Neighbourhood Democratic Councils locations, resources are allotted and, in some cases, resources were spent.

Mr. Ramjattan: A follow-up: Could the Minister say whether these NDCs will be recuperating any of this money or is this a Government subsidy to the NDCs, which is not going to come back in the form of a [*inaudible*]?

Mr. Dharamlall: I said in the NDCs areas because I wanted to save time rather than list all of the canals. Listing all would take us the rest of the day to complete. The ‘NDC areas’ do not mean that it is the NDC. This is a regional administration activity and it is accounted for by the regional administration. It is imperative that every government, including our Government, at this point in

time... Agriculture is paramount and that is why we are re-opening sugar estates, reducing land rent that the last Administration put in place to penalise farmers.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you allow me to ask the Hon. Member a question? Hon. Member, I think you had said recuperating these expenses or something like that. Is that so?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could we stay on track with that?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, these are not resources of the NDCs. This is a commitment of our Government to farmers and users of these facilities.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: My question is on the same line item mentioned before. I am just seeking clarity as to how much of this money was spent between January to September and how much is left to be spent for the rest of the year?

Mr. Dharamlall: The sum of \$74,408,000 was already expended.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There was the removal of two employees. Could the Hon. Minister explain why? I have a follow-up question.

Mr. Dharamlall: Two Equipment Operators were re-employed on a temporary basis because they are above the age of 45.

Mr. Chairman: I am being advised by our Hansard Division that, if we do not speak into the microphone clearly, the *Hansard* will not be able to reflect what Members are saying. The records might show ‘inaudible’.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I must bring to this Committee’s attention that while there is a reduction in the staffing details, under this line item, there is a significant increase in salaries. Could the Minister say how and why this is so?

Mr. Dharamlall: It accounts for the annualisation of the increases lost.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: I observe that one staff has been added to the staffing details. I would like to know the designation of the staff added and the remuneration the staff would be receiving.

Mr. Dharamlall: This is an Agricultural Officer and the salary is \$144,468.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: I recognised that the number of staff remains the same but, of course, the moneys allocated under this head have been increased. Am I to understand that persons may have changed designations and, of course, if the Hon. Minister would be so kind, could he provide to this Committee the designations of the first three employees and their remunerations?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is a very long list. It is for Sluice Attendants and their salaries are \$104,301, \$104,299 and \$104,260. They are mostly Sluice Attendants, Labourers and Servicemen.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$397,659,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$28,980,000

Ms. Philadelphia: Project code 1701200 – Agricultural Development: In the Legend it states that this provision is for the construction of revetments. I understand that Region 4 spans all the way to Moblissa and Mahaica. My question is, which are the specific areas in which these revetments will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is actually stated in the profile. It is for the construction of 15 feet (ft) x 200 ft timber revetment at Managers Lane Cane Grove, East Coast Demerara, and a 15 ft x 130 ft timber revetment at Section A Golden Grove, East Bank Demerara.

11.49 a.m.

A 15 ft x 300 ft timber revetment will be constructed at the in-fall of Spring Hall sluice at Unity, East Coast Demerara.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I need some clarity on the same project code 1701200, Agricultural Development. I would like to know whether any of these revetments have already been constructed. If not, would they be done in the last three months of this year?

Mr. Dharamlall: The only capital items that were constructed have been constructed under the APNU/AFC Government and it has been money illegally spent. Under this Administration, all moneys have to be accounted for. Before the process of accounting begins, parliamentary approval is the first activity. We are approving it now and we will spend it in the next few months. These are new projects.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Is it that the Minister expects to spend the entire sum and complete all revetments within the next three months?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, what I can assure you is that moneys will be spent and the products of those moneys spent will be tangible – quite unlike what happened in the last Administration.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I would like to seek clarity that by 31st December of this year, the revetments that have been identified by the Hon. Minister, persons would be able to go and see that those revetments are completed.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I want to assure you that, once again, these projects that we have for the end of the year would be tangible and that moneys will be spent on them. They have not yet started but advertisements are already out in the public, which is something that the APNU/AFC did not like to do when it was in Government. Procurement was a sore issue for you, and you can rest assured that, under the People Progressive Party/Civic Administration, procurement is going to be one of the things that we look at very seriously. If you cannot account for what you have done... I would like to ask the REO and the Auditor General to peruse what happened and whether proper procurement procedures were done in the past, especially in our country.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I hope that the Hon. Minister knows that he is speaking badly of the staff who he sitting next to and I do not appreciate that.

On the same project code, I am enquiring, is this the total cost or is this going to be rolled over where there will be requests for another cost to complete this programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are projects that will be completed this year and we expect that the payments will be made this year.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$28,980,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$163,834,000

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Member be so kind to inform this Committee as to where these roads to be maintained are located?

Mr. Dharamlall: These roads are located in Beterverwagting (BV), the penultimate street in Triumph; Yarrowkabra; Kuru Kururu; Prospect; Goedverwagting; Golden Grove; Foulis; Trench Road; New Diamond Scheme; Enmore; and North Haslington.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister tell us where the bridges to be done are located?

Mr. Dharamlall: These bridges are located at Hand-en-Veldt, Mahaica; Jonestown, Mahaica; Ann's Grove Scheme; Cambridge, Mahaica; Grove, East Bank Demerara; Third Creek, Laluni; Ann's Grove line top; Prospect, East Bank Demerara; a linking bridge between Ann's Grove and Clonbrook; Goedverwagting, East Coast Demerara; Factory Road, Paradise; a timber bridge in Kingstown Street, Victoria; Last bridge, North Friendship, East Coast Demerara; and a timber bridge at Providence Island, East Bank Demerara.

Ms. Philadelphia: Mr. Chairman, I heard the Hon. Minister mention a bridge in Ann's Grove housing scheme, but I do not think that there is a housing scheme in Ann's Grove. I know there is a housing scheme in Clonbrook and there is another one in Two Friends. I would be grateful if the Hon. Member could identify if it is one of those housing schemes.

Mr. Dharamlall: I did not mention Ann's Grove housing scheme at any time. I said, in the eastern section of Ann's Grove, a concrete culvert will be maintained. I also said that a timber bridge linking Ann's Grove line top to Two Friends would be maintained. I also said a timber bridge linking Ann's Grove and Clonbrook would be maintained.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$163,834,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$87,648,000

Mr. Ramsaroop: Project code 1400700 – Roads: Could the Hon. Minister make it clear to the Guyanese people whether we are going back to chip-seal road or are we going to continue with the high-quality roads that the APNU/AFC Government started?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is funny that the APNU/AFC started all these roads and still ended up in the Opposition; something is wrong. It is possible that moneys were budgeted and the roads were never done, yet the moneys were spent.

We will be constructing, for the people of the country, please note, a cross street between Cemetery Road and the Boulevard, Mocha; upgrading of Fourth Street, Herstelling, East Bank Demerara, with asphaltic concrete; upgrading of First Street, GuySuCo Scheme, Herstelling, with asphaltic concrete; upgrading of First Street, Covent Garden, with asphaltic concrete; Western Street Vereeniging, Mahaica, East Coast Demerara, with asphaltic concrete; and Second Street, Herstelling, with asphaltic concrete.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Under the same project code, I heard the Hon. Minister identified a road in the Mocha Arcadia community. I do not know if your description is correct, so I would like to have some clarity as to whether it is Burnham Boulevard or Cemetery Road.

Mr. Dharamlall: Just for clarification, it is a cross street between Cemetery Road and the Boulevard. Just for clarification as well, since the street does not have a name, I could name it 'Nigel Dharamlall street'.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, 'Nigel Dharamlall road' is now going to be repaired.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$87,648,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$5,827,748,000

Ms. Philadelphia: I recognised that, at line item 6111, Administrative, there is an increase of 72 administrative staff. If I am seeing correctly, could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown as to the 72 staff; where they are located; their skillsets and, of course, if persons, who may have an upgrade in status, have moved from one to the other.

Mr. Dharamlall: This is for the increase, as a result of new appointments of senior teachers.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I see there is a sum of over \$152 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us to which infrastructure is he referring?

12.04 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6255 caters for repairs to fence and walkway, servicing and repairs to external toilet facilities, and external plumbing works at several schools across all levels.

Additionally, provision is for weeding and cleaning of 134 compounds and the department of education and sub-offices. This is, of course, to enhance the environment so that our learners, teachers and other staff could be in an atmosphere where they could inculcate and transfer knowledge in a comfortable environment, quite unlike the past five years.

Ms. Philadelphia: I recognise that at line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, again, there is an increase of 248 staff. Could the Hon. Member be so kind to inform us as to where these persons will be attached? I am aware, if my memory serves me correct, the only carpenter we had in the RDC, Region 4, is retired and, of course, the electrician will soon be retiring. I may want to believe that, with this number, we may be considering rehiring those persons who have left and those who will be leaving us shortly.

Mr. Dharamlall: The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) made lots of appointments and these are catered for. All teachers ought to know this, especially Head Teachers in Region 4. I am surprised that Ms. Philadelphia does not know this.

Ms. Philadelphia: I am looking at line item 6255, Maintenance and Other Infrastructure. There is a secondary school under construction at Good Hope, East Coast Demerara. I know that, from this year's National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA), students were allocated places at that school. Am I to understand that a sum from this allocation will be used to complete that facility?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a massive issue where this is concerned because this school, despite the huge moneys that have been allocated for it and all the issues surrounding it, is not yet completed. As far as I could let you know; the school is not yet completed and ready for the admission of students.

Ms. McDonald: I am just following up on the question posted by the Hon. Mdm. Philadelphia. This question is with regard to a response from the Hon. Minister regarding appointments made by the Teaching Service Commission.

Hon. Minister, I would be happy if you could share with this Committee and with the Guyanese nation, the period within which these appointments were done and the number of appointments that were done by the Teaching Service Commission. I am aware that there are piles and piles of appointments that have not yet been filled. I would be happy to have the Hon. Minister share with us the number of appointments that were done and the period within which they were done.

Mr. Dharamlall: I will endeavour to provide that information, but a dutiful representative of teachers ought to have that information. If you do not have it, I am going to represent the teachers, on your behalf, and be a proper representative for our teachers so that they are well adorned with a good salary and all the amenities that teachers require, for which the last Government could not provide, including the underrepresentation by the last union that the Hon. Member is part of or was a part of.

Ms. McDonald: Education is the greatest equaliser. I am also General Secretary (GS) of the Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU) and I am aware that these appointments were not made, hence, the request made to the Minister.

However, since we are on that and we looked at maintenance of buildings and so on, I would want to ask of the Minister, could he say whether Presidents' College is on his list for maintenance? What are some of the works that are going to be done for Presidents' College and for the Diamond Secondary School?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy and proud to speak on behalf of Presidents' College because I was in the first batch of the Presidents' College students. It means that I was an extremely brilliant student and my work has shown brilliance already.

Again, for the current General Secretary or the former General Secretary of the GTU... This is the problem in our country: The people who represent these issues have no understanding of the issues. The Presidents' College is a board school which gets a subvention and its support is given by the Ministry of Education and from the regional administration's Education Department. If the Hon. Member does not know that, then I would say, once again, to our teachers, that the Hon. Member has been misrepresenting teachers for as long as she has been representing teachers. Maybe, that is why there is the whole issue of the current GTU selling out teachers.

Ms. Philadelphia: It is unfortunate that, following the NGSAs' recently concluded exams, our students were allocated spaces at the Good Hope Secondary School, East Coast Demerara, and the Minister is sitting here to insult our intelligence by saying to us that the former Government did shoddy work at that school and so the school will not be completed. Why were children allocated spots at that school when we know, full well, that the school would not be completed for the reopening of school, whenever that time comes?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy that the Hon. Member has acknowledged that they have done shoddy work in their Government. I would like to reiterate that it is true that they have done a lot of shoddy work.

I would also like to state that, as soon as the school is ready, it will be accommodating. Furniture will have to be procured and students will have access to the school. Of course, we cannot send our students into a school that is not properly constructed. We were of the impression that the school was properly constructed. Now that we have found that the school is not properly constructed, it cannot be opened. I will like to encourage the Hon. Members, on the other side, to continue to enhance services rather than... Once again, I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Lots of shoddy

works on schools were done, in the last Government, and we will have to make sure that schools are safe and secure for our students, and to say that the school will not be opened at this point in time.

Ms. McDonald: I recognise that the Minister is caught up with a lot of *fluff*, flurry and feathers. I did ask, specifically, about the Diamond Secondary School and Presidents' College, but he went on *palancing* somewhere as if he was dancing.

Mr. Dharamlall: I spoke about the question that was asked of me earlier and that is of the Presidents' College. This is the first time, and maybe it was a figment of the Hon. Member's imagination, that she raised Diamond Secondary School. If the Hon. Member would like to ask me a question on new Diamond Secondary School, then she could.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, she did ask about the Diamond Secondary School.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I did not hear the question about Diamond Secondary School; I just heard a statement.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Minister did not hear. Could you repeat that question?

Ms. McDonald: I first asked about the provisions for Presidents' College, since I am aware that the Hon. Minister attended Presidents' College and received at good grounding there. I also asked about the provisions for the Diamond Secondary School. If you did not hear me, again, I am asking about the Diamond Secondary School on the East Bank Demerara.

Mr. Dharamlall: We are in the current programme. We have been in Government since 2nd August, 2020. I would have thought that, in all of the previous five years, all schools would have gotten support and be brought to a standard. If the Hon. Member on the Opposition side is saying that they did not do enough works on the schools in Region 4 and, maybe, particularly Diamond Secondary School, then the Hon. Minister will have to ask the principals of the Opposition why they did not do works on the new Diamond Secondary School. What I could tell you is that every school will have attention from the PPP/C Government. If the new Diamond Secondary School requires attention, then we will provide attention to the new Diamond Secondary School.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$5,827,748,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$183,791,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project code 1203300 – Buildings - Education: I observe that there is a sum allotted there and the description in the Legend states:

“Provision for schools, laboratories, water troughs and living quarters...”

Could the Hon. Minister say where the living quarters are located?

Mr. Dharamlall: I was recently with His Excellency, the President, on the Soesdyke, Linden Highway and the situation that we met there is dire, especially regarding education. The Hon. Minister of Education had to visit as well. The living quarters at Silver Hill Primary School will be reconstructed.

Ms. McDonald: Could the Minister share with us, under line item 6284, Other, what is meant by ‘Other’? What does the allocation for ‘Other’ entail?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with the capital programme. We have already passed the current programme.

12.19 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Ms. McDonald.

Ms. McDonald: I withdraw, Sir.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$183,791,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$1,587,597,000

Mr. Chairman: I recognise the Hon. Member, Ms. Philadelphia, but if you want to cede, I will not call you again.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister be so kind to tell us of the buildings that will be maintained or have been maintained over the period from January to July?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, so it would not include buildings. I am happy that I am under this issue because a healthy mind will allow us to read these books very clearly. It is because I have a healthy mind I will also share with you what line item 6255 entails. It includes the sealing of leaking septic tanks, the capping of walkways, and the fabricating and painting of metal gates.

I will provide the locations. We have to unclog waste and sewage pipes, and this is a running item in many areas. We have to weed and clean some compounds; the Regional Democratic Council's isolation centre has to have a fence. Emergency plumbing works will be done at the Golden Grove Health Centre – again, this is plumbing, a part of sewage. There will be plumbing works at Supply. What conditions were these facilities in so that we now have to do plumbing works on them?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we have three minutes remaining for this head.

Mr. Dharamlall: The Golden Grove, Plaisance and Buxton Health Centres and the Diamond Diagnostic Centre, are all listed for plumbing works. There is the repair of the septic tank at the Unity Health Centre; repairs of security huts and fences at Enterprise, Mon Repos and Plaisance Health Centres. There is the repair of the security hut at the Buxton Health Centre, which is almost similar. There is also the landfilling and the fixing of drains at the Mocha Health Centre. I can go on and on. There is the Lusignan and Melanie Health Centres... There is the repair of the septic tank at the Beterverwagting Health Centre; repairs on the security huts at the Soesdyke, Long Creek and Herstelling Health Centres; repairs to the fence at the Mocha Health Centre and the fences and drains at the Soesdyke and Craig Health Centres. There are repairs to be done on the fences at the Lusignan, Melanie, Cane Grove and Beterverwagting Health Centres. There are repairs to be done to the fence and walkway at the Buxton Health Centre. All of these facilities we now have to look after.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: I noticed, in 2019, there were 79 staff members but, in 2020, there is an increase of 37. In addition, there is an increase in the allocation from about \$67 million to about \$106 million; it is an increase of about \$39 million. Could you give an account for this? What are the details and the emoluments of these staff? Where are they attached?

Mr. Dharamlall: There was the appointment of six Pharmaceutical Assistants, eight Porters, six Environmental Health Assistants (EHAs), two Drivers and 15 Handymen. The increase takes account of that. I also have the...

Dr. Cummings: You can lay it over, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: I can let you know now. For the Pharmaceutical Assistant, the salary is \$70,000. I can lay over the salary for those whom you have asked for.

Dr. Cummings: Yes, lay it over.

Line item 6292 – Dietary: Which health institutions are being provided for under this line item? Does it include the Dr. C.C. Nicholson's Hospital in Region 4, East Coast, or is it the Diamond Diagnostic Centre? Just let us know what are the facilities.

Mr. Dharamlall: For the knowledge of the Hon. Member of the Opposition, who worked in the regional health system before, when I was a Permanent Secretary (PS) at the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development... The Hon. Member would know that we only provide dietary supplies to those facilities which provide in-patient services. The Dr. C.C. Nicholson's Hospital does not provide those types of services. Naturally, the Dr. C.C. Nicholson's Hospital will not receive, as you were requesting, because it does not provide in-patient services.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$1,587,597,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: In spite of the fact that we have just reached the allocated time for this programme, I would, nevertheless, propose the question for Capital Expenditure on page 693. I will entertain a couple of questions.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$145,146,000

Dr. Cummings: Project Code 1203500 – Buildings - Health: The description of the project states:

“Completion of the Supply and Diamond-Grove health centres. Construction and rehabilitation of health centres, sheds, sinks and fence.”

Could the Hon. Minister give us the breakdown as to which health centres would have their sheds, sinks and fences repaired? What is the status of the completion or, should I say, is there a timeline and a completion date for the Supply Health Centre?

Mr. Dharamlall: The SMART Health Centre at Diamond-Grove is under construction. The Supply Health Centre is completed so there is a rollover payment retention and it is similar at Long Creek.

We have some new projects. There is a shed for the Paradise Health Centre. There is a guard hut and timber shed, as well as the installation of a plumbing system for the COVID-19 centre at Herstelling. There is a shed and a stage for COVID-19 patients at the Diamond Diagnostic Centre. There is a chain link and timber fence, a guard hut and a toilet for the Diamond Diagnostic Centre. There is the construction and installation of handwashing sinks at practically all, if not most, of the health facilities on the East Coast and the East Bank Demerara. There is a shed for COVID-19 patients at Eccles, Grove and Buxton. There is a walkway with a shed for the Eccles Health Centre. There is to be the remodelling of the room at the Beterverwagting Health Centre and the pharmacy area at the Lusignan Health Centre. There is the construction of a guard hut at the Paradise Health Centre and an outside toilet at the Clonbrook and Timehri Child Advocacy Centres and the retrofitting of the Better Hope Health Centre.

We will also be buying a lot of equipment for the Long Creek Maternal Waiting Home. There will be a generator and refrigerator accommodations for our mothers. There are many other things that we will be buying. There will be ventilators for the Diamond Diagnostic Centre and Electrocardiogram (ECG) machines for many health facilities on the East Coast and the East Bank Demerara. I thought these facilities already had those. There will be Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA) examination sets for the Diamond/Grove and Enterprise Health Centres. There will be

gynaecological examination beds for the Enterprise Health Centre and the Diamond Diagnostic Centre.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Chairman is asking if you could lay that over.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I have about 30 seconds.

Mr. Chairman: I have asked if you could lay it over because I promised the Members two questions on this programme.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$145,146,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Let me take this opportunity to say thanks to the Minister and staff for taking us through Agency 74, Region 4.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members. This is a good time to take the suspension. Let us see if we can return promptly.

Sitting suspended at 12.31 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 1.47 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I do not know if it was the soup with beef or the peas soup but, somehow, it slowed us down today.

Hon. Members, we shall resume the Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: We are at pages 504 and 505, Region 5. I noticed that we have had the Hon. Minister standing for 20 minutes. I trust that we will be expeditious with these proceedings.

Agency 75: Region 5: Mahaica-Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$204,111,000

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6111 – Administrative: I see here that there were five staff in the year 2019 and eight in 2020. Could the Hon. Member give the designations, salaries and benefits of the eight staff?

1.50 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you and good afternoon everyone. Mr. Chairman, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that, on the Government's side of the House, the Hon. Minister answers, so please correct that in the future; show some respect.

This line item caters for one Registry Supervisor at \$104,018, one Administrative Assistant at \$103,524, two Environmental Development Officers (EDOs) at \$104,654, one Chief Accountant at \$167,675, one Senior Personnel Officer (SPO) at \$144,466 and one Accountant at \$123,847. The increase is due to the appointment of one SPO, one Accountant, and the transfer of one Deputy Regional Executive Officer at \$277,911.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Member state the designations and salaries of these contract employees?

Mr. Dharamlall: It caters for one Principal Personnel Officer (PPO) at \$245,794 and one Expenditure Planning & Management Analyst (EPMA) at \$167,675.

Mr. Jordan: I recognise that, in 2019, the revised allocation was \$3,389,000 and now, in 2020, it is \$6,632,000, which is over a 90% increase in that line. Could the Hon. Member state what caused this increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not know which line item the Hon. Member is at.

Mr. Jordan: I am at line item 6116, Sir.

Mr. Dharamlall: I did mention earlier that it caters for one officer, the PPO, at \$245,794 and one EPMA at \$167,675. This would take account of all the increases that would accrue to them as well.

Mr. Jordan: Under Line item 6112, Senior Technical, I recognise that we had one staff in 2019 but we now have zero in 2020. Could the Hon. Member state why?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as you had indicated, when there is zero there is no reason to ask questions.

Mr. Jordan: Sir, not for the amount but the sum.

Mr. Dharamlall: The sum is zero.

Mr. Chairman: The sum is zero and you are not obliged to make a statement.

Mr. Jordan: I will be guided, Sir. Line item 6117, Temporary Employees, I would like for the Hon. Member to state what are the designations of these temporary employees.

Mr. Dharamlall: They are one Typist Clerk, two Drivers, one Clerk. The increase is due to the appointment of one Driver, one Typist Clerk and one Clerk/General.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Member state which buildings would be maintained and briefly state the nature of the maintenance required?

Mr. Dharamlall: These buildings are the Mahaicony sub-office, the Mahaicony Hospital, the main office and annex of the Regional Executive Officer and other living quarters.

Mr. Chairman, should I go through the entire list? As I indicated, they are the Regional Democratic Council's main office, boardroom, sub-region office, the Amerindian Hostel at Mahaicony, the guest house at Moraikobai and some living quarters.

Mr. Jordan: Could I have a brief statement of the nature of the maintenance required from the Hon. Member?

Mr. Dharamlall: Did the Hon. Member say maintenance department or the nature of the maintenance works?

Mr. Jordan: I said the nature of the maintenance required.

Mr. Dharamlall: The maintenance works to be undertaken would be general maintenance to the RDC's main office, which is a wooden and concrete building, and it would include repairs to the roof, internal walls and painting. I hope that it is not duck egg green because you know that APNU/AFC had a fetish for duck egg green, so they painted the entire country in duck egg green.

Maintenance also includes electrical works; windows have to be serviced; sanitary facilities have to be serviced; and similar types of works and routine maintenance have to be done to concrete columns at the boardroom.

There is also an issue of bat infestation at the boardroom, that has happened over the last five years. There are many farmers in that area who were removed from planting. The bat dung is good manure and we will use it when the farmers go back on the land very shortly. In other cases, we have to change damaged locks and do electrical works on the sub-office at Mahaicony and at the Amerindian Hostel, repairs to the roof, ceiling, windows, gutters, sanitary facilities, again, and painting. At the guest house in Moraikobai: repairs to the roof, ceiling, gutters, windows, sanitary facilities and painting again. At the living quarters: general repairs to sections of the ceiling, floor, roof, windows, electrical, plumbing and painting works; and similar works across the other living quarters.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, did I hear right? Are you talking about fertiliser, for example, bat dung?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Farmers were removed from planting on almost 50 acres at Fort Wellington. The land was repossessed in a very vicious way, which became illegal, but the court has since granted the land back to the farmers. We can make this bat dung available to the farmers – bat dung accumulated by the APNU/AFC in five years.

Mr. Chairman: I am worried about the association of bats and COVID-19.

Mr. Jordan: I really cannot understand how the farm got into maintenance of building but, nevertheless, I understand the nature of this Minister. I will proceed.

Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Member state what is the total number in the fleet of vehicles attached to the Regional Administration of Mahaica-Berbice, Region 5, and how many are in operation at the moment?

Mr. Dharamlall: We have many programmes in the Regional Democratic Council and this is only one such programme. I will be grateful for clarification from the Hon. Member as to whether he is speaking about this programme or all the programmes. If he is speaking about all of the

programmes, then I will be unable to answer for the other programmes because we have not yet finished those.

Mr. Jordan: It is preferably this programme, Sir.

Mr. Dharamlall: There are seven vehicles: the first one PMM 1635, a Hilux Surf which is nine years old; PMM 9165, a Hilux Surf, which is 10 years old; PJJ 6967, 13 years old; PPP 1695, eight years old; PRR 7765, six years old; PTT 4662, six years old and PWW 3052, three years old.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Line item 6281 – Security Services: There has been an increase in the 2020 budgeted sum. Could the Hon. Member kindly explain what might have caused the increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: Under this line item, we pay 46 security guards and those involved in escort duties. The increase is due to an additional eight guards at the RDC compound. There have been numerous reports of unauthorised persons entering the compound. I hope that those unauthorised persons were those who were breaking the law and that the former ‘petroleum jelly advisor’ was not a part of that; the notorious ‘petroleum jelly advisor and protestor’. They interfered with property. There was an increase of six additional guards at the two government compounds including the famous farm where \$90 million was spent. Ninety million dollars was spent since 2016 on that farm and only \$1.4 million in produce was sold so far in the last four years of that farm – \$90 million invested and \$1.4 million sold.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Member tell us what are the activities catered for under line item 6284?

Mr. Dharamlall: When one peruses the Auditor General’s Report one will find that, for a period of time, there were massive irregularities with the procurement system in Region 5. One will note, in this line item, we paid for the Regional Tender Board members, the evaluators and also for the distribution of masks to the residents of the Region.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities: Could the Hon. Member provide this Hon. Committee with the names of the local authorities that will benefit from these subventions and how much for each?

Mr. Dharamlall: Just a few days ago, there was a vote in this Committee against Amerindians and Amerindian development by the APNU/AFC. They voted against the entire capital programme. I would like to state to the Amerindian people of Moraikobai that, the People's Progressive Party/Civic will be providing a subvention to assist with the supply of fuel, the maintenance of the generator and for community enhancement projects to enhance the lives of the Amerindian people in Region 5. Moraikobai is the only Amerindian village in the entire Region 5 and we are proud to provide a subvention. We will put more money to support Amerindian development in this country.

Mr. Jordan: Perhaps I have to say, to the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils... Could the Hon. Member state for me which are the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils and how much they will be receiving and not Moraikobai?

2.05 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: The line item speaks to local authorities and local authorities include Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs), Community Development Councils (CDCs) and Amerindian Village Councils. Of course, the last Government had no regard for Amerindians, their administration or their governance. That is why they will not understand what is taking place here. We will provide to Moraikobai, with or without your support and commendation.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Mr. Chairman, I want to follow up on the same line item, 6312. Could the Hon. Member confirm if the total allocation under this line item is for Moraikobai alone?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated to you, there are different types of local authorities in our country. This line item, at this point in time, caters for – and I will repeat – the Amerindian people of Moraikobai, Region 5, to assist with the supply of fuel and the maintenance of their generator, because they need electricity too, and other things.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: A follow-up to line item 6312. I hear what the Hon. Member is saying but I would like clarity. I would like to know what are the subventions set aside for the NDCs in Region 5.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I spent the best half of yesterday afternoon... The subventions – Opposition Chief Whip, please, you need to school them – come from the Ministry of Local

Government and Regional Development. Please spend your time listening and understanding rather than heckling unnecessarily in the Committee.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I will try to be as specific as I can. I am asking this to clear the air. Could the Hon. Member state, how much will be provided to the Union-Naarstigheids NDC? I understand that it comes from local government, but I want to know what this is specifically used for. Is there any for the Union-Naarstigheids NDC?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I did indicate that yesterday and I really cannot spend the time... I think we are doing a disservice to the people of this country if you are not doing your homework. You are not doing your homework. *[Interruption]* Mr. Chairman, I am a very peaceful man, and the God who I believe in is also a peaceful God. I subscribe to certain principles that bear peace, and I come in goodwill.

As I said before, subventions will be provided to all 70 NDCs in the country. It is stated in the Budget. If they do not understand how to read the Budget, I would like to open our Ministry for a training programme for Members of the Opposition to come and learn how to use the Budget.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$204,111,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,500,000

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$217,771,000

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member state the designations and salaries for the 23 staff within that employ?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, this is the famous part. From January to July, 2020, the last Administration spent \$11,795,487 under this line item. Now, with \$8,750,000 being requested, the

increase is due to the appointment of five Farmhands at \$70,000 per month and nine Labourers at \$70,000 per month. It also includes two Sluice Attendants, two other Labourers, three Farmhands and eight other Labourers. I would like to reiterate that, since 2016, more than \$90 million was invested in this farm. This was supposed to be a model farm in Region 5, which has the most agricultural lands in the country. Over 85,000 acres of rice per crop were planted. This farm, a model farm where dozens of farmers were once planting, was taken away viciously by the last Administration. A model farm was imposed with over \$90 million spent and only \$1.4 million reaped in produce and sold in the last five years. That is an injustice to this Budget, an injustice to the resources, and an injustice to the taxpayers of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Mr. Jordan: I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for acknowledging that the Mahaica-Berbice Regional Administration, during the five years of the APNU/AFC governance, indeed provided jobs for the people of the Mahaica-Berbice, Region 5. And so, I thank you.

Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could the Hon. Member state the designation and the salary of that staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: In response to the preamble of the Hon. Member, jobs are created mostly by the private sector. The farmers are private sector people. There were dozens of farmers there, so dozens of jobs were taken away by the last Government. The farms had workers but those workers lost their jobs, and then there was the downstream, where jobs were also lost. There is no justification for the more than \$90 million spent on a farm and only \$1.4 million being received. Then, the Administration complain about the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) which has 17,000 jobs, and it took away 7,000 without justification, but look at what is happening here. It spent \$90 million and only reaped \$1.4 million. Imagine what was going on in the politics of Region 5 under the last Administration.

The increase is due to the appointment of an Agricultural Assistant at \$71,594.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up on both line items. When I look at the entire area, from line item 6111 to line item 6117, I want to ask the Hon. Member what he will now do with the staff that were employed, since he said that the land that formally belonged to the RDC was used as a farm and is now given back to the residents.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, our responsibility to the people of Guyana is to make sure that everyone is gainfully employed, quite unlike what happened in the last Administration. We will not discriminate against anyone, including your political affiliates. As you are aware, one Hon. Member of this Committee, in the Opposition, still retains a job – a senior position – earning over \$220,000 per month in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. I would like to let you know that, at the failed farm, where \$90 million was spent and only \$1.4 million in produce was harvested, the employees will be reassigned to the health service at the Fort Wellington and Mahaicony Hospitals and at the 16 health centres across Region 5.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister tell us, in view of the COVID-19 situation, what are the events captured under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, again, I will share my knowledge of the Budget. There is no reflection of a sum in this line item. So, again, to edify the Hon. Member on the other side, rather than make noise and protest in the Committee, please read the Budget. Maybe, I will have to go to Region 5, where I came from, to let the residents know that, instead of you representing them here, you are here protesting and doing very unconscionable things on their behalf.

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Mr. Chairman, I do not quite understand what the Member is saying. My book has a sum and it is not zero. I would like the Hon. Member to repeat his answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, could you call the line item and let me check what my copy of the book has?

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Line item 6291. It is \$2,300,000.

Mr. Chairman: Is it line item 6291 under National and Other Events, Agriculture?

Ms. Singh-Lewis: Yes, Sir. I am not sure if it is the ‘Mahipaul syndrome’, but that is what my copy of the book has.

Mr. Chairman: I think it might be that syndrome again, because my copy of the Estimates has zero too.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, line item 6251///designation. As I ask the question, I would first like to invite the Hon. Minister to Number 5 Village once again. Could the Hon. Member state the

number of roads that will be maintained under this line item and the communities which will benefit thereof?

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would like to share with this honourable Committee that I was, actually, born in Region 6, but I am from Region 5. I have been going to that Hon. Member's village even without his knowledge for a lot of years and I even have family in the village that the Hon. Member is from. I do not know what the Hon. Member is speaking about.

The last encounter that I had with the Hon. Member, Mr. Jordan, of Region 5, was when the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, the Hon. Minister of Labour and I saw the Hon. Member in Region 5 leading a protest at a funeral. That is what we have seen from that Hon. Member. The Hon. Member would pay the price in this democracy for such outrageous behaviour, to sow the seeds of discord amongst the peaceful residence and citizens of Region 5.

I was there just a few days ago. I also went to Bath Settlement and I was told, at Bath Settlement, where a certain engineer of the Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) is supposed to have oversight, that the engineer refused to visit with the residents of Bath Settlement. I do not know if it is discriminating or if it was discriminating against the residents of Bath Settlement. There was no water pressure. There are hundreds of leaks in the water system. Instead of the Members doing their work as officials of the Government, they were on the road protesting and destroying public property. There is evidence of that. Destruction of property is a criminal offence, but we will again fix all of the roads that were destroyed. We will fix them.

We will maintain farm to market roads in DeEdward Village, in Bush Lot, in Esau, in Jacob Mahaicony, in Champagne Mahaicony, in Novar, in Abary, in Hyde Park, in Burma and in a section of the Mahaicony Branch Road.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Jordan and Hon. Members, I just want to bring to your attention that now is half of an hour since we started this head. We have 10 different heads to consider. We are just at 30%.

Mr. Jordan: The hypocritical statements that come from Members of this House and threatening remarks are very unbecoming. The residents of the Mahaica-Berbice region needs an apology for

the activities that occurred within the Mahaica-Berbice region on 6th and 9th March and all of those dates. Let me move on.

Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Member state again the communities that would benefit and the number of bridges that would be maintained?

Mr. Dharamlall: One of the tenets of democracy is building bridges and that is something that the last Government could not have done. The People's Progressive Party/Civic Government will be building bridges in Hopetown Village, West Coast Berbice; in Strath Campbell, Mahaicony; in Blairmont, West Bank Berbice; in Bush Lot, West Coast Berbice; and in Rosignol, West Bank Berbice. We will be building bridges.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$217,771,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$43,500,000

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$43,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$179,328,000

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could the Hon. Member kindly state the designations and salaries for these staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is one Electrical Engineer at \$212,241, one Civil Engineer at \$246,092 and a Senior Superintendent of Works (SSW) at \$117,078.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: I see three temporarily employees. Could you provide the designations and the salaries for these employees?

Mr. Dharamlall: This line item caters for temporary employees and not permanent protesters. There is one Road Foreman at \$78,427, one heavy duty Vehicle Driver at \$70,000 and one Equipment Operator at \$73,263.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Member kindly state the buildings which will be maintained and, again, the nature of the maintenance required?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I was hoping that the Hon. Member would ask me about buildings.

Mr. Chairman: Did he not ask you that?

Mr. Dharamlall: I was really hoping that, because I have a lot of information to share with you, including the building the Hon. Member started, spent \$12 million to get it fixed and over \$70 million was already spent. His office is not completed as yet. The Hon. Member who is asking me about buildings was supposed to be housed in a building for \$12 million but over \$70 million was already spent on it. The Opposition Chief Whip should take note of that and find out exactly what is going on with that building.

We will be doing routine maintenance on the roof, ceiling, stairway, lights, the Engineering Department, the entire living quarters at Fort Wellington, the Engineers living quarters – we have to ensure that our engineers are well accommodated but not in \$70 million offices which are not yet completed – the State Auditors living quarters and also two other living quarters for the Regional Democratic Council officials.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister state, what are the works, if any, and how much will be expended in the communities of Hopetown, Bath Settlement, Ithaca, Cotton Tree, Belladrum and Dundee?

Mr. Dharamlall: Some of the villages in Region 5 that the Hon. Member just spoke about were heavily discriminated by the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change. As a matter of fact, Bath Settlement, under public works, streetlights were removed within weeks of the APNU/AFC coming into Government, in 2015. It took the streetlights from Blairmont, Cotton Tree and other areas also. Yes. We would be maintaining sections of the Blairmont Branch Road, Kippy Street, Bath Settlement; Number 7, Cross Street – Mr. Chairman, that is my village –

Woodley Park, another village that the last Government discriminated against and did not give its full support. The Venezuelan Housing Scheme roads are in a deplorable state because, of course... The PPP/C usually gets 100% support from these areas. The last Government refused to work in those areas. Also, Golden Fleece...

We will also be procuring a lot of road building materials. So, for those roads that were built in other areas, not built to specification, poorly built and of poor standard, we will also be rehabilitating those roads. In Middle Walk Dundee and Burma, we will be rehabilitating those roads, as well. In the residential area of Burma, we will also be doing some rehabilitation works. Mr. Chairman, I can let you know that, for the last two months, we are currently doing road works in Hopetown, Saint John, Number 29 Village and Number 30 Village. Our Government is saying that, in most of these areas, it will not discriminate. We will work with everyone, and the roads the Opposition destroyed we will rebuild them. That is what we are doing currently in these villages as I mentioned, Hopetown, Number 29, Number 30 and Saint John.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, the question to the Hon. Member was, could the Hon. Minister state what the works are, if any, and how much will be expended in the communities of Hopetown, Bath Settlement, Ithaca, Cotton Tree, Belladrum and Dundee? The Hon. Minister went on to give me a list of villages. I want to put on record, is it that the Hon. Minister is saying that no works are budgeted for Hopetown, Belladrum and Ithaca? Kindly clarify that for me, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like simple English. The understanding of English language has never been the strong point of the APNU/AFC. I will repeat, once again, to enhance your embarrassment. In Hopetown, in Saint John, in Number 29 Village, in Number 30 Village, the Ministry of Public Works is doing roads in those communities. Mr. Chairman, I would like to report to you, also, that in this new dispensation of the Government, we work very closely and in collaboration with the sister Ministries of this Government. That is how it ought to be done and it is obvious that it was never done, in the last Government, which is why there has been a massive breakdown in public administration in Guyana over the last five years. In Kippy Street, Bath Settlement – \$10.8 million; Blairmont Branch Road – \$7.62 million; Macambo Street – \$7 million; Number 7 Village – \$8.5 million; General Rehab at First Street, Woodley Park – \$8.8 million and these are all estimates.

2.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to you that public works will be shared to different contractors. It would not be limited just to agents of the APNU/AFC.

The Venezuelan Housing Scheme, \$3 million; rehabilitation to Cross Street at Golden Fleece, \$6 million; we will procure \$2 million in materials; Middle Walk Dundee – \$7.5 million; and Burma Residential Area, \$4.5 million.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Mr. Jordan, now the time is going.

Mr. Jordan: I want to have it very clearly, recorded, for the record sake, that Belladrum and Ithaca has zero allowance in the Budget. Mr. Chairman, I will move on.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify.

Mr. Jordan: Under line item 6254, Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses, which portion of the sea defence is due to be maintained?

Mr. Dharamlall: Sea defence maintenance is not something that the last Government should be asking me about. Do you know what has happened at Content and Dantzig, Mahaicony? There was less than a metre of encroachment that became a few kilometres because of bad administration and corruption by the APNU/AFC. As a matter of fact, now, the entire area is inundated with salt water. It is because of its maladministration that farmers and households are affected. Now, there are thousands of acres of land under salt water and lives are going to be terribly affected. [**Mr. Duncan:** *(Inaudible)*] We will not be buying pampers for your mouth actually, Mr. Duncan.

In addition, to all of what I have just said, we will be using greenheart wood to do revetment works, Hon. Mr. Duncan. At the Rosignol sluice outfall there are collapsed sections, deteriorated piles, walers and sheet piles. All of those are going to be replaced. Please, do not become orgasmic about that.

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$179,328,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$104,200,000

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$104,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$2,105,606,000

Mr. Jordan: We all understand the COVID-19 situation that we are in. Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: I would first like to ask, should school be reopened before the year is through, is there any provision in this line item for fuel for the David Granger school bus, now renamed Region 5 School Bus?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we could save some time with the repetition.

Mr. Dharamlall: The tax dollars of Guyana will not promote the sycophancy of any Member of the Opposition. As I am aware, there are no David ‘G’ buses in Region 5. As a matter of fact, our research has shown that, at a previous life, the David ‘G’ buses were smoking the villages rather than picking up school children and were picking up school children in a very discriminatory way.

I would like to let Members know now that all the Region 5 school buses will work in all the villages of Region 5. We will be using three boats, four buses and one canter. In addition... [**An Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*).] ...truancy campaign bus; there is no truancy campaign bus. We will be using those vehicles as part of our truancy campaign. There are two cruisers, one canter and one minibus to transport learners and teachers in Abary and Mahaicony, because we care about everyone. We will be providing gas for the dormitory and the Home Economics Department.

Mr. Jordan: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister state whether the very David ‘G’ buses, now renamed, are still being used to transport the nurses, doctors or those whom we term ‘frontline workers’ in the Mahaica-Berbice region?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am checking; this is education and not health.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I am dealing with fuel and lubricants

Mr. Chairman: Is it under education?

Mr. Jordan: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dharamlall: There are buses in the region. I do not know of any David ‘G’ buses from my visit to Region 5. I have not seen them. Mr. Chairman, I would like to let you know that the buses we have in Region 5 are used as part of the entire programme of support to fight COVID-19 in the region.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I see \$4,568,000 in excess. Could the Hon. Member state, what would that be used for? If possible, when are the National and Other Events likely to take place in this COVID-19 period?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will be providing support, under this line item, to schoolchildren and not to the APNU/AFC political activities. Virtual activities will be conducted, under this line item, as well as a Regional Award Ceremony for our schoolchildren in Region 5.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6292 – Dietary: I know for a fact that the APNU/AFC Government introduced a school feeding programme in a number of schools in the Mahaica-Berbice region. I want to ask the Hon. Member, is this programme catered for should school be reopened under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: I will do a lecture on how the Budget should be read and interpreted. Under this line item, please note, just to indicate to the Hon. Member that the Five Bs programme that he has been speaking about includes: boats, bicycles, buses, breakfast and barbershops. I was in the Rupununi recently and the Amerindians told me that whilst some areas received Five Bs they received two Bs. I asked them, what are the two Bs that they received? They said that it was *bare blows*.

Under this line item, we will be providing meals for 35 students and staff at the Mahaicony Students Dormitory. I would like to, again, educate the Hon. Member that the school feeding programme is centrally directed, and he should have asked that question under the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Jordan, keep your eyes on the time, because we have five minutes remaining for this agency.

Mr. Jordan: A follow-up: Previously, the question was asked about the feeding programme and the Hon. Minister of Education, my good Friend, Ms. Manickchand, said that it is catered for under the region. I am now a bit ‘mixed up’ as to who is really catering for this programme.

Mr. Dharamlall: As I said, the only two Bs that we know about in this country is *bare blows* under the APNU/AFC. I can assure you that the Hon. Minister of Education will not make such a mistake and will not commit such an error. I would suggest that you write to the Minister of Education and you will receive proper clarity on a lot of the misapprehensions you have at this point in time.

I can let you know that every schoolchild will be transported to school whether by himself or herself, because of the removal of the hardship measures so that his or her family can now afford its own vehicle and, also, because we will provide fuel where fuel has to be provided. We will ensure that every child remains in school, focus on learning, grow into lives that are becoming, and become proper and decent citizens of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$2,105,606,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$51,850,000

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, permit me this one question. Project code 1203700 – Buildings -- Education: What are the works and costs, if that could be provided, that will be done at the Bygeval Secondary School since, throughout the last five years, we spent nearly \$50 million doing rehabilitative works at the school? This was because of the mess, in the first place, that the school was in.

Mr. Dharamlall: There are very many things that I have to raise on this question, one of which has to do with ‘this is an emergency budget’. It is only for three months because of the autocratic and dictatorial behaviour of the last Administration, as it refused to acknowledge the Constitution and spent five months counting Statements of Poll (SoPs) or Statements of Recount (SoRs) which,

until now, it has not been able to provide to the people of this country. That is why we have a three-month Budget.

The Hon. Member indicated that the last Government spent over \$50 million at the Bygeval Secondary School. I would like to let you know, Mr. Chairman that Bygeval Secondary School is the largest school structure in Region 5. One of the best Presidents, so far, has come from Bygeval Secondary School, the Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, Champion of the Earth. We are proud of him because a lot of the other Members on the other side, including the Hon. Member, Ms. McDonald, benefitted tremendously from the Administration of Mr. Jagdeo. [**An Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible)*] You do not have to be embarrassed about it. It is true. Yes. We have the details.

Opposition Chief Whip [Mr. Jones]: A Point of Order.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Jones, what is your Point of Order?

Mr. Jones: Once again, the Hon. Minister is making reference to a Member of this Committee and not referring to the line item of which he is being requested to pronounce on.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please stay on track with the line item.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a consequence of the poor, shoddy and substandard work done with \$50 million being spent on the Bygeval Secondary School, now we still have to spend more moneys on the school. The sum of \$4 million will be spent and a lot of rehabilitation works must be done and will be done. Some of the sections need complete rewiring and we will have to provide that rewiring works. Work needs to be done on the roof and the front facade, all of that we will be doing. Despite the spending of \$50 million on Bygeval Secondary School by the last Administration, APNU/AFC, if children go to the school now and it rains, they will get wet. The last Administration spent \$50 million and the school is still leaking. That is your legacy – shoddy works, incompetence, poor management, corruption, extravagance and the squandering of taxpayers' dollars.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$ 51,850,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$964,519,000

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): In light of COVID-19, I do not know who the beneficiaries of this training would be. I am seeing an increase from the revised sum of \$784,000 to over \$2 million. How much money, between now and the rest of the year, will be allotted to that training? Who are the beneficiaries of that training?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I must indicate to you that, of this amount approximately \$600,000 were already spent, just to inform the Hon. Member. Numerous training programmes are catered for and the Hon. Member would know what Earned Value Management (EVM), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), primary lateral sclerosis (PLS), logistics management, zero maternal deaths by haemorrhaging and the continuing of the medical education programme.

I must say, too, that I would like to encourage the Regional Health Officer (RHO), if there are drug abusers in Region 5, they can also engage the Administration to provide training and critical rehabilitation support for them and not use up our pethidine to fester the drug abuse problem.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Are there adequate storage facilities in Region 5 to ensure the potency of the drugs? Normally, the region will warrant the moneys to the Ministry of Health, but it would leave back some for emergency supplies. I would like to know how much money has been budgeted for emergency supplies? [**An Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*)] Have you not heard? [**Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*)] It is a two-part question.

Firstly, I am asking, are there any storage facilities? There are storage bonds to keep the potency of the drugs that are being bought.

Secondly, I know generally that moneys for drugs and medical supplies are warranted to the Ministry of Health to benefit from the economy of scale. I am wondering if some parts are left back for emergency drugs. What percentage or how much money is left to be spent for the rest of the year to purchase emergency supplies?

Mr. Dharamlall: If you read the reports of the Audit Office for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 – learn to read the Report of the Audit Office rather than rabble-rouse in this Committee – a great anomaly, a big audit query under regional health as well as the Ministry of Health has to do with drugs and medical supplies. There is a great opportunity now for us to have this problem

resolved. The health sector was totally mismanaged. Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, there was a famous drug bond that our taxpayers had to fund for \$400 million.

In Region 5, the Hon. Member would know and they ought to have known that there is no regionally built storage facility specific to drugs and medical supplies. The Hon. Member would know too, that the health centres and the hospitals in Region 5 do their own storage. The Hon. Member would know, also, that centrally, 60% of the drugs are stored and 40% are relayed to the regions. The 40% is to allow for and to treat with emergencies.

The policy that the last Government had was that moneys from the region had to be warranted to the central Ministry. I do not know of how successful that was in the last Government, because that was also an audit query that kept reoccurring. The Ministry of Health will advise us on the different directions, as we move forward, in this Budget and in budgets to come.

I can assure you, Hon. Member, that every health facility in this country, quite unlike what happened in the APNU/AFC time, could not source Aspirin and Panadol at the health facilities, billions of dollars were spent on drugs and medical supplies and they were not provided. Every health facility in this country will get drugs and medical supplies.

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$964,519,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$165,745,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Jordan you have the floor and after that I will allow one other question, because we are 10 minutes into the other schedule.

Mr. Jordan: Project code 1203700 – Buildings - Health: I see here a provision for incinerators and when I reference Volume III, I recognised it also states that we will be building two incinerators, one at Fort Wellington Hospital and one at Mahaicony Hospital.

During the Budget debate, the Hon. Member, present Minister sitting, mentioned to this House that the APNU/AFC Government built two incinerators at the cost of \$25 million as compared to

that of Region 2 at the cost of \$12 million. Are we building two other incinerators or is it that the incinerators were never built?

Mr. Dharamlall: I recall speaking about two incinerators in Region 5 and one in Region 1. I said in my Budget speech that the incinerators in Region 5 are for \$25 million or \$26 million. I also said that the one in Region 1 is for \$5 million. That is what I said. This brings me to this issue, in Region 5, tenders have gone out. This is the estimate for the incinerators. Apparently, my research has shown that the incinerators may be similar. If two incinerators in Region 5 cost close to \$26 million and one in Region 1, with practically the same specifications, costs \$5 million, then something is definitely wrong.

3.05 p.m.

That is what I had said about those incinerators. Under this programme, we will install gas lines in the accident and emergency (A&E) unit, the intensive care unit (ICU), the surgical wards and in the high dependency unit (HDU) at the Mahaicony Hospital. Surgical wards will also be constructed at the Mahaicony Hospital. We will also be renovating and remodelling the accident and emergency ward at the Mahaicony Diagnostic Centre, a security hut at Experiment Health Centre – that is close to Bath Settlement, for those of you who do not know – a changing room and flooring of tents at the COVID-19 site.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to inform you that, in last Government, \$1.5 billion was set aside for capital works to fight COVID-19 and some works began. In this instance, the tent we now have to floor is part of the COVID-19 fight. Apparently, tents were procured and now the floor is requested for these tents and that is what this floor is for. We also have to launch an investigation into how the COVID-19 relief funds provided to the regions were expended during the course of the APNU/AFC Administration.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister.

Hon. Member Mr. Jordan, please, keep this one short because we are 15 minutes into the other programme.

Mr. Jordan: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I thank you. I trust that when the investigation is launched that the COVID-19 deaths and cases will decrease.

My contention in the question is whether, presently, as stated, we have two incinerators built at the Fort Wellington and Mahaicony Hospitals. We can rely on the *Hansard* for such evidence. At what cost were they built, when were they built and who built the incinerators?

Mr. Dharamlall: Under this project code, we will construct an incinerator estimated at the value of \$13.5 million at the Fort Wellington Hospital and an incinerator at the Mahaicony Hospital for \$12.8 million.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will put the question because we are now 16 minutes into the next head and it is unfair to the officers who are coming after you.

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$165,745,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Let me thank the Hon. Minister and his staff for taking us through that head.

Agency: 76 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$184,591,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: There is an increase of \$7.5 million to cover expenses for eight workers. Could the Hon. Minister give us the positions and the emoluments of these workers?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: one Typist Clerk, another Clerk, another Typist Clerk, an Accounts Clerk, an Accounts Clerk II, another Accounts Clerk II, a Stores Clerk and a Checker.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: There is an increase from \$294,000 to \$1.3 million. Could the Hon. Minister justify this for us?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are things that will be bought. It is a long list, but most of it is to enhance our mitigation activities within the Administration to fight against COVID-19.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6243 – Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies: There is an increase of approximately \$1.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister say where these...?

Mr. Dharamlall: The mere fact that we have to increase janitorial supplies is because we have to clean up the place. The place was left very untidy by the last Regime – waste paper baskets, hand brushes and dust pans, Harpic fluid, Smell-O-Pine disinfectant, floor mops, toilet soap, laundry soap, rubber gloves, soap powder, toilet brushes, cheese cloth, plastic buckets, mopping buckets, hard brushes, dust pans, pointer brooms, door mats, liquid Ajax, bleach, toilet deodoriser, methylated spirits, toilet flushers, Bright Bowl toilet cleaner and other cleaning agents.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain the cause for the significant increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is a running justification practically across the regions. It is to pay stipends to tender board members and the evaluators. It is also for awareness planning and response measures to disaster under this line item.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: I need some further clarity on the increase at line item 6243. In the interest of time, I would suggest that the Hon. Minister, if he is willing to, he could layover the information pertaining to all of the janitorial and cleaning supplies.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, would you lay it over?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I already spoke to the list and I called the cleaning agents out, so I will not be amenable to laying it over.

Ms. Sarabo-Halley: Since we are going to go through it that way, I would like to know the sizes of all of the items and the number of all of the items he plans to buy – the quantity, everything. If he would not mind, he could go through it now, since he does not want to lay it over.

Mr. Chairman: I am sure he would not mind.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the reason the Hon. Members want to waste time is because they do not want us to tell the people of Region 6 what it is that we are doing, as the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. I would be happy to receive a request in writing or by electronic

mail (e-mail), if they are so sophisticated, or by *WhatsApp* or *Messenger*, and that request will be presented at the appropriate time.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you have a request before you, right now.

Mr. Dharamlall: I will not lay it over. They can ask a question and we will provide it in writing.

Mr. Sinclair: This does not count as transparency.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member did ask a specific question.

Mr. Dharamlall: Specifically, we have already indicated the items. We are unable to provide the information that the Hon. Member is asking for, as a layover, in terms of the sizes of the bottles and the quantities of each bottle.

Mr. Chairman: Are you prepared to provide that at a later stage, Sir?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, at a later stage, yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister say to this honourable Committee, what does that \$10 million include in this budget for the rest of the year?

Mr. Dharamlall: Under other infrastructure, we will be doing repairs to State House's fence, and landfilling and installing security lights at the compound. We will also be doing some works at the Amerindian Hostel and even more works on the fence of the Amerindian Hostel, and external electrical works will be done in the Regional Democratic Council's compound.

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$184,591,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$18,800,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Project code 2504200 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration: We see here \$6.8 million for the purchase of furniture and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us where this furniture will be used?

Mr. Dharamlall: A sanitisation unit will be placed at the RDC's main building and at Whim's sub-office; a photocopier to replicate materials; and printing materials. We also have to enhance the tools that are provided to our staff, so that some computers will have to be bought as well as office chairs – apparently, the last Government left a lot of defective furniture, whilst they were sitting in huge offices – a water dispenser, desks and refrigerators for five different living quarters.

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$18,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.20 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$964,828,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: There is a sum under this line item of \$63 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us, why is there such an increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: The increase is only \$6.5 million. It is for the appointment of Labourers, Sluice Attendants, Rangers and other Labourers.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There is an increase from \$234,250,000 to \$280,000,000. Could the Hon. Minister please explain this increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report that under line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, in Region 6, between the period 1st January to 31st August, 2020, the regional administration, at that time, spent \$167,280,000. In the many visits from the Ministers to Region 6, including the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, my Colleague as well as other Ministers, the issue of drainage and irrigation and the dilapidated state of the agricultural infrastructure was raised as one of the sore issue. We will have to provide support to the mobile pump at Number 51 Village. We will also have to assist the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils

in its drainage works as well as with fuel to the Black Bush Polder and the Manarabisi Pump Stations.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: There is a sum of \$460 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the areas where these works would be undertaken?

Mr. Dharamlall: The areas include: Bush Lot, Maida, Kilmarnock, Philippi, Cromarty, Wellington Park, Tarlogie, Number 36, Kiltearn, Eversham, Number 46 Village, Friendship, Adventure, Whim, Bloomfield and other areas.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: There is an increase from \$180,000 to \$310,000. Could the Hon. Minister say where exactly this would be used?

Mr. Dharamlall: In a budget of hundreds of millions of dollars going into the billions, I am being asked a question on a budget of \$310,000. That is the level or type of question that we are getting. We will be providing fumigation of houses in Black Bush Polder as well as the Drainage and Irrigation sub-office at Whim and also the removal of garbage.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I am asking, could the Hon. Minister indicate to the us what sort of training will be done, and would this training take into consideration the suicide issue in the East Berbice–Corentyne?

Mr. Dharamlall: This will be used to enhance the computer efficiency and skills of our overseers, rangers, sluice attendants and, also, the general knowledge, especially in the agricultural sector in Region 6. I do not see why training in the area of suicide should not be part of this and other programmes. So, I would also suggest, as you are suggesting, that be taken into consideration.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6281 – Security Services: I noticed that there is \$61 million for security services for the rest of the year. Could you say exactly where and who is going to be contracted under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, read the Budget book properly; it is not \$61 million for the rest of the year. The budget for the year is \$61,674,000 and the balance on the budget is \$20,496,000. So,

that means \$41,178,000 was already paid. It is to pay security guards and it also includes the 14% value-added tax (VAT) at that time, for the eight hours per day.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$964,828,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$50,000,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Project code 1301000 – Drainage and Irrigation: There is a sum of \$50 million for the construction of revetment, bridge and excavation of canals. Could the Hon. Minister please specify the areas where these works will be done and the amount of works completed?

Mr. Dharamlall: A revetment of 150 ft will be done at the Crabwood Creek sluice and the construction of a heavy-duty 16ft x 32ft dimension bridge also at Crabwood Creek. The excavation of Number 51 to Number 43 Villages first depth canal will facilitate drainage of the Black Bush Polder front lands. It is about 9 kilometres (km). The excavation of Lesbeholden/Mibicuri is about 1,700 rods and more than 400 farmers and residents will benefit. Similarly, with the excavation of 2,726 rods in the Lesbeholden/Mibicuri front lands distributary, over 1,000 farmers will benefit. The excavation of Letter Kenny/Bloomfield drainage canal – over 2,000 rods – will benefit over 400 farmers, and with the excavation of the Johns to Ankerville facade – 1,000 rods – over 100 farmers will benefit.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Under the same line item, are there any construction, revetment, bridges or excavations of canals for East Bank Berbice?

Mr. Dharamlall: I must indicate to the Hon. Member that this is basically a three-month Budget – an emergency budget – and we know the reasons we are now presenting a budget. It is no fault of the Government, but all attributed to the past Government. So, those are works that will take account in future budgets.

Mr. Ramjattan: One final question. The excavation stated here, is it going to be new canals or is this going to be maintenance of the old canals that we have?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are not new canals, but these are substantial works and that is why they come under the capital expenditure.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$50,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$327,680,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: There is an increase from \$15.9 million to \$20.3 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us why the increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: This line item takes account for the following: a Cleaner, Driver, Sluice Attendant and another Cleaner.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: There is a sum of \$20.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the Committee what sort of works will be done and please specify the areas?

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, we have to do rehabilitation work for the Regional Executive Officer's living quarters. We will also have to enhance Regional Democratic Council's compound at Vryman's Erven. We also have to fence and landfill a compound at Springlands as well as at Vryman's Erven, to enhance the conditions of our staff and the environment in which they work.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what sort of buildings, where they are located and how many?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will be repairing the roof and the ceiling walls of one of the regional buildings in Vryman's Erven. It is a concrete and timber building.

3.35 p.m.

There are some rotten wooden members on another building in Vryman's Erven which will be replaced and that will provide better conditions for the staff; it is a concrete building. There will

be renovation works there. On the other six timber buildings repair works will be done to rotten and broken washrooms, ceilings, closets, windows and roofs.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: Could the Hon. Member please specify why is the double amount there?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is to procure long boots, safety boots, raincoats and other gears for 41 staff members. And, also, the purchase of masks for all staff in our fight against COVID-19.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister please specify what sort of training will be done, to whom and where?

Mr. Dharamlall: One of the Superintendents of Works will be attending an AutoCAD training and this takes account of that.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Could the Hon. Minister please repeat what he said?

Mr. Dharamlall: This line item takes account of training for one of the Superintendents of Works in AutoCAD training.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: This is a follow-up question. How much of that sum is allocated for repairs to the REO's living quarters?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is approximately \$3 million, and this is spread from January to December.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the five David G buses in the region would be maintained to service the East Berbice-Corentyne?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, sorry, I did not get the question.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Would the five David G buses, inclusive of the boats at Orealla and Barakara, be maintained for the service to the children of East Berbice-Corentyne?

Mr. Dharamlall: This programme is Public Works. There are 10 moving pieces of vehicles, including a Toyota Hilux Surf, Nissan Frontier, pickup, lorry, land leveller, four motorcycles and a Nissan Frontier.

Mr. Holder: A follow-up on the same line item 6264. Is the Hon. Minister saying that there is nothing for the David G vehicles?

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, I will take my time and explain very slowly that, this programme is called Public Works. I can repeat the numbers of the vehicles that I just shared with you. They are as follows: Toyota Hilux Surf, Nissan Frontier, a pickup, a lorry, a land leveller, four motorcycles and one Nissan Frontier.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$327,680,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

[Mr. Chairman left the Chair.]

[Mr. Seeraj, Presiding Member, assumed the Chair.]

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$107,000,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Under this programme, project code 1100700, Bridges, there is \$42 million for the construction of bridges. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the location where these bridges will be built, the number of bridges to be built and the cost for same?

Mr. Dharamlall: Presiding Member, I would like to inform you that I just heard a heckle from the Hon. Member, Mr. Sherod Duncan, as the Hon. Member stood to speak, referring to you as proxy. This Parliament takes that Office very seriously. The unfettered words that come out of the mouth of Mr. Sherod Duncan needs to be taken account of. We will have to ensure that discipline is maintained in this Committee.

There will be a footpath bridge at the western sideline, Auchlyne Village – with dimensions of 9.8 metres x 1.83 metres; a light duty bridge at Jallop Alley, Cumberland – 7.93 metres x 3.05 metres; a wooden light duty bridge at western half, Kendall Village – 9.15 x 3.66 metres; a footpath at Train Line, Third Street, linking Miss Phoebe, South Corentyne – 22.4 metres x 1.82 metres; a footpath at Fourth Street, Whim Village – have you seen the rubber stamp there – 8.5 metres x 1.83 metres; a light duty bridge at Lesbeholden, South, across the main drain, Field 910 – 29.1

metres x 3.05 metres; a light duty bridge at Yakusari – 19.6 metres x 3.05 metres; and a light duty bridge at Joanna, South Field 11 – 18.3 metres x 3.05 metres.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Project code 1401000 – Roads: The sum of \$65 million is allocated for the provision of roads. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the areas where these roads will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: One of the signature projects, in this year, is the design of a road from Number 52 Village to the Canje Creek, to open up more farm lands; the rehabilitation of Third Cross Street, Edinburgh – 160 metres x 3.3 metres; the rehabilitation of Bascom Street, Reliance Settlement, East Canje – all of these are asphaltic concrete roads – 203 metres; construction of a street in South Ankerville – 210 metres; the rehabilitation of School Street, Alness – 657 metres; the rehabilitation of Bush Lot, Cross Street – 657 metres; and the rehabilitation of Middle Walk, Number 64 Village – 242 metres.

Ms. Walton-Desir: A follow-up question on the last item. I wonder whether the Hon. Minister would be so kind as to share with us the rationale for ending the road at Number 52 Village. I know that persons from Number 52 Village all the way to Number 56 Village are heavily reliant on farming and there is a lot of arable lands. I was just wondering, could advise us as to the rationale?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is a road in the back lands going way done to Canje Creek. The alignment is from Number 52 Village to Canje Creek, but account will be taken of the lands in all of those areas.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$107,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$ 4,548,916,000

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: There is a reduction of staff by 33. Under the same line item, there is an increase of wages by \$130,416,000. Could the Hon. Minister give some clarity on this?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6112 takes account of five Graduate Senior Assistant Mistresses upgraded to Graduate Headmistresses; one Graduate Senior Assistant died; three Assistants absconded; one Nongraduate Assistant retired; and 13 Graduate Senior Assistant Mistresses upgraded to Graduate Senior Mistresses.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: There is an increase from \$15,151,000 to \$20 million...

Mr. Dharamlall: I did not hear the question.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: There is an increase from \$15,151,000 to \$20 million. Could the Hon. Minister please specify the nature of these prints and what will they be used for?

Mr. Dharamlall: This budgeted line item will be used to procure a number of items such as: forms; subscriber identification module (SIM) cards; stores ledgers; imprest cash books; internal stores requisition (ISR) books; request to purchase (RTP) books to conduct daily cash composition; purchasing of all the national newspapers – the *Guyana Chronicle*, *Stabroek News*, *Kaieteur News*, and the *Mirror*; the regional magazine will be helped in printing... [**An Hon. Member (Opposition):** *(Inaudible)*]

3.50 p.m.

Yes, the *Mirror* is a national newspaper and the daily *Guyana Times*... other reams of paper at the attendance register, time books, goods received books, stock books, store ledgers and child development index cards.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Would printed materials for the children who are at home and participating during the COVID -19 session, fall under this category or another line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: There are 17 secondary schools, 53 primary schools and 57 nursery schools. The reason for that increase is to cater for the materials that would be provided to those children as a result of the COVID-19 environment in which they now have to operate.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: We are aware that school is off and there is a significant increase here for almost \$6 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to

us why, even though school is off, we are still purchasing drugs and medical supplies for education?

Mr. Dharamlall: In our massive fight against COVID-19, we will be procuring at least 180 first-aid kits primarily for schools. Practically all are to enhance the first aid capacity in our schools. We will also be procuring infrared thermometers so that, upon entry in all of the facilities, we will be able to screen for any changes in temperature as well.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Services: Would part of the \$25 million be allocated to service the five David G buses, the boat at Barakara and the boat at Orealla? Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will be servicing a host of vehicles. I think 13 vehicles were assigned to the Education Department. These vehicles are PJJ... Should I read the numbers? These are vehicles in the Education Department that will be serviced.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): There is an increase from \$11.9 million to \$22.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate the type of training? We know that most are being done virtually. What scholarships are being given to the people of the Berbice branch?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report that, under the wise and auspicious leadership of the Hon. Priya Manickchand, during these challenging times, teachers will also have to be provided with upgraded training – virtual training. This budget line will also cater for facilitators who will conduct training with and for teachers.

Mr. Holder: If I heard correctly, I am not sure if it is line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials. The Minister mentioned advertisements in national newspapers and he included a newspaper that we, on this side of the Committee, do not know anything about. Could you repeat which national newspapers have sums allocated for advertisements?

Mr. Dharamlall: I did not say that Print and Non-Print Materials cater for the payment of advertisement in newspapers, so I would not be able to answer that question.

Presiding Member: I think the Hon. Member is referring to a heckle which is not part of the official proceedings.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$4,548,916,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$129,600,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Project code 2504100 – Furniture and Equipment - Education: There is a sum of \$40 million that states, “Purchase of furniture and equipment for schools”. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the category and type of furniture that will be purchased for schools, since we are aware that school is not in session?

Mr. Dharamlall: I recall, in the last Administration, three days before the change of the Government, a COVID-19 hospital was built for \$1.6 billion, but it was only a shell. Hundreds of millions of dollars will now have to be spent to furnish it. Similarly, we have to make sure that the schools are all ready for the admission of students. Furniture and equipment are necessary items that have to be placed in our schools. It makes no sense there is a school with walls and without furniture inside. We will be buying combination furniture, beds and mattresses, tablets, computers, office chairs, overhead projectors, desktop and laptop computers... Do you want to challenge it? We are buying computers for schools to enhance services, something that the APNU/AFC could not do for five years. As I said, projectors, projector clickers, projector mounts, screens, other mattresses and teachers’ tables.

I am amazed that schools in Region 6 do not have these things. Five years the last Government, spent, but I realised what has happened, they were buying those things for themselves. As I had indicated earlier this morning, where the former Minister with responsibility for Housing spent \$13 million just on her office, and here we are spending \$40 million only for furniture for schools. Just one office in the last Government cost \$13 million. Why are you questioning the furniture and equipment for schools in Region 6? I find that inhumane. I find that unconscionable that we are now providing for schoolchildren and the APNU/AFC is questioning furniture and equipment for the schoolchildren in Region 6.

Mr. Jaiprashad: The question was a straightforward, direct question that required a simple answer. No need for all the other explanations.

Project code 1203900 – Buildings - Education: There is a sum of \$89 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the kind of work that will be done for schools and sanitary facilities? Could the Hon. Minister specify?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Coronavirus disease first came to Guyana on 13th March, when the first case was identified. Between March and August, the last Government did absolutely nothing for the schools in Region 6 in the fight against COVID-19. Under the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government, 49 schools are going to benefit from enhanced infrastructure in our fight against COVID-19. These schools include: Winifred Gaskin Secondary School, Skeldon Primary School, Number 60 Nursery School, Cropper Primary School, Number 67 Primary School, Massiah Primary School, Albion Back/C Nursery School, Ankerville Nursery School, Number 79, the Municipal Nursery School, Princetown Nursery School, Number 67 Nursery School, Babylon Nursery School, Kiltearn Nursery School, Johanna Nursery School, Alness Nursery School, Manchester Nursery School, Tain Nursery School, Port Mourant Nursery School, Ankerville Nursery School, Albion Front Nursery School, Albion Back Nursery School, Fyrish Road Nursery School, Sheet Anchor Nursery School, Number 2 Nursery School, Canefield Nursery School, Glasgow Nursery School, Sisters Nursery School, Skeldon Primary School, Massiah Primary School, New Market Primary School, Number 56 Primary School, Tain Primary School, Barakara Primary School, All Saints Primary School, New Amsterdam Primary School, Skeldon Line Path Secondary School, Skeldon High Secondary, Tagore Memorial Secondary School, Winifred Gaskin Memorial Secondary School, Corentyne Comprehensive Secondary School, J.C. Chandisingh Secondary School, Port Mourant Secondary School, Lower Corentyne Secondary School, Canje Secondary School, Berbice Educational Institute, Tutorial Academy Secondary School, Vryman's Erven Secondary School, P.I.C Industrial Arts and McGowan Primary School. Those schools will get support in the next three months from the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Hon. Minister, I might have missed it, but Leeds Primary and Leeds Nursery Schools, are they on that list?

Mr. Dharamlall: I could repeat the list but remember this is a three-month Budget. This is spread across the entire Region 6. Certainly, we will provide, if not this year, next year for those schools that were missed.

Ms. Walton-Desir: Are you confirming that it is not catered for in this three-month Budget.

Mr. Dharamlall: I just outlined all of the schools that will be supported under this emergency Budget.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$129,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$2,265,866,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could the Hon. Minister indicate why there has been a significant increase of this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: One Staff Mid-Wife and eight Staff Nurses are accounted for under this line item.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: I see that there is a spike from \$100,000 to \$10.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate where are these buildings located and what will they be rented for?

Mr. Dharamlall: We are renting some buildings in Region 6 in our fight against the COVID-19.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Through the Presiding Member, where are these buildings located?

Mr. Dharamlall: I did not mention the locations because it will hurt the Members of the Opposition. Now that you have asked me again, I will mention the locations. There is an area that requires a lot of support in Region 6 – thousands of jobs were lost there. One of those areas, is the Rose Hall Estate. I am happy that Estate will be re-opened. In the meantime, we had rented some buildings from the Rose Hall Estate and this line item 6241, Rental of Buildings, caters for that.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: There is a sum of \$75 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what sort of infrastructural work will be done and where?

Mr. Dharamlall: There are some buildings in the compound of the New Amsterdam Hospital and some health centres. Hon. Members of the Opposition, maintenance works will be done at the National Psychiatric Hospital. There is also maintenance works to be done on the Mibicuri District and the Skeldon Hospitals; Number 53 Village, Cumberland and Whim Health Centres; one of the buildings in Williamsburg; Number 64 Village, Number 47 Village, Angoy's Avenue, Bohemia and the Brothers Health Centres; the medic quarter in Brothers Village; some doctors' quarters at the Number 64 Village and Number 47 Village Health Centres; the Brothers Health Centre compound; the Plegt Anker, Number 53 Village, Bohemia, Fryrish, Eversham, Williamsburg, Skeldon, Crabwood Creek and Yakusari Health Centres; the Mibicuri, Skeldon and New Amsterdam Hospitals' compounds; Lan-Live-Man Health Centre compound; Cumberland, Health and Family Life and the Sandvoort Health Centres.

Again, there are more works on the National Psychiatric and the New Amsterdam Hospitals. There are maintenance works to be done on the sewage tanks and the incinerator at the New Amsterdam Hospital; the septic tank at the Port Mourant District Hospital and the New Amsterdam Hospital. There are also maintenance works to be done on the laundry building at the National Psychiatric Hospital compound; the old Nurses Hostel; the fence at the National Psychiatric Hospital; the incinerators at the Plegt Anker and Edinburgh Health Centres; maintenance works will also be done on the sewage tank at the New Amsterdam Hospital; at the Port Mourant Hospital and the Edinburg Health Centre, maintenance works will be done on the plumbing systems; there will be more maintenance works on the incinerator at the Port Mourant District Hospital; the sewage tank at Ward Two of the New Amsterdam Hospital – that is two sewage tanks; a wooden tarmac at the COVID-19 tents and the main entrance gate at the National Psychiatric Hospital. We have to fortify it for you guys. There are a host of others. Presiding Member, it is only like four more pages, could I read them?

Presiding Member: Maybe, if the Member so requests, you can lay it over. Hon. Members, you have to keep an eye on the time. We started this Region just about 3.10 p.m. We have the Capital Expenditure to get to, so you might want to speed it up.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Since the Hon. Minister made mention, very clearly, about line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, I now bring line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings. Would this be different from infrastructure because all those listed there are buildings. This is just in terms of clarity for line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I was referring to the locations of the other infrastructures. Now, for line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, there are the New Amsterdam, Skeldon, Port Mourant District, Mibicuri District and the National Psychiatric Hospitals. There are the health centres at New Amsterdam and Eversham. There is the Lan-Live-Man Health Centre at Liverpool. There are the Angoy's Avenue, Bush Lot, Port Mourant, Williamsburg, Number 64 Village and Whim Health Centres and many more. I can continue. There are the Fyrish, Cumberland, Number 47 Village – Cde. Ramjattan – Yakusari, Bohemia, Sandvoort, Goed Banana Land, Crabwood Creek, Orealla and Siparuta Health Centres. There are the Nurses Hostels at Mibicuri and Port Mourant. There are the doctors' quarters at the Skeldon Hospital, at the Port Mourant District Hospital, at Asylum Street and at the Mibicuri District Hospital. There is a whole list of other things.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$2,265,866,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$131,642,000

Mr. Jaiprashad: Project code 2504300 – Furniture and Equipment – Health: There is an increase of \$32,762,000 for the purchase and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what are the types of furniture and where they will be located?

Presiding Member: Could you speak up a bit? Hon. Minister, did you hear that?

Mr. Jaiprashad: What are the types of furniture and where will they be located?

Mr. Dharamlall: I just indicated, under Current Expenditure, the amount of work that we will have to do because of the devastation in the health sector in Region 6 caused by the last Regime, the APNU/AFC. We also, now, have to put new equipment into the New Amsterdam Hospital –

the different departments. These are: a bio-chemistry analyser; an international equipment company (IEC) centrifuge; microscopes; a bio-safety cabinet (BSC); haematology analysers; operating beds – these are the things that were in short supply since the last five years; anaesthetic machines; ventilators; diathermy machines; digital and mobile electromagnetic radiation (x-ray) machines; digital intraoral sensors; a wall-mounted intraoral x-ray unit; many beds and mattresses; a submersible water pump; a fresh water pump; and another water pump.

We have to buy water tanks; three magnetic therapy machines; two low-level laser therapy machines; five transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) machines; eight hot packs; six infrared lamps; 20 dupla-faced monitors; 200 sitting chairs; four commercial washing machines; four microwaves; and three large gas stoves with ovens.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$131,642,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Presiding Member: Hon. Members, this brings us to the end of Agency 78, Region 6. Let me, on your behalf, thank the Members for providing the answers to your queries. Thank you very much.

[Mr. Chairman assumed the Chair.]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Member Mr. Seeraj.

Agency 77: Region 7: Cuyuni Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$340,281,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I would like to recognise the hard-working staff of the Regional Democratic Council in Region 7. We are happy that you could come here to work. I would like to make a very short statement before I ask my very first question.

Mr. Chairman: I think you should ask the question.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: If we start making statements, we are going to get more statements.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. I was just saying that the people of this country are intelligent enough to discern what happened before 2015, what happened during 2015 and they are very anxious to find out what will be done during this tenure. Hence, I wish that we do not spend time preambing, so I will go straight into my question.

Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee what national events or activities are catered for under this line item between now and December?

Mr. Dharamlall: Please note, Hon. Members, that there is a good reason the PPP/C is in Government and there is an even better reason the APNU/AFC is in Opposition. The citizens of Guyana were able to make that decision despite it took a very long time.

Under this line item 6291 – National and Other Events, you will notice that there is a decrease too. It was decreased and it will focus on national and regional activities.

4.20 p.m.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: A follow-up: My question was very specific. What are the activities? The Hon. Member can specify if it is Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, Heritage or whatever – just say.

Mr. Dharamlall: This \$6 million, I would like to inform the Hon. Member, who happened to have served as a Minister of Government in different departments, that \$5.5 million out of the \$6 million was spent under the APNU/AFC. You need to tell me, Hon. Member, what activities this was spent on by the APNU/AFC. I would not be able to account for the activities that the APNU/AFC spent taxpayers' moneys on.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]: As one of the Geographic Members of Parliament (MP), I would like to ask the Hon. Member some questions. Could the Hon. Member say if the increase in line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, would cater for the return of the school bus for the children at Agatash and Dagg Point, where the bus for that community was removed by the former Government? The children have had to be paying for their transportation from that area. With the increase in fuel, would that now mean that those children will be able to get back their buses to take them to school?

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, I would like to report to you two things: we will provide fuel for the bus to transport school children, but that would be covered under Programme 3 – Education.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am a bit disappointed because my question was very specific, between September to December, so I do not know how APNU/AFC could do something between September to December. Anyway, I will move on.

Line item 6284 – Other, and line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Member tell this Committee what those headings entail?

Mr. Dharamlall: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Could I clarify? Is it line item 6284 or 6294?

Mr. Chairman: It is both.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6284, it is a stipend to the members of the tender board members and the evaluators – I had indicated that this runs across all regional agencies – payment to caretakers at Upper Mazaruni for the payment of portage and supplies and for screening and sanitizing to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We also have to pay \$2,150,000 for the rental of State lands, works, washing and other stuff within the RDC building and face masks to provide for residents of Region 7.

To clarify the earlier question, the \$500,000, though very meagre after the APNU/AFC spent \$5.5 million, we will be using it sparingly and as wisely as possible in the Heritage celebration activities in remembrance and in other activities.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$340,281,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$4,500,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Project code 2601900 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration: Could the Hon. Member be kind enough to tell us what furniture and equipment will be catered for to the tune of \$3.5 million and which offices will benefit?

Mr. Dharamlall: The reason we are buying furniture and equipment is to replace the defective furniture and equipment currently in this programme and to ensure the safe and comfortable environment in which our staff work. Actually, when both are done, then the levels of efficiency will be increased. We will be buying computers, printers, executive office chairs, other swivel chairs, waiting chairs, writing desks, water dispensers, furniture for the regional guest house at Bartica, furniture for the Amerindian Hostel at Bartica, a radio set, a counting machine and some filing cabinets.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$4,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$189,064,000

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: There is the sum of \$66,460,000. Could the Hon. Minister advise us on which roads will be maintained in which of the sub-districts of Region 7?

Mr. Dharamlall: Originally, we will be maintaining in the Upper Mazaruni the Kamarang-Waramadong farm-to-market road; in central, the Agatash road; Mora Point, Kalakoon road; Caribisi Hill road; Bamfort Point road; Byderabo back road; Byderabo front road; Potaro road, Bartica; and maintenance at Bartica and the Three Miles Secondary School compound.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member say if there is any money here for the roads in Bartica? Some of the roads are in very bad conditions in Bartica itself – the craters, in central Bartica. Is there any money available for any of those roads?

Mr. Dharamlall: In Public Works, capital, some roads will be catered for. Remember, this is an emergency Budget and also the Ministry of Public Works will be helping with some roads in those areas as well, as well as the Miscellaneous Roads Programme of development.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Member be kind enough to tell us which bridges would be maintained to the tune of \$33.4 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report that three bridges will be done in Chinowieng, Upper Mazaruni; one bridge will be done at Imbaimadai, Upper Mazaruni; one bridge at Three Miles, Potaro, which is in the Bartica area; three bridges in Paruima, that is Upper Mazaruni; a bridge at Agatash; a bridge at Number 8; and Kamarang farm-to market road in Upper Mazaruni.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Ms. Hastings-Williams, do you have a follow-up? If not, I will have Mr. Mahipaul.

Mr. Mahipaul: I have taken note with reference to line items 6251, Maintenance of Roads and 6252, Maintenance of Bridges that the Hon. Minister spoke in the future tense. I would, therefore, like to know if any works under Maintenance of Roads and Maintenance of Bridges were done before or are these works to be done? If they were done before, could you state where?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report to the people of Guyana, particularly, to the residents of Region 7 that, the last Government, under line items 6251, Maintenance of Roads and 6252, Maintenance of Bridges, none were done in Region 7 under the APNU/AFC. They will all be done under the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am from Region 7 and I travel up and down the river and the land, and we had done some works on the bridges. I can name bridge number six, bridge number four, *et cetera*. We did do some works. I started by saying that the people are intelligent enough to know what was done and what will be done. Thank you, for your answer.

My question would be on those same line items. Hon Minister, could you kindly give me a breakdown, if that is possible, as to what will be the cost for each of these bridges?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is the 2020 Budget and we are speaking about the 2020 Budget. I would like to report that the APNU/AFC built no roads or bridges under the maintenance programme for Region 7. The Waramadong farm-to-market road, estimated cost is \$6 million; Agatash road, \$5 million; Mora Point road, \$5 million; Caribisi Hill, \$7 million; Bamfort Point, \$7 million; Byderabo back road, \$9 million; Front Road, Byderabo, \$8 million; Potaro road, Bartica \$12.4 million; and maintenance of the road at Bartica and the Three Miles Secondary \$7 million. A total of \$66,460,000.

All will be done between August to December, which is in 2020 by the People's Progressive Party/Civic. Again, between August and December, 2020, under the People's Progressive Party/Civic, the three bridges in Chinowieng, \$9.5 million; the bridge at Imbaimadai, \$6,409,000; the bridge at Three Miles Potaro, \$5.2 million; three bridges in Paruima, \$3.8 million; the bridge at Agatash, which is replacing defective beams decking, track planks and rails, \$3.5 million; and the maintenance of the Number 8 bridge at Kamarang is \$5 million.

4.35 p.m.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am, again, on line items 6251 and 6252. I heard the Hon. Minister say that none of the roads and bridges was maintained with the sums allocated in the 2020 Budget, which are to the tune of \$66,460,000 and \$33,409,000, respectively. We have a document before us – *Statement of Expenditure for the Period January 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020 and August 2 to September 30, 2020*. It shows, under the Cuyuni-Mazaruni Region, Region 7, Programme 772, Public Infrastructure – which is what we are dealing with here – that a total of \$41,300,000 was expended from 1st January to 31st July, and a total of \$16,983,000 is to be expended between 2nd August and 30th September. Is the Minister accurate in the information that he just disseminated to this Committee or is he deliberately misleading this Committee in terms of moneys that were allocated in the 2020 Budget for the maintenance of roads and bridges in the Cuyuni-Mazaruni region?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are quoting from a document. I think the standing position is that if you are quoting from a document accurately, you should lay it over to the Committee.

Mr. Mahipaul: No, it is in the same document.

Mr. Chairman: Is it in the document? Very well.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I think the Hon. Member has totally misrepresented and misread the entire document to which he is referring. He is referring to the public infrastructure programme. I am speaking about these roads that we will have to do because none was done before, and the bridges that we also have to do because none was done before in Region 7.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I have a follow-up please.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Minister is saying that the document you have in front of you does not pertain to the particular line item.

Mr. Mahipaul: I agree, Mr. Chairman. It seems as though I have to repeat for my President's College Friend, the Hon. Minister. The sum that is allocated in the 2020 Budget for line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, and the sum that is allocated for line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges, are totals of \$66,460,000 and \$33,409,000, respectively. Those are the total sums for 2020. My question that I asked originally was: Were bridges and roads maintained before 2nd August? If so, could the Hon. Minister tell this honourable Committee which bridge or bridges, which road or roads and where they are located? I can understand that the ones he read out are to be done, but he did say that none was done – no bridge nor road was maintained. That is why, in my previous follow-up, I referenced the document that was laid over to this House.

Clearly, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, \$41,300,000 in Public Infrastructure, at Programme 772, shows that works were done. I am asking, if it was done for bridges and roads, could the Hon. Minister say to this Committee which bridge or bridges, which road or roads, and where?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I shudder to think that someone on the other side, who has been elected to represent the region of His Excellency, the President, cannot understand something as basic as a budget book. I will reiterate, re-emphasise and reclarify that the APNU/AFC built no bridges, maintained no bridges and maintained no roads in Region 7, in 2020. Those roads and bridges I just indicated, outlined or listed would be maintained. I cannot help if a Member of Parliament does not understand how to read the profiles, does not understand how to follow the programmes and does not understand how the line items operate.

Ms. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, before I go to the specific line item, I must first comment on line item 6251. I believe that a statement was made by the Hon. Minister that no maintenance was done. He implied that, under the APNU/AFC Administration, those roads were neglected. If that is the case, then the Hon. Minister is definitely *a stranger to the truth*. I would like to inform this honourable Committee that the competent staff of the Region 7 Regional Democratic Council have been doing a tremendous job of maintaining roads and all of those things. The name is Caribisi Hill. Caribisi Hill has been maintained; the Potaro Road has been maintained; and the Byderabo Road has been maintained. Those are things that I would know because that is where I live.

Now, as we go to line item 6213, could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of what the \$18,025,000 represents?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I stand by what I said. The hardworking staff of the Regional Administration of Region 7 are with me and they provided this information. They prepared it. So, I would ask the Hon. Member to apologise to the hardworking staff of the Regional Administration, Region 7. What the Hon. Minister just said is to impugn the character of the staff of Region 7. That is very unbecoming of a young leader. I would suggest that you get your facts in order and do not impugn the character of the staff of the Regional Administration.

I would also like to tell the Hon. Member that there is no line item called 6213. The Hon. Member asked me a question under line item 6213, but the budget book does not have a line item called 6213.

Ms. Fernandes: If I may, Mr. Chairman, the line item that I referred to is line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants. The sarcasm of the Hon. Minister is not becoming of a Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Member to ask the question again, if you do not mind? It is because I do not have a question on line item 6231 before me.

Ms. Fernandes: For line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, there is a budgetary allocation of \$18,025,000. I am asking the Hon. Minister, what comprises this amount and, more specifically, what new has been added to this line item, if anything at all, for the remainder of 2020?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would advise and would like to invite the Hon. Member to visit the RDC of Region 7 to get clarity on issues of ignorance. In Kamarang, a generator, a water pump, a 25 horsepower (hp)... Before I continue, the amount in *Budget 2020* has been reduced from the amount in 2019. So, I do not understand what has increased or “what new has been added.” In Kamarang, it is a motorcycle – and these are benefitting from fuel and lubricants – and a boat. In Bartica, a generator; a 150 hp boat; a Model M truck; another Bedford truck – and these are on the inventory under Public Works – a pick-up; a fiberglass boat; two 125 cubic capacity (cc) motorcycles; an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), which is 2 years old; another ATV, which has now become unserviceable; and a mini excavator.

Ms. Fernandes: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First, the Hon. Member can attempt to lecture on everything else but when it comes to ignorance, he holds no reputation to speak on that ground.

When it comes to line item 6254, Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses, could the Hon. Minister please specify, without the sarcasm, where that will be?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, again, the sarcasm has cost them the Government. They are now in Opposition, where they will remain permanently. Some, from young to old, will remain there permanently. That is the unfortunate thing about the APNU/AFC. The members think that they know everything. They speak about everything and nothing gets done.

That is the representation the APNU/AFC has put forward for Bartica. I will answer the question, but no one comes to this House and throws sarcastic remarks filled with ignorance. The river defence at Bartica will be done, particularly in the market area. For those Members who have never gone to Bartica, that needs to be done, and it will be done by the People's Progressive Party/Civic. Something that you were unable to do, we will now do in the next three months.

Ms. Fernandes: Thank you, Hon. Minister, for that. I know that the APNU/AFC Administration has done an exceptional job at the Bartica Market. This is the beauty of technology: I can cut the video with my questions to you and your responses to me and pay for it to be aired on television in Bartica. That is what I will do; that is a promise to you.

Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister kindly give a breakdown of what that amount will be used for? Thank you.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Now, we have to do so much work where work was not done before. I am happy to go to Bartica and tell the people that the APNU/AFC did not do any works. As a matter of fact, our votes increased in Bartica and it will increase to the extent that, at some point in time in the near future, the People's Progressive Party/Civic will win Bartica. That is our vision and our mission.

That line item caters for the payment of advertisement fees under the public works programme.

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$189,064,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$79,521,000

Ms. Fernandes: Referring to project code 1401100, Roads, there is a budgetary allocation in excess of \$37,580,000. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind as to tell this honourable Committee what that entails?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you be so kind?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will be rehabilitating the Kamarang to Waramadong road. As you are aware, under the PPP/C Government, prior to 2015, that road was first established *via* resources from the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, which was headed by Ms. Pauline Sukhai. We will provide \$9 million to enhance this road, which will create an easier access for students attending the Dr. Desrey Fox Secondary School in Waramadong.

We will also be doing major rehabilitation at Byderabo front road, including excavation of the existing carriageway, placement of plastic and grid, compacting loam, crusher run and finishing with reinforced concrete at \$6 million – 100 ft x 14 ft. The Agatash main access road will also be done – 850 ft x 14 ft. We will be doing a pedestrian bridge at Kaburi, 72 Miles – 100 ft x 6 ft. I have been informed that when it is complete, it will possibly be the longest wooden bridge in Guyana.

Eight bridges will be done at Kako to Kamarang, along the farm to market road, and these will also provide easier access in the Upper Mazaruni. One of the things we would like to do is enhance the logistics between villages of the Upper Mazaruni. There would be the construction of a culvert at Byderabo back road and a river defence at Agatash. [**Ms. Fernandes:** I am asking you about one specific road.] Are you embarrassed by me going ahead and telling the people of Region 7 what we are doing? Why do you not want the answers?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you stick to the point in front of you?

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Fernandes: I asked a question specific to project code 1401100, Roads. The Hon. Minister was so kind as to go through project code 1402100, Bridges and project code 1500900, Sea and River Defense. I will just go back to the project code to which I was referring.

Thank you, Hon. Minister, for mentioning the project codes for bridges and sea and river defense. I know when it comes to these things, especially the one in Agatash, which the Coalition had already started and had maintained over the past five years, that will be great. The bridges will be great also.

Back to the question with the road. We have, I believe, the road in the West Indian Housing Scheme. Could you say when those contracts were awarded for the projects under this particular project code? Could you give me the contract date for those particular projects?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, 2020 has been a year in which the last Government tried to rig the elections. We were unable to get a proper Government in place since March, 2020. A proper budget could have been in place since March, 2020. The reason we are here presenting a budget at the end of September, Hon. Member, young Ms. Juretha Fernandes, is because the APNU/AFC caused a constitutional crisis in our country by their efforts, on global television, to rig the elections of 2nd March, 2020. As I am answering the question, I have to put a context as to why we are here at this point in time. It is because the APNU/AFC tried to rig the elections. They were caught and then they were rolled out of Government. That is what happened.

That road began since 2019. It ought to have been paid for since 2019, but because, again, of incompetence, unconstitutional nature, autocratic behaviour and rigged elections, we now have to pay over \$13 million in retention on this road.

Ms. Fernandes: Thank you once more, Mr. Chairman. With all the preamble and rambling from the Hon. Minister, what was actually highlighted was the contract was awarded in 2019, and not by the Hon. Minister.

Could you turn your attention to project code 1500900, Sea and River Defense? You have touched on it a bit already. Would you be so kind as to tell the honourable Committee the magnitude of this project, probably in millimetres or whatever unit you want to use?

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Member please repeat the question? Because of the rambling coming from the Hon. Member, I could not understand what the question was.

Ms. Fernandes: Could the Hon. Minister please pay attention this time? Thank you very much. I am referring to project code 1500900, Sea and River Defense. There is an allocation of \$10 million for the construction of a revetment. I believe when you were speaking earlier you mentioned that it was for Agatash. I am asking you what the magnitude of this project is in terms of length because you did not put it in units or feet or whichever you chose.

Mr. Dharamlall: This is a new project and it is the capital project of the PPP/C Government in Region 7. It is the construction of a river defence at Agatash, worth approximately \$10 million. It will be a revetment which will reduce erosion. I do not know why but I guess it is because the PPP/C has a lot of support in Agatash, and that is why the APNU/AFC left it, as it left the river and sea defences of our country. So, we will be doing revetment of about 180 ft because of the erosion caused by the river.

Ms. Fernandes: Did you say 180 ft? Hon. Minister, could you please clarify if it is 180 ft?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Hon. Member was just telling me about listening and now I am here repeating myself. It is 180 ft.

Ms. Fernandes: I am taking a pattern from you, Hon. Minister. Mr. Chairman, may I?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Fernandes.

Ms. Fernandes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Hon. Minister for pointing out that the \$10 million will be used for a 180 ft revetment. I would like to inform this honourable Committee that, under the APNU/AFC, 370 ft were completed in Agatash. Thank you.

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$79,521,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$1,470,493,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I would like to turn our attention to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, which has a sum allocation of \$71,595,000. Could the Hon. Member be kind enough to tell us how many schools will be maintained under this line item? Please listen, Hon. Minister, because I did not begin with a question of ‘why’. You seem to be answering the ‘why’ questions.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could I proceed? Was the question asked?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, she did ask.

Mr. Dharamlall: Actually, no works were done during the APNU/AFC’s tenure. Under the PPP/C Government, the following will be done in Region 7: St. Anthony’s Primary School, St. John the Baptist Primary, Potaro Primary School, Three Miles Secondary, the Bartica Secondary School, the teacher’s quarters at Bartica, Kako Nursery School – when last have you gone to Kako or why do you not get to go to Kako anymore – the female dormitory at Waramadong, the teacher’s quarters at Waramadong, the plumbing to the Regional Education Officer’s (REDO) building in Bartica and some other works in other parts of the region.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you, Hon. Member. I am happy that you will be maintaining those schools. Line item 6255 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could the Hon. Member give us the details of what the moneys will be used for?

5.05 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6255 is Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. I would like to report on line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure and not line item 6265 – Other transport, Travel and Postage, as the Hon. Member is. It is to maintain a fence and for concrete works at the special needs school. In Waramadong, we will do fence and trestle maintenance. The fence of the Education Department, Hill View Nursery, Itaballi, Falmouth, Future Builders Nursery, Potaro Primary, Beach View Nursery, Agatash and Bartica Secondary School dorm will be done, as well as cleaning and weeding the compounds around Bartica and in other riverine areas.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member say under line item 6292 – Dietary – if these figures relate to the school feeding programme and for the children in the dorms? If that is so, how many children

will benefit from this? I know that school has been closed for about six months now. Assuming that we would be able to open in the not too distant future, how many children in nursery, primary and secondary schools and the dormitories will benefit from the school feeding programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: Bartica Secondary School Dormitory, Three Miles Secondary School Dormitory and Dr. Desrey Fox Secondary School Dormitory at Waramadong will benefit. It is a total of 621 students.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are just about eight minutes away from putting all of the remaining six heads.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I think the Hon Minister did not hear me. I was asking about line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage. What does that amount of money under that line item entail? I would like to know how many visits will be made by the Education Officer.

Mr. Dharamlall: Is it line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage, Hon. Member? I wish to confirm. Line item 6265 is for transportation of office, field and other janitorial supplies to schools in the Middle and Upper Mazaruni; the transportation costs for teachers who reside in other regions but serve in Region 7; and an increase in the number of flights to transport students to Arrau, Kaikan and Eteringbang from the Dr. Desrey Fox Secondary School.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$1,470,493,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: I now turn to page 696 and 697 while keeping an eye on the clock.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$120,058,000

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Project code 1204100. I am looking at the project profile and it states payment of retention, construction, extension and rehabilitation of schools and teachers' quarters. I am kindly asking the Hon. Minister to please give us the details – how much for retention, extension and rehabilitation and the construction of the sanitary blocks at Eteringbang and Imbaimadai?

Mr. Dharamlall: Part of this goes to the payment of retention for projects that started since 2019. Part of it will go towards construction of sanitary blocks at Eteringbang, Imbaimadi and Wineperu to replace the old structures, teachers' quarters and enclosure in Imbaimadi and the construction of teacher's quarters in Eteringbang.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$120,058,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$832,399,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, Hon. Minister, could you say if the buildings to be maintained for this \$47,227,000 will include any works to Eteringbang Health Centre in order to make it more suitable for the patients and the doctors stationed up there?

Mr. Dharamlall: The \$47,227,000 caters for Jawalla Health Post, Kubenang Health Post, the nurses living quarters in Bartica, the Kartabu Health Post, Itaballi Health Post, Four Miles Health Post, Issano Health post and the Bartica Hospital. Next year, we would look for more substantial support for those areas.

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$832,399,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$110,907,000

Ms. Fernandes: Project code 2507600 – Furniture and Equipment - Health: It caters for furniture and equipment for staff quarters valued \$2.8 million. Could the Hon. Minister be so kind as to enlighten us on what buildings these furniture and equipment will be going in?

Mr. Dharamlall: The \$2.8 million will cater for eight beds, eight single wardrobes, five dining sets, five chair suites, three pieces each, and six gas stoves at the Bartica doctors' quarters, Kamarang doctors' quarters and nurses' hostel.

Ms. Fernandes: Project code 2402100 – Land and Water Transport: There is \$3.9 million for the purchase of boats and engine. Who will directly be benefitting from the purchase of these items?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is to purchase a 40-horsepower outboard engine and a 16-foot wooden boat at Kamarang, a 16-foot wooden boat at Phillipi, a 75-horsepower outboard engine for Bartica and an 18 ft wooden boat at Bartica.

Ms. Fernandes: Project code 1204200 – Buildings - Health: Could the Hon. Minister be so kind as to give us the breakdown of the buildings that these moneys will be spent on?

Mr. Dharamlall: We have to procure the construction of an incinerator at the Kamarang Hospital for \$3.5 million. Region 5 had for \$12 and \$13 million, respectively. We have to complete a fence at Mongreppo Hill at the COVID-19 Centre. We have to do procurement for rehabilitation of a building in Upper Mazaruni for COVID-19 isolation activities. I had indicated that \$1.5 billion was set aside, under the last regime, for COVID-19 activities under capital expenditure. There are some other works that are already completed but those were specific to the fight against COVID-19.

Ms. Fernandes: One final question on that project code. I did not hear you mention it. I am just wondering if that would include the completion of the enclosure at the staff quarters in the hospital compound.

Mr. Dharamlall: It has already been advertised and it has to be done – the enclosure of two doctors living quarters at Bartica.

Ms. Fernandes: I know, under project code 2402100, Land and Water Transport, the Hon. Minister mentioned that an engine will be purchased for the Bartica Hospital. The question to the Hon. Minister is: what department will be using this boat engine?

5.20 p.m.

This is my final question on this programme, and I would like to close by saying that, as a resident of Bartica, I have sincere gratitude to the administration of health in Bartica. In 2015, we started with three doctors and, today, we have 18 doctors who are specialists, we have information and communication technology (ICT) scanners, we are performing surgeries, Caesarean Section (C-

Section) and we are saving hundreds of lives. I am extremely grateful for efficiency in the administration of health in Region 7.

Mr. Dharamlall: It takes, at least, seven years to train a doctor. The doctors who went to Region 7 in 2015 were trained as Jagdeo's scholars. The doctors who went there in 2016 are Jagdeo scholars. The doctors who went there in 2017 are Jagdeo scholars. The doctors who went there in 2018 are Jagdeo scholars. The doctors who went there in 2019 are Jagdeo scholars. The doctors who went there in 2020 are Jagdeo scholars and the future doctors will all be trained and were all trained by the People's Progressive Party/Civic, when we were in Government. It means that the APNU/AFC did not train a single doctor for Region 7 in the last five years. That is a shame and a travesty to the health sector in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Programme: 774 – Health Services - \$110,907,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 775 – Agriculture - \$5,000,000

Ms. Fernandes: Project code 1310200 – Agricultural Development: I see there is a budgetary allocation of \$5,000,000 for the construction of shade house and equipment. I know that, under the APNU/AFC Administration, we constructed a shade house at the Three-Mile Secondary School because we wanted the students to get better accommodation for all the hard work that they do and to accommodate the Teachers also. My question is whether these shade houses would be at the other schools, as the APNU/AFC Administration had intended to continue this project?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, just before we take a break, I would just like to inform the Hon. Member, who just asked me that question, that the shade house is an agricultural project where plants are grown. It does not provide accommodation for staff, students or anyone else at the Three Miles Secondary School. That is what was reported just now. All of the shade houses are agricultural projects and they are not to shade students, as the APNU/AFC did, according to the Hon. Member, Ms. Fernandes.

We will build a shade house to enhance the agricultural potential of Waramadong Secondary School. We will also be buying the swing fog, a rotary hand tiller, a chain saw, an egg incubator,

20 bees' suits, five manual honey extractors, gloves, hive tools; all to enhance agriculture in Region 7. I want to reiterate, for the record, that shade houses are an agricultural project where plants are grown and not, as the Hon. Member said, to accommodate students.

Mr. Chairman: We are now running 10 minutes over what was allotted the programme.

Ms. Fernandes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is just one line item so we cannot exhaust any more time with it.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead.

Ms. Fernandes: Before we close, I think I must respond and say that the Hon. Minister has done a splendid job of using sarcasm to showcase his ignorance. When I spoke about accommodation, I was speaking about accommodating the projects that the agricultural students undertook under the APNU/AFC Administration. There is no further question, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: I have to give the Hon. Minister an opportunity to respond to the accusation.

Mr. Dharamlall: I recall, very well, that the Hon. Member said that the shade house will provide accommodation for the students and teachers at Three Mile Secondary School and that it was built by the APNU/AFC. All I am saying, once again, is that the Hon. Member, apparently, does not know what a shade house is or knows what exactly was built at the Three Miles Secondary School. I am saying that we will build a shade house at Waramadong Secondary School so that the students' agricultural potential would be enhanced. If the APNU/AFC built a shade house to shade teachers and students, then I could understand why you were trying to rig elections to stay in Government. Unfortunately, democracy prevailed. The entire world rejected you and you were rolled out of government and you have now rolled into permanent Opposition.

Programme: 775 – Agriculture – \$5,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I wish to inform the House that the Hon. Minister of Education had promised to layover some items, in particular to Programme 401 – chart of account 6284, 6282, 6264 and 6301. The Hon. Minister has provided this breakdown. As promised, the Hon. Minister has laid this over. I will pass this over to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to the Hon. Members. Let the Assembly resumed.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this is a good time to take the suspension, though we are way behind. Hon. Members, the House is now suspended.

Sitting suspended at 5.30 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.31 p.m.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I want to put you on notice. The breaks are now getting beyond an hour and fifteen minutes and we do not make up for time. Tomorrow, I expect that we will take half an hour lunch and we will have no dinner time. You will sneak out for dinner and come back into the House. That is the only way we will complete. I trust the Hon. Chief Whips will abide by that decision.

We will now move to Region 8. If we could we minimise the preamble for the next three regions we might be able to finish by 9.00 p.m. The Chairman will enforce the rules. We have been very tolerant over the past few days. I think if we are to get through the business of the House, as scheduled for this week, we will now have to apply the rules.

Agency 78: Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$185,097,000

Mr. Sinclair: I refer to Staffing Details – I see that there is an increase in staff and spending at line item 6111, could the Hon. Minister give us an idea about the staff and their emoluments?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is an increase by one staff and that is the Deputy Regional Executive Officer, and the salary is \$298,503,000.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: I noticed here that there is a budgeted amount of \$5,500,00, could the Hon. Minister give us the details on that?

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Member repeat a little louder?

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There is an allocation of over \$5 million, could you say to this honourable House what that entails?

6.36 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: It caters for the operation of vehicles, in both subregions of Region 8.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: There are four new temporary employees, could the Hon. Minister say what are their designation and emoluments?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we have a Chief Accountant at \$144,467, an Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst (EPMA) at \$144,467 and two Clerk III Generals at \$76,116.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I see there is an allotted sum of \$32,093,000. What are some of the specific expenses to the agency?

Mr. Dharamlall: A host of activities are usually performed using this line item and it is managed by the Regional Chairman. There has not been a Regional Democratic Council meeting from January to August, but I can go through the activities that are usually performed using this line item, if you would like.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6294 – Other: There is a budgeted sum of \$675,000. Could the Hon. Minister give us some details about how this money will be spent?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6294 is for staff encashing their salaries at the Mahdia Post Office.

Minister of Amerindian Affairs [Ms. Campbell-Sukhai]: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House how much of this \$32 million has already been spent and how much is remaining for the next three months, taking into consideration that the RDC has not had much activities over the last nine months? Could he detail, also, what the money was spent on from January to August?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I will endeavour to provide that information to the Hon. Minister, before the end of the sitting of the National Assembly.

Mr. Mahipaul: A Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister confirm, even though there were no RDC meetings held from January to August, whether the Regional Chairman and Regional Vice

Chairman still have access to these funds in terms of their office and whatever else was needed for them, like all other regions?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, yes, is the short answer. This line item also caters for stipends for Toshaos, for Senior Councillors, Vice Toshaos and so forth.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say what training is currently being done or being offered in the region?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is an allotment of about \$400,000 for training of newly employed staff and to build capacity within the current staff strength. There is training for the regional accounting unit and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training for staff, especially for the senior staff within the regional administration.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: There is a sum of \$5.8 million. Could we have a description as to what will be the job description of these employees?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I was asked that question already and I answered it, but I will repeat it. It is for one Chief Accountant, one Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst and two Clerk III Generals.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the Standing Orders speaks to the issue of repetition. I want to also say that staffing details, comprehensively dealt with in these Estimates, are for every single department. The strength is, what the designation of the people employed are and the salary scale under which they are employed. These are contained in the estimates. I am just bringing that to your attention, especially now, coming into the last few heads and tomorrow's session.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I see that there is an increase of about \$900,000 in terms of the expenses. Could the Hon. Minister say for what this is going to be used?

Mr. Dharamlall: Region 8 is comprised, primarily, of Amerindian people. This is Amerindian Heritage Month and these activities are in support of villages' regional administration or will be in support of those activities, whether virtual or in small groups. It will also serve to provide resources for secular and non-secular holidays and activities.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$185,097,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$700,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1209100 – Furniture and Equipment - Staff Quarters: Is this sum for one staff quarter or more than one and if it is for one, which designation from the region is occupying that staff house? If it is more than one, what are the various designations?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, there are two staff quarters, one in Mahdia and one in Kato. The Assistant Regional Executive Office is occupying one in Kato and there is one in Mahdia occupied by other staff at Mahdia. If you are asking for deployment to that region, please let me know.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$186,162,000

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister say for what is that amount intended?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as is customary, the line item that has zero has no answer.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges, 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, 6254 – Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses and 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say if there are roads, bridges, drainage and irrigation works, sea and river defenses, and other infrastructure that were already done? If they were not, where are they expected to be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to urge that, when these questions are asked of me, without a budget or without parliamentary oversight, the completion of projects can be considered unconstitutional and illegal. The unfortunate thing is that the Hon. Member who is

asking me this question, sat here in this compound counting and recounting votes which fostered the illegalities that the last Administration imposed on the people of Guyana.

There are a host of projects that have to be done and that were done, I will endeavour to provide that list as of now. There is the maintenance of eight roads at Kopinang to Kamana, Kato to Cheong Mouth, Kaibarupai to Waipa, Kato, Paramakatoi, Maikwak, Red Creek, Monkey Mountain and Taruka. There is an all-terrain vehicle carriageway from Taruka to Paramakatoi, Mahdia to Monkey Mountain, Kurukabaru and Kamana. There are bridges at Orinduik, Tuseneng, Muruwa, Maikwak, Cheong Mouth, Waipa, Kaibarupai, Kato, Kanapang and Itabac. There are drainage and irrigation (D&I) works to be completed at five creeks: Tuseneng, Kamana, Kato, Yawong and Itabac. There are rivers and sea defence and the maintenance of two revetments and embankment.

6.51 p.m.

One of the revetments is at Tawara Bridge and the other is at Tuseneng Bridge approach. Maintenance of other infrastructure, one boundary fence and fence and gate at the Engineers quarters.

Could I inform the Committee, as well, that we will be providing directly from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, in Region 8, our community enhancement workers from the Amerindian villages? I would like to reiterate to the Committee that, moving forward, Amerindian village councils will benefit and must benefit and access the resources under the Regional Democratic Council of Region 8, as well as from other ministries, so that we could build capacity and develop the village economies in Region 8, the Amerindian Villages and across the country in Amerindian villages.

Mr. Mahipaul: I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for confirming the amount of work A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change would have done in Potaro-Siparuni, Region 8.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is a decrease from four employees to three, was this employee terminated or did the employee resign and what was the designation of that employee?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would have to clarify this question with the regional administration. In the meantime, there is an Equipment Operator at \$84,492, a Pump Attendant at \$74,139 and a Caretaker at \$70,000.

Mr. Mahipaul: I would appreciate if the Hon. Minister would provide the answer in writing for the question.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$186,162,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$61,699,000

Ms. Campbell - Sukhai: Under project code 1100800 – Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee whether the \$14 million budgeted here would complete tower at Yawong Bridge, which has not been completed for the last two years and what sums are allocated for that bridge?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is a bridge at Konawaruk. The bridge started in 2019 and it has not been completed up until now. Hopefully, it would be completed by the People’s Progressive Party/Civic Administration.

Under this same line item, the road from Monkey Mountain to Paramakatoi had a contract signed, in 2019, for \$71,32 million. That road has not begun as yet, but a mobilisation sum in excess of \$20 million has already been paid to the contractor.

Programme: 782 Public Works – \$61,699,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$1,201,890,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: I observe that there are 39 new employees added to this area. I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us what are the designations of the new employees?

Mr. Dharamlall: There are 10 acting teachers and 29 auxiliary staff.

Mr. Jaiprashad: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the Committee where these works would be executed?

Mr. Dharamlall: This provision caters for the maintenance boundary fences, gates, sanitary blocks; repairs to pit-latrines; cleaning of water tanks; upgrading of washroom facilities in areas such as at El Paso Primary School and Mahdia Secondary School; sanitary blocks at Kopinang, Karisparu, and Princeville Primary Schools; sanitary block and a water system at Paramakatoi Secondary School; two sanitary blocks at the Mahdia Secondary School; sanitary blocks at Micobe, Kato, Tusenen, Kurukabaru, Taruka, Kamana, Cheong Mouth, Chenapau, Maikwak, Itabac, Kaibarupai, Kanapang and Monkey Mountain primary school; sanitary blocks and a water system at the Kato Secondary School Dormitory and Paramakatoi Secondary School; and sanitary blocks at Sandhill, Bashville, Arasawa and Waipa Primary Schools. These are all of the schools that have to be taken care of. Apparently, again, Mr. Chairman, we are putting moneys into sanitary blocks. I do not know what has happened in the last Administration. Why is it they have discriminated so much against Amerindian people and, especially now, the Amerindian people in Region 8?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, that is the list. Thank you very much.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: There was a revised sum for \$1.8 million which has increased to \$3.6 million. Could the Hon. Minister say to us how the Ministry intends to spend this sum of money?

Mr. Dharamlall: This subvention caters for the repairs to some of the vehicles in the education [inaudible].

Mr. Sinclair: Are some of these vehicles located in Mahdia or in the North Pakaraimas?

Mr. Dharamlall: Some of the pieces of vehicles would be in the North Pakaraimas, while others would be in the Mahdia sub-region.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: I see a steep increase to \$15,900,000 from \$6,277,000. Is the Hon. Minister saying that they are expecting peeping pests and parasites (PPP) there?

Mr. Chairman: We were going very good.

Mr. Dharamlall: Those are already in the Opposition, they are APNU/AFC and they are in their rightful place.

We will now be spending an exorbitant sum to ensure that our schools are in a better condition, especially to get rid of termites and rodents. For the washing of buildings, there are 30 schools, three dormitories, four learning resource centres and the Department of Education. Again, we have to clean up some of the school reservoirs and water tanks. We will also have to desalinate some of the septic tanks. We also have to spray, fog out schools and clean the schools' compounds in Region 8.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6292 – Dietary: I see the revised total for 2019 as \$357 million and, in 2020, \$395 million was budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister state what the moneys would be used for and why the increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would just like to inform the Committee that this is the first time the Regional Executive Officer and team is before the Committee of Supply. A lot of work has been put into the preparation and participation of Region 8 today. I wish to inform the Committee that there were lots of liabilities in the last Government.

In Region 8, in 2018, \$27.160 million was a liability, which now has to be paid. Apparently, a lot of items were taken from suppliers and were not paid for in 2018, and that is an unpaid account. In 2019, there was liabilities in the sum of \$26,962,800 for dietary supplied to the Kato Secondary School, and a part payment in December of \$2.3 million for Paramakatoi Secondary School.

Mr. Jordan: My concern really was to get a clearer understanding because, for all of Guyana, we know that school has been out since March, 2020. I would like to understand where the \$395 million would be going. As a matter of fact, I would like to know where part of the moneys went already.

Mr. Dharamlall: The country should not stop because the APNU/AFC has lost Government and so students are still writing exams or had written exams at Mahdia and at Paramakatoi Secondary Schools. We will also be providing relief packages to the resident students as part of our support to families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The regional administration of Region 8 would be providing to those resident students as well.

Mr. Sinclair: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: I thought that, for the delivery of education, this would have been catered for. Could the Minister please explain what is the difference between line item 6265 and the other travel that was spoken about earlier?

7.06 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: When we take students and place them in these schools, we have to feed them. The last line item was to feed those students. This item specifically caters for other things including transportation liabilities to transport teachers and students in 2020 at \$3,270,000. It also includes air, water and land transportation for the distribution of school feeding supplies, the assessment of papers, and the distribution text and exercise books in the riverine and mountainous areas of Region 8.

Ms. Ferguson: If I could take our attention back to line item 6283, Cleaning and Extermination Services. The Hon. Member stated that it will cost the Region \$15.9 million for extermination services. My concern here, to the Hon. Member, is whether this particular sum will be expended by 31st December, 2020, taking into consideration that the cut-off point for the closure of the books is usually 15th December. I just want to establish from the Hon. Member, would the sum of \$15.9 million be spent within the three months and what is the cause for a 50% increase for this particular service?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to assure the Hon. Member, Ms. Annette Ferguson, that the resources will be spent. I would like to educate the Hon. Member, Ms. Annette Ferguson, that nowhere in the law or in the Fiscal Management & Accountability Act (FMAA) does it state that by 5th December we close off accounts. The year ends on 31st December. I am surprised that a former Minister within different departments of the last Government does not know that. I am also concerned that an Hon. Member of this House, who was a former Minister, would get down to

such stuff by claiming that we would not be able to spend. We have to clean up 30 schools in the Region 8.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a Point of Order.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member has risen on a Point of Order.

Ms. Ferguson: Standing Order 40(a) on a clarification. I did not state ...

Mr. Chairman: Standing Order 40 (a) might not be clarification; Standing Order 40 (b) might be clarification. Hon. Member, for that point I would have to ask the Hon. Minister to give way.

Ms. Ferguson: No problem.

Mr. Chairman: I think if you had stood on Standing Order 40 (a), with respect to the point being address now, to let him stay on track, I might have allowed it.

Ms. Ferguson: I am not hearing you clearly, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member is standing on a point of order to stick to the issue and the answer to the question. Go ahead Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: We will have to clean termites, wash and sanitize 30 schools, three dorms, four learning resource centres and the Department of Education.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: I see there is a sum of \$28 million here. Could the Hon. Minister state what are these allocations for and how much of the \$28 million was expended before 2nd August?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report that as part of our enhanced support to school children in our country, we have to provide different types of services because the country is now affect by COVID-19. We want to ensure that our students are in an environment where they are safe and secure. So, more materials will have to be produced, reproduced, printed and distributed, which includes lesson plans, records of work, class logs, entry profiles, registers and test papers. Then, we would also have to provide other amenities as part of print and non-print materials such as ink for photocopiers, risographs and those kind of things, statutory records and everything in the regions. Most of this money will be put towards our students specifically.

It is unfortunate that for the first eight months... with all that has happened in our country, it means that the last Government refused to look at the welfare of students in Region 8 and, similarly, in other regions.

Mr. Holder: I notice that there is an increase of nearly four times the amount from the previous year. I am listening to the Hon. Minister and hearing about registers and test papers, but those are the normal things that are printed. I am trying to get from you, Sir, what are the new items or what is new under this allocation to increase it by almost four times?

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, I repeat, as part of the response to COVID-19, many students are at home – practically all students are at home – so we have to print more materials to provide to those students as they home study during this period. Worksheets and other materials have to be printed and distributed. If these things were taken into consideration before August, then we would not have been in this House discussing this matter. The fact is that the last Government refused to treat these issues. We have to come now to the Assembly to get a budget to help the Amerindian students in Region 8.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$1,201,890,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$96,885,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$377,434,000

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that there is an increase in contract workers, whereas one would have thought that there would be a decrease in contract workers. I want to ask the Hon. Minister if there is a new policy with this new Government, that we are pushing towards persons being employed on contract rather than on the fixed establishment?

Mr. Dharamlall: One of the good things about a democracy is that people have choices, and the type of employment arrangement they desire would be provided to them. The last Government forced persons to go in one particular direction and that is called an autocracy. In this Government, which is called a democracy, we will give the choice to employees for them to determine how they will be employed.

Dr. Cummings: Could the Hon. Minister give the designations and emoluments on those contract workers?

Mr. Dharamlall: A Medic at \$140,711, a Radio Operator at \$71,589, a Field Assistant at \$73,343, two Cleaners at \$70,000 each, two Ward Maids at \$70,000 each and one Laundress at \$70,000.

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$377,434,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$35,993,000

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$35,993,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$ 25,300,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister tell us what training is currently being done in this area?

Mr. Dharamlall: Training is done in conjunction with the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) and Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA); workshops on pest and disease management; crop protection and vegetable production; bee-keeping in Mahdia, Chenapau, Paramakatoi and Kopinang. On value-added methods are fruits and vegetable production in Kopinang and training in aqua-culture production.

7.21 p.m.

Ms. Flue-Bess: A follow-up: Based on the answer given by the Hon. Minister, I see there is no staff under this agency. Does that mean that the services are being offered to the residents in the area?

Mr. Dharamlall: I did mention that the training will be done by the specialist and in conjunction with NAREI and GLDA.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister say where were these works done or, if they were not, where are they intended to be done?

Dr. Dharamlall: I wish to *burst the bubble* of the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul. These works were not done as yet, and we will do them. It will provide for improved drainage in the North Pakaraima and at Mahdia. The cleaning of many creeks will be done at Kawa, Paramakatoi, Cheong Mouth, Kanapang, Arasawa, Kaibarupai and Handrail Creek at Mahdia. I would like to reiterate that these projects will be given to the Amerindian villagers so that they could benefit from the resources of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$25,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$4,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1702000 – Agricultural Development: May I ask Hon. Minister, what equipment are you purchasing here for \$4 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Amerindian way of life requires support to agriculture. We have received reports that even things as basic as bait for Acoushi ants was not provided to the Amerindian farmers in many regions across Guyana. We would have to ensure that, as we provide those and other things, we also upgrade the equipment in service to the Amerindian people with a soil auger, a swing-fog machine that is used to spray Acoushi ants, two hives and bee keeping equipment, a poultry plucking machine, an agricultural solar drier, two solar water pumps, a portable generator, one computer system, a Ransom cement mixer, two spray cans, two mist blowers, one image projector, one chain saw and one industrial juicing machine.

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$4,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: I want to congratulate all the sides for bringing this head to completion well within the allocated time, and say thanks to the Minister and his staff for guiding us through it so efficiently. We could have a change-over to the supporting staff for the Minister for Region 9.

Agency 79: Region 9: Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$243,827,000

Mr. Henry: Under line items 6111 to 6116, in relation to employees of the Regional Democratic Council and especially the clerical and other support staff, I would like to make a special appeal that, since they will not be getting any increase of salaries in this Budget, that they be given...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Mr. Vincent Henry, do you know that as a fact?

Mr. Henry: Pardon me.

Mr. Chairman: Do you know that as a fact there will be no salary increases for 2020?

Mr. Henry: May I finish? I would like to appeal that the staff members of the RDC be given special consideration and to be given food hampers *et cetera*, because they do not have the time to go to their farms and even to fish. They have been doing a wonderful job in Region 9. I appeal for them to be given some sort of assistance, especially going towards Christmas.

Mr. Dharamlall: As you are aware, Hon. Member, or maybe you are not aware because you are probably not in the Region, that we have bought and prepared over 400 food hampers. The staff of the Regional Administration of Region 9 have benefited wholesomely from the food hampers provided.

Mr. Henry: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Just for information sake...

Mr. Chairman: At line item 6242 there is zero; unless I have a ‘Mahipaul’ book.

Mr. Henry: Yes, it is line item 6242, but I may have a ‘Mahipaul’ book too. It is the item on Maintenance of Buildings.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you may have to move on to another head where there is an allocation against it.

Mr. Henry: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): There is the sum of \$11,057,000, so I would like to ask what sort of training will be done? Who will be trained using this amount?

Mr. Dharamlall: This line item caters for staff development. When I say staff development, it is not limited to the staff of the regional administration but also the Amerindian village councils could benefit from this. Some examples would be in electronic learning (e-learning), communication, procurement, customer service, human resource management, conflict resolution, conflict management and a whole host of other things.

Mr. Henry: Expenses Specific to the Agency, on that heading I wish to ask if the Toshaos and senior councillors are to expect any increase in their stipends at this time?

Mr. Dharamlall: As you are aware, this line item caters for the payment of stipends to Toshaos, Councillors and also the RDC sub-committees, and for statutory meetings. The transportation of Toshaos could be covered here. The Regional Toshaos' Conference, when they come together and discuss their issues on behalf of their villagers, is also covered here.

Moving forward, we have made a commitment to the Toshaos of Guyana and to the Amerindian people, that we will increase the support that we provide to them whether infrastructural or institutional. We have begun to do so. Two days ago, the A Partnership for National Unity Alliance For Change actually led a vote against the budget of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. The APNU/AFC voted against the capital budget of over \$800 million for Amerindians. Toshaos are going to be paid. Their stipends will be increased in the future, and we would like to make that known. A Partnership for National Unity Alliance for Change, when it campaigned in 2015, stated that Toshaos would get \$80,000 per month as a stipend. Up until today, they have not given the Toshaos a single cent in increase.

Mr. Henry: Although it was not specifically said, I heard that there will be no increases in this Budget for Toshaos, Senior Councillors or RDC Councillors in their committees.

On behalf of the Toshaos and the Councillors of Region 9, who have been manning gates across the Region... just over 11 gates have been managed because of COVID-19 and they are doing a

fantastic job of ensuring the safety of their communities. They have been asking for remuneration for at least two persons who man the gates. I am asking if this heading, line item 6211, could be used to do it now, if not, could it be done in the future? Thank you very much.

Mr. Dharamlall: As the Hon. Member is aware, or is possibly unaware, we have been including Shulinab, the village where the Hon. Member resides. We are taking care of the entry point and paying for the staff at that entry point into the village. I would also like to inform the Committee that, through the initiative of our Hon. Prime Minister, food hampers were also distributed to COVID-19 affected villages in the Rupununi. I did not see the Hon. Member anywhere around at Quaiko, for example, which is a satellite village of Shulinab, to assist us with the distribution of COVID-19 support, as we have done also in Patarinau and other villages in the South Rupununi.
[*Interruption*]

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I observe there is an additional 16 new contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister give us the designation of those new employees?

7.36 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I think the Opposition has degenerated. I just heard a comment from the Opposition that, because we are providing hamper support to Amerindians, we are creating a hamper society. We have to feed our people and we will provide hampers to Amerindians and everyone in this country if they deserve it. Also, very soon we will begin the distribution of the \$25,000 cash grant to every household in this country. That is the disrespect that the Opposition has for the people of this country.

There is one Deputy Regional Executive Officer, one Assistant Regional Executive Officer, one Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst, eight Accounts Clerks, one Data Entry Clerk, one Supply Expeditor, one Hinterland Affairs Worker, one Confidential Secretary, six Typist/Clerks, five District Development Officers (DDO), one Caretaker, one Assistant Caretaker, one Radio Operator, One Information Officer and two Cleaners. Also, their National Insurance Scheme (NIS), station allowances and gratuity payments are covered under this line item.

Mr. Henry: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Again, I would like to humbly appeal for some of this money, if possible, to be used to repair some of the wireless fidelities (Wi-Fi) that

have been down because of lightening or whatever. The people, the young people especially, need those systems to do virtual learning.

Mr. Dharamlall: The Hon. Member would know that 100 information and communications technology (ICT) hubs were established, in 2014-2015, by the People's Progressive Party/Civic Government, in 100 Amerindian villages across Guyana, in practically most or if not all of the main villages in Rupununi, Region 9. The Hon. Member had five years to fix these things. The Hon. Member is now coming here, almost two months into a new Government, to ask why some of these things are not fixed or why they have not been... I need to ask why the APNU/AFC has not fixed any of the ICT hubs in the last five years? That is what we need to ask. I can tell you that resources, from other agencies of the Government, have been budgeted to fix all of the ICT hubs in Amerindian villages in Guyana.

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$243,827,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$34,100,000

Mr. Henry: Project code 1204900 – Buildings – Administration: I was made to understand that support is given to the COVID-19 checkpoints, but I want to confirm that this amount can be used to assist the other checkpoints across the region. There are 11 checkpoints across the region which are in need of little huts and support also. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under this project code 1204900, Buildings, Administration, we will be doing an extension to the living quarters of the REO because we have to provide better accommodations. We will be constructing a washroom and office space in the Public Works Department. There will be three security huts in Lethem, Aishalton and Karasabai. There will be a sanitary block at the Aishalton guest house.

I wish to inform this Committee that we will do so *via* public tender and the Procurement Act. It is quite unlike what happened in the last Administration. Practically for five years, in the Rupununi, Region 9 contractors were handpicked. They had to bear Party cards and support the APNU/AFC before they received works. Everything practically was done in the last three years by that method

with a three-quote system. Tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars were spent and not approved to the benefit of the people in Region 9, especially the Amerindian people.

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$34,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$66,257,000

Mr. Henry: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: For information, the Department of Agriculture is very active in the COVID-19 prevention at the border in Lethem and other communities. The \$400,000 seems to be very limited. If a way can be found to increase that, it will be very helpful.

Mr. Dharamlall: That is not a question. You will be aware that allocations for some of the line items have already increased despite we are in a three-month budget.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what buildings will be maintained with this sum?

Mr. Dharamlall: There will be minor maintenance repairs on the buildings in the compounds of the Department of Agriculture in North Rupununi and Aishalton.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): What type of training is being offered to the staff or the community?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report that all classes will be done online. In order to increase effectiveness, timely reporting and communication – Mr. Mahipaul, Hon. Member – in the Department of Agriculture, we will engage in capacity building, and training support for staff in the department.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$66,257,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$36,500,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project code 1701400 – Agricultural Development: I see the Legend states:

“Provision for agriculture development interventions.”

Could the Hon. Minister name at least two of the interventions that are being catered for?

Mr. Dharamlall: I endeavour to provide adequate information as free, prior and informed consent, which is something imperative to Amerindian governance and governance across our country. We have to share information openly. Please do not limit me when it comes to sharing information, especially for hinterland communities.

We will establish a mobile data collection system. We will purchase equipment as part of that to collect and monitor data in the five sub-districts. We will construct a foot and mouth disease building at Bashauzon, a five-by-five security hut at Saint Ignatius and a sanitary block at the agricultural station in Saint Ignatius. There will be equipment for the min-veterinary laboratory and the purchase and installation of a submersible water pump. We will rear Black Giant birds, the dual-purpose kind, for Aishalton, Masakenari, Apoteri and Yurong Paru villages – that would be in the deep south, the north and the south Pakaraima Mountain. There will be the establishment of shade houses in Nappi, Taushida, Achiwib and Tipuru.

Ms. Flue-Bess: It is the same project code 1701400, Agricultural Development. Could the Hon. Minister at least name three of the communities which are likely to benefit from these interventions?

Mr. Dharamlall: I mentioned earlier Aishalton, Masakenari, Apoteri, Yurong Paru, Nappi, Taushida, Achiwib and, in the central area, Lethem.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$36,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Before we continue, I call on the Hon. Member, Ms. Priya Manickchand, to move the Suspension of the Standing Order so that we can go beyond 8.00 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 11

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That Standing Order No. 11 be suspended to enable this sitting of the National Assembly to continue with its business beyond 8.00 p.m.”

[*Ms. Manickchand*]

Minister of Education [Ms. Manickchand]: I move that the Standing Order No. 11 be suspended so that we could proceed with the work of the House, for today, until its completion.

Question put and agreed to.

Standing Order suspended.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$233,498,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads and 6251 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could I ask the Hon. Minister to name at least three of the roads and three of the bridges that will be done under these line items?

Mr. Dharamlall: I wonder why the Hon. Mr. Vincent Henry of Region 9 is not asking the questions.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are we not going well?

7.51 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: These line items, 6251, Maintenance of Roads and 6252, Maintenance of Bridges, cater for repairs to sections of the road in Saint Ignatius – one kilometre; the road at Prakana- Karasabai – two kilometres; the road in Karasabai – two kilometres; roads in Lethem are 1.4 kilometres and other sections in Lethem are 0.8 kilometres. Bridges are: Sawariwau bridge, Makawau bridge, Kamacalis bridge and Yurong Peru bridge. Mr. Chairman, I would like to report

that we would now have to do all of these things, because none of it was done in the last Administration, A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change.

Mr. Henry: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: I just heard that some road works will be done in Lethem. We want to ask that there not be a repetition of what used to happen before. This is where roads were built by the People’s Progressive Party/Civic and only last in the town for six months. We want to ask that it take an example from the roads in central Lethem, a very strong and durable road that was built by the APNU/AFC Government. It will be long-lasting serving the region, including our brothers and sisters of the Amerindian nations. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: The fanfare in which the Hon. Member got up... I would like to report, to the people of the Rupununi and to the people of Guyana, that one of the roads I just mentioned, in Lethem, \$14 million was paid to the contractor, at that time, under the APNU/AFC, and not a single brick, pebble or sand was placed on that road. The sum of \$14 million was spent and that we will have to investigate. We will, now, have to build the road where the sum of \$14 million was already provided to the contractor by the APNU/AFC and not even a grain of sand was placed on that road.

Ms. Ferguson: Line item 6302 – Training (including scholarships): I noticed the sum of \$3.3 million is proposed to be spent on this particular line item. Could the Hon. Member state, what training will be done? Who are to benefit from this particular training?

Mr. Dharamlall: In public works at line item 6302 – training (including scholarships), I think the Hon. Member is desirous to ask a question, but this line item has zero. I think the question is misplaced. That asks the question of whether the Hon. Member actually passed her grades in the scholarship that we are all paying for, and when will the Hon. Member graduate?

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, is it that we are looking at agriculture programme under...

Mr. Chairman: We are looking at agriculture programme under public works.

Ms. Ferguson: Public Works, sorry. I thought it was agriculture.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see there is an increase from three employees to 11 employees. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee, when were these eight contracted employees employed? What are their designations?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not know if the Hon. Member is seeking popularity by asking these questions. The line item caters for seven Checkers, one Overseer, one Labourer, one Equipment Operator and the increase is also due to the appointment of one Superintendent of Works. The line item, also, caters for station allowance, National Insurance Scheme (NIS) benefits and gratuity for staff.

Mr. Henry: Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Hon. Minister, I would like to let you know that the APNU/AFC Government commenced building proper bridges in Region 9 including the Manari bridge, one at Bina Hill and elsewhere. These are concrete bridges and we will like for that to be continued and not wooden bridges that can be burnt at any time. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: As you are aware, on the side of democracy, we build bridges and on the side of the Opposition, the autocrats, burn bridges. There is evidence that the APNU/AFC burn bridges in this country. We will be building bridges in the People’s Progressive Party/Civic Government.

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$233,498,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$70,000,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project Code 1902300 – Infrastructure Development: I see the legend speaks to construction for culverts. Could the Hon. Minister name at least four of the culverts or areas where the culverts will be constructed?

Mr. Dharamlall: In addition to the construction of culverts we will also construct the bridge at Powisnau. We will, also, construct a steel bridge at Kabanau. We will construct a timber bridge at Sawariwau Creek, which is at the now the Potaro Crossing. We will also construct a concrete and timber bridge at Meriwau. We will also upgrade a section of the Nappi Farm to Market road about one kilometre. We will upgrade the road in Lethem, the right bank of Tabatinga of one kilometre.

We will upgrade a section of the road at Hiawa to one kilometre, because schoolchildren were complaining that during the rainy seasons, especially, parts of the road to Kumu becomes flooded and impossible. We will construct two culverts in the Kumu village.

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$70,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$1,482,736,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: could the Hon. Minister tell us, is this rental for one or two buildings?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is an absence of a teachers quarters a building will be rented to house teachers and some others.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6302 – Training (including scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister tell us, what are some of the training or scholarships being offered to the teachers or educators in the area?

Mr. Dharamlall: The last APNU/AFC Government gave scholarships to their Ministers and their families. I do not know if they have graduated as yet. Under line item 6302, Training, in Region 9, it caters for training at all levels, early childhood, numeracy and literacy, special needs, multi-grade workshops, child friendly spaces, positive discipline workshops, intensive Mathematics and English, science initiatives at primary and at secondary, School Based Assessment (SBA) workshops, training sessions for all SBA subjects *et cetera*. There will be 87 head teachers to benefit at least on staff development sessions. Teachers will also be trained online. This will be opened to those in some of the villages.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$1,482,736,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$95,050,000

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$95,050,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$757,844,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see that there is an addition of nine new contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister give us their designations?

Mr. Dharamlall: A Receptionist, a Labourer, a Cook, a Driver, a Mechanic, a Mortuary Maid, a Pharmacy Assistant, a Ward Maid, a Medix, a Field Assistant, a Cleaner and a Data Entry Clerk.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6241 – Rental of Building: I observed that there is an allotted sum of \$1 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us, is it one building or are there several buildings to be rented?

8.06 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: The Hon. Member said, “a massive \$1 million for rental”. The Hon. Member has forgotten that the last Government was renting multimillion-dollar homes on the backs of taxpayers, for ministers and junior ministers in the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change Government. That is a travesty. Now, we are spending just \$1 million to rent a building or buildings in the Rupununi to cater for the COVID-19 patients, then I think that is justice. That is how a proper government works. We help poor people because we are a pro-poor Government. We will make sure that all patients are taken care of.

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$757,844,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$80,019,000

Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$80,019,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: On your behalf, I want to thank the Minister and staff for taking us through the Estimates for Region 9.

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$240,444,000

Mr. Sears: Line item 6111 – Administrative: I have seen a decline of staff from ten to nine. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, could he explain the reduction of the one staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the retirement of the Deputy Regional Executive Officer is why there is a reduction.

Mr. Sears: To the Hon. Minister, I would like to ask, when would that vacancy be filled for the DREO?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the DREO retired in July. That vacancy will be filled at the appropriate time by the Administration.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I am seeing an allocation of \$36,000,000. Could the Hon. Minister provide an explanation of how this money will be utilised?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6211 is for the stipend to the Amerindian Village Council, the Toshaos, the Deputy Toshaos, the inclusion of some disaster-preparedness activities as well as meetings of the Councils.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings that have to be maintained?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are the Kwakwani sub-office, the Bayrock Community Centre, the RDC main office, an annexe building, the accounts building, the Regional Executive Officer's quarters, the Regional Chairman's quarters, the Regional Vice-Chairman's quarters and for unforeseen works.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6255 – Maintenance and Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister identify the maintenance that has to be done to these said structures?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is for the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic, for emergency works on the shed at Bamia – there will also be a supply of wood, stone and cement, among other things – the Son Chapman Boulevard and repairs to the signboard at the Wisroc and Watooka Junction, the perimeter fence will be repaired at the REO’s quarters at Fairs Rust, repairs to the perimeter fence at the Regional Chairman’s quarters and, similarly, at the quarters of the Regional Vice-Chairman. Those will be done by the People’s Progressive Party/Civic Administration over the next few months.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6294 – Others: Could the Hon. Minister shed some light on what will be done with this allocation?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, this line item caters for the payment of bank charges and stipends for evaluators and the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB) members.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6294 – Others: Could the Hon. Minister continue on that same line and give an explanation for this allocation?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, this line item provides for the enhancement of social activities. It will also focus on commendation activities for staff, especially outstanding staff members, during the course of the year.

Mr. Figueira: A follow-up: could the Hon. Minister identify what social activities will be hosted factor in the COVID-19 environment?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I did not say that a physical activity will be held; I said, “social activities”. Social activities can also mean, as the Hon. Mr. Charles Ramson is doing, the *One Guyana* virtual concert. So, many of these things will be done, taking into account the COVID-19 situation in Guyana.

Mr. Figueira: A follow-up: You were not as pellucid as the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramson, who had identified what will be done. Could you give an example or two of what will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, this is a line item of \$1.2 million. I am willing to spend as long as we have to spend to explain to the people of Region 10 that an Hon. Member of Parliament, Mr. Figueira, is asking me how \$1.2 million will be spent. We have hundreds of millions of dollars to be spent and he is not spending time asking me about those things.

Again, I will repeat, social activities, staff commendation activities and other activities to build staff morale in the Regional Administration will be funded from this Budget line item.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, I noticed Mr. Sears waiting very patiently.

Mr. Figueira: Sir, you are the one to give me the floor and I appreciate that. I would want the Hon. Minister to know that, as the representative and resident of Region 10, and citizen of Guyana it is imperative that, as elected representative of the House, I peruse these Estimates significantly, regardless of the quantum of allocation.

Line item 6302 – Training and Scholarships: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what type of training will be done? If any scholarship should be given, what will be the nature of those scholarships?

Mr. Dharamlall: Training is something that has to happen continuously. In Region 10, we have to build the capacity of our staff. The regional administration will have to provide resources, as we are providing now, for the enhancement of staff capacity as well as institutional support to the Administration. This is so that we can enhance the services, performance and that the people of Region 10 can have real benefits out of the resources put in this Budget.

Mr. Sears: Hon. Minister, we appreciate that explanation. I just have two follow-up questions with regard to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings and line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. Could you state who the contractors are for those maintenance projects and are they from Linden or Region 10?

8.21 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I would not be amenable to indicate the names of the contractors. What I am amenable to doing is, to state to the Hon. Member, Mr. Sears, that there was an Advisor to the Minister of Communities, now the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, who has never offered a single ‘T’ or an ‘I’ in advise to the Ministry, but was

reported to have collected hundreds of thousands of dollars per month. That Hon. Member sits in the House and is also from Region 10.

Mr. Sears: It is rather unfortunate that I could not have gotten the list. We want to ensure that this Government represents the people of Region 10.

Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: early today, we would have heard representation being made for the other regions, but for this line item there is \$0. However, that raises a lot of questions as to whether this Government cares about the people of Region 10.

Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: We have seen an increase of over 100% from last year. Could you give a breakdown of what field of medical supplies are going to be bought?

Mr. Dharamlall: In the exuberance to paint the current Administration as on here, I would like the people of Region 10 to know, that the same Hon. Member who asked me a question was also the recipient of hundreds of thousands of dollars as an Advisor in the Ministry of Natural Resources. I do not think that the people of Region 10 know that.

In the line item that is zero, the Regional Democratic Council, is controlled heavily by the APNU/AFC. I would want to ask them, why did they not put resources or request resources under drugs and medical supplies for the staff in administration and finance of Region 10? Mr. Chairman, I would also like to inform this Committee that we will have to take care of the staff since the RDC refused to do so. We would be providing, under this line item, face masks, Lysol wipes, Lysol spray, paper towels, spray bottles, hand sanitisers and whole host of other things in our fight to contain and to eradicate the COVID-19 in Guyana.

Mr. Sears: Line item 6224 – Print and Non- Print Materials: We have seen an increase again for more than 100%. How will this funding be spent? Will it be going to the Public Relations (PR) Department of the RDC?

Mr. Dharamlall: We, also, believe that it is important for transparency and accountability. We have to publish all the tenders that have to be published. We have to advertise all that have to be advertised. We have to make sure that we buy the newspapers and other materials, so that the budget line will enhance services provided by the regional administration to the citizens of Region 10 and the country as a whole.

Mr. Sears: Hon. Minister, is there a PR Department? I asked the question under line item 6224. It is a follow-up. I am asking whatever is being spent, is it going towards the PR Department?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not want to belabour this issue, but the Hon. gentleman who is asking me the question was once an Advisor to the Ministry of Natural Resources. He ought to know certain basic things in Government. This is not for the PR Department. I will educate him once again and I would hope at this time he would understand what I am saying very clearly.

The materials for Print and Non-Print, under this line item, is to enhance the Administration and Finance Department or programme of the regional administration. This has nothing to do with whether the region has a PR department or not.

Mr. Sears: I can conclude that the Hon. Minister does not know if there is a PR department or not.

Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges and line item 6273 – Water Charges: We have seen a significant increase in budgetary allocation from \$701,000 to \$2 million. Could you explain the significant increase? How are the moneys going to spent with regard to these utilities?

Mr. Dharamlall: As we peruse this budget book, I would like to inform the Committee that Region 10 never had a PR department. It may have had a Public Relations Officer (PRO) who resigned, but not a PR department.

Line item 6272, Electricity Charges, would reflect arrears of \$743,000 for 2019. There was an increase in the rates in 2018 from \$7 per kilowatt to \$15, more than double, in Region 10 and this passed us without notice. The cost of electricity doubled in Region 10 and it passed us without notice under the APNU/AFC. Also, locations: two administrative buildings, the Regional Executive Officer quarters, the Chairman’s quarters, the Vice-Chairman’s quarters, the Deputy Regional Executive Officer’s quarters and three other quarters that are currently not occupied.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up: could the Hon. Minister indicate, how many of the five programmes, under this agency, is in one building or in one compound?

Mr. Dharamlall: We are speaking about Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance. If the Hon. Member is asking me about Region 10 specifically and is desirous of being assigned in Region 10, then, I am certain, adequate space will be provided for the Hon. Member. That

depends on the acceptance of the regional administration of that Hon. Member being assigned to Region 10.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I am just trying to understand. Why I asked how many of the programmes are in one building or in one compound is that because all of the programmes have allocations for electricity charges and water charges. I was trying to ascertain if there are five meters there for electricity, for them to know directly how much each building is using and the same for water. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could say if all five programmes are housed in one building or separately, so that I can understand, going forward, the different programmes and the allocations that are under water, electricity and telephone charges?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not know if the Hon. Member is casting aspersions on the people of Linden and Region 10. I can assure the Hon. Member that in none of the buildings you would have five programmes. I would prefer, as an employee of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, to endeavour to send the Hon. Member on a mission to Region 10, to confirm all those questions that the Hon. Member is asking.

Mr. Sears: Line items 6111 – Administrative, 6113 – Other Technical Craft Skilled and 6116 – Contracted Employees: Along these line items we have seen a reduction in staff. We spoke about reduction of 10 to nine administrative staff. Then, we see that when it comes to Other Technical and Craft Skilled six to five staff and Contracted Employees from seven to six staff. Please, state why the sudden decrease. Ultimately, if it is the goal of the Administration to create 50,000 jobs, why has this happened?

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6116, a Systems Development Officer resigned. Under line item 6113, an Assistant Field Auditor resigned from the staff complement.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6111 – Administrative: Could the Hon. Minister state if consideration with this allocation will be put towards the Presidents Youth Award, Republic of Guyana (PYARG) initiative?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6111, Administrative, caters for salaries and benefits accruing to an employee. The Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, has once again misplaced his question. I have already answered the question. It was previously asked.

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$240,444,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$17,493,000

Mr. Sears: Project code 1205100 – Buildings - Administration: The question would be with regard to the “completion of electrical works, fences and payment of retention - rollover.” I want to ask, which buildings are being rehabilitated with regard to those things identified?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is not for rehabilitation as the Hon. Member said There are some rollovers that we would have to provide support for at the Linden Concert Hall and School (LICHAS) such as electrical works and painting and also at the Christiansburg Community Centre. This was broken up, because I guess this contract was spilt. Christiansburg Community Centre – Painting and decoration, lot two Christiansburg Community Centre – tiling of the ground floor and rehabilitation of the Christiansburg Community Centre – carpentry and plumbing. This, Mr. Chairman, is contract splitting that happened in 2019, in Region 10.

Mr. Sears: Project code 2505500 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration: I would like to know, which offices will be furnished? Who, possibly, the contract has been awarded to?

Mr. Dharamlall: Once Again, I would like to report to the National Assembly and to make very clear to the people that moneys cannot be signed, and contracts are not awarded as yet. This Budget is, now, being contemplated for approval.

8.36 p.m.

If that used to happen in the past where contracts and moneys were paid out by the APNU/AFC, it will not happen under the People’s Progressive Party/Civic.

We will be setting up two walk through sanitisers and again, that is on our COVID-19 mitigation or prevention; some metal office desks; office chairs; computer systems; the RDC secretariat; the Accounts Department; the Registry; the Public Works Department; and the Procurement Department. So, amongst those areas that is how those pieces of furniture and equipment would be shared.

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$17,493,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works – \$201,973,000

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: could the Hon. Minister identify the positions of these Senior Technical Officers as well as to state the highest and lowest salaries and benefits for these officers?

Mr. Dharamlall: The REO is trying to locate the information.

Mr. Figueira: I did not hear that Hon. Minister.

Mr. Chairman: The REO is locating the information.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could please proceed in the meantime?

Mr. Chairman: Is there another question, as they locate the information? We can come back to that.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: could the Hon. Minister identify these said roads?

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Moblissa/Wisroc access road, Noitgedacht internal road, Third Corner, Hostel Road, Church Road, Block 22, Woodpecker Lane, Amelia’s Ward, Fordyce Road, Block 22, farm-to-market road at West Watooka. These works also include grading and shaping of some carriage ways in the area.

Mr. Figueira: For line items 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges, 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works and 6254 – Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses, respectively: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the details of those said programmes?

Mr. Dharamlall: The details are as follows: emergency repairs to Maxwell Alley Bridge, Armstrong Alley Bridge, and the Mariah Elizabeth/Three Friends Mines are under line item 6252 The Christianburg School compound – I think that is where the Hon. Member teaches or used to

teach – Christianburg School compound and, again, Christianburg School compound, these are contracts that have already been nominated and there are contractors in place. It looks like this is contract splitting as well, so that happened previously.

Cleaning and desilting of drains and canals in Fairs Rust; cleaning of clogged drains in Watooka; repairs to damaged sections of solid cast concrete drains in Casuarina Drive and cleaning and desilting of clogged drains in Republic Avenue.

Mr. Figueira: The Minister's assumption of contract splitting cannot be substantiated; I would like that to be strike from the record.

Line item 6254 – Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses: Could the Hon. Minister identify where this will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we must not leave anything unsaid. There were already contracts for Christianburg School compound, one: shaping, taring and bolting of 250 greenheart piling for revetment purposes; the second contract: supply 1 x 12 x 12 greenheart, bolts and nuts; and the third contract: repairs to damaged sections of the revetment wall and backfilling. That is contract splitting and that happened in the RDC of Region 10.

Weeding and cleaning at the staff quarters at Fairs Rust, the Amerindian hostel at Wismar and the engineer's quarters at Blueberry Hill. Purchases will be made for the RDC and the main office and also, the Amerindian hostel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira, did we get the information that was asked for the first question that you put?

Mr. Figueira: No, that is why I am standing. Minister, the question is actually under line item 6254 – Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses; could you please identify where this will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: Just before I go, I would just like to provide to the Committee of Supply with the information under line item 6112. They are as follows: a Superintendent of Works (SOW) – \$101,000; a Plumber – \$70,000; a Senior SOW – \$126,000; and a Civil Engineer – \$239,590. With regard to line item 6254 – Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses, it is emergency repairs to the riverside revetment works at Christianburg.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: could the Hon. Minister give some clarity on this allocation? Since, he would be answering that, could he also provide us with information under line item 6294 – Other, as well.

Mr. Dharamlall: On a point of correction to the Hon. Member, under line item 6294, there is zero allocation, so questions cannot be asked on that neither am I able to supply answers to questions that has no merit.

Line item 6284, that will cater for an increased number in the Clerks of Works attached to capital works and consultancy personnel for the key and critical development projects in Region 10.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Figueira are you good now?

Mr. Sears: I would like to point out line items 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies and 6283, Cleaning and Extermination Services, respectively. I realised, while going through these two line items, that the sums remained the same, as last year. I would like to know, given the whole COVID-19 pandemic which we are faced with, if further allocation should not have been made? What are the items that are going to be bought to ensure that we deal with the whole COVID-19 pandemic?

Mr. Dharamlall: One of the principles of good governance and shrewd management is the principle of economies of scale. The Public Works Department also shares the same building with the Administrative Department and the importance of this line item is co shared between those two Departments.

Mr. Sears: I am really not satisfied with that answer, Mr. Chairman, but moving on; line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): We see \$400,000 allocated to this. What are the criteria for persons to enter the programme, and will this be specific to the Public Works' staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: Ideally, we would like it to be for the Public Works' staff, but because we have limited resources – a lot of it disappeared in the last five years – we would have to make sure that we train personnel as much as possible. The provisions for analytical and psychological services will entail the prospective contractors be trained in the standard bidding processes and how to improve the quality of document preparation; they will receive training in project execution, as well. Training of staff and technical personnel in effective social distancing – apparently, this is a

problem in Region 10 – sanitisation of work environment and also, the transmittal of information to staff and contractors selected for project execution.

Programme: 802 – Public Works – \$201,973,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works – \$43,192,000

Mr. Chairman: We have the Estimates as Public Infrastructure but the book states Public Works. This is another ‘Mahipaul’ issue – so, Public Infrastructure/Public Works.

Mr. Sears: Just to confirm is it Programme 803?

Mr. Chairman: No. It is Programme 802.

Mr. Sears: I am getting mixed up with some of these. It is the *Mahipaul syndrome*.

Mr. Figueira: Project code 1401400 – Roads: could the Hon. Minister identify these said roads?

Mr. Dharamlall: The carriageway at Christianburg will be upgraded; carriageways at Accabre Drive, Karakara and Mackenzie will be upgraded – 326 metres; upgrading of a fair-weather carriageway at Wisburg Secondary School entrance.

Mr. Figueira: Project code: 1901700 – Infrastructural Development: Could the Hon. Minister identify these developments that will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: The construction of a revetment and erosion control structure at Block 22.

Mr. Figueira: I did not hear you; where?

Mr. Dharamlall: At Block 22.

Programme: 802 – Public Infrastructure/Public Works – \$43,192,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

8.51 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$2,573,123,000

Mr. Sears: With reference to line items 6116 – Contracted Employees, 6117 – Temporary Employees and 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: We are seeing temporary employees decrease from 12 to 9, contracted employees decrease from 24 to 19 and clerical and office support decrease from 25 to 19. It is almost 14 persons that would have either lost or resigned from their jobs. Could we have some explanation on that Hon. Minister?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a decrease because there were some resignations – one House Mother, one Cook, one Head Cook and two House Fathers.

Could you please indicate, again, the other line items?

Mr. Sears: They are line items 6117, 6116 and 6114.

Mr. Dharamlall: I have already mentioned line item 6116. There are seven part-time Teachers under line item 6117 and under line item 6114, there are three Typist Clerks and three Librarians resigned.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: I am seeing an increase of 24 senior technical staff. Could the Hon. Minister identify the positions of the highest and the lowest paid salaries and their emoluments?

Mr. Dharamlall: Twenty-four trained graduates – Grade 1 Class 1 Teachers and the salaries range from \$110,000 to \$269,000.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: I am seeing an allocation here for \$920,000. Could the Hon. Minister identify this building and where it is located?

Mr. Dharamlall: A teacher has been transferred, I think, to Barakara; there is no replacement at this point in time. Currently, three apartments are being rented in Kwakwani. I also have the rental fee, if the Hon. Member would like to know that, I could also provide it.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: There is an allocation for \$95 million. Could the Hon. Minister identify those said buildings?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Christianburg Wismar Secondary School, Amelia's Ward Nursery, Linden Concert Hall and School (LICHAS) and Mackenzie High School, the Mackenzie Primary, the teachers quarters at 58 Miles and Red Crescent, Blueberry Hill Nursery, Amelia's Ward students' hostel, Republic Avenue Nursery School, Blue Berry Hill Nursery, 47 Miles Primary School, Sand Hills Primary School, Coomacka Nursery School, the Education Department, the teachers' hostel at Amelia's Ward, Wismar Hill Primary School, the Amelia's Ward students' hostel, the main office at 47 Miles Primary School, Amelia's Ward Nursery, Atonement Primary School, Children's Garden Nursery, Christianburg Wismar Secondary School, Coomacka Primary School, De Veldt Primary School, Mackenzie High School, New Silver City Secondary School, the education officers' quarters, Rockstone Primary School, Watooka Day Nursery School, Watooka Day Primary School, Wismar Hill Nursery School, Aroaima teachers' quarters, Harmony Secondary School, Kwakwani Secondary School, St. Lust Primary School, Retrieve Nursery School and Wairuni Nursery School; in Mackenzie – St. Aidan's and Amelia's Ward Primary Schools, Mackenzie High School and Linden Foundation Secondary School, One Mile Regma and Wismar Hill Primary Schools, the staff quarters in Industrial Area, One Mile Primary School – which is a flat building – Wisburg Secondary School, Harmony staff quarters at Industrial Area and the Coomacka Primary School. It also caters for emergency maintenance works.

Mr. Sears: Let us turn our attention to line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: I would like to know what will be printed and what is the strategy for its distribution?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are materials, especially for our schoolchildren. I would like to assure the Hon. Member that these are legitimate materials and they are within the education department. They are for the students of nursery, primary and secondary schools. The Regional Education Officer and Department of Education in Region 10 will establish a system to ensure that every child who deserves and who has to have – which is every child – will receive it; quite unlike the \$30 million plus in printing for birth certificates by one of the People's National Congress executives in Miramar, Florida.

Mr. Sears: It is clear that my question was not answered. I wanted to know, specifically, what is the strategy for its distribution. It is all right to say that you do not know, but you are putting it over to the Regional Education Officer. The reason I am asking this is because we have students in far flung areas who are currently suffering because they do not have internet access or because

school is not in session now. So, that is the reason why I am asking that specific question, especially for those in the riverine areas.

Mr. Dharamlall: It is funny that the Hon. Member is saying that we do not know. Are you also insinuating that the Regional Education Department does not know how to distribute books? Is that what the Hon. Member is saying? I find that as an unjust statement to the teachers and the officials of the Education Department of Region 10. And what I find that is even more difficult to configure is that an Hon. Young Member of Parliament of Region 10 is saying this about the staff of the Regional Administration, Education Department, Region 10.

We will endeavour to make sure that every child receives support, even if we have to take a boat and go, we will go; even if we have to walk and go, we will go so that every child will receive support.

Mr. Figueira: I do not believe the Hon. Member intended in any way to berate the teachers as you are professing to make your point.

Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I am seeing an allocation for over \$11 million for the remaining months. Could the Hon. Minister identify or state what type of events will be catered for with this allocation?

Mr. Dharamlall: The activities here will not be held at Durban Park. The payments for Mashramani celebrations in 2020 were facilitated here as well as for the regional Science Fair. The regional awards ceremony as well as Singing Bee and literacy competitions will be covered here, amongst other activities moving forward.

Mr. Figueira: Line item 6284 – Other: There is a big allocation of \$135 million for the remaining months of the year. Could the Hon. Minister be very pellucid in explaining how this allocation will be utilised?

Mr. Dharamlall: In a democracy, when people work, they have to be paid. There are 151 Sweeper/Cleaners, and this caters for the payments of 151 Sweeper/Cleaners.

Mr. Figueira: Could the Hon. Minister be kind in also providing us with the details of the allocation under line item 6294, Other?

Mr. Chairman: Hon Members, while the Minister is getting his information together, we started this head at 8.05 p.m., and we are now just about four minutes to the hour.

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, we have had a programme of development for teachers in Guyana and we will continue to support our teachers and ensure that they have the best facilities to conduct their duties. There will be installation of internet connectivity in five schools in Sub-Region 2. These schools are Howell Wilson Primary, Hururu Primary, Aroaima Primary, Maria Henrietta Primary and St. Lust Primary Schools.

Mr. Figueira: Final question on this side. Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): I know the Hon. Minister would have given an indication of the nature of training in the previous programme so, I do not want him to reiterate what was said. I figure that same that was mimicked there, could also be done here. Are there any scholarships being afforded and to whom?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Hon. Minister of Public Service indicated that the PPP/C Government has now established opportunities for thousands of scholarships, which were never pursued under the APNU/AFC. Also, specific to this line item, for the enhancement and development of teachers, there will be a debating competition, monthly primary cluster meeting, subject committee meetings, monthly cluster workshops for secondary schools and welfare services cluster workshops; more importantly, these activities will be held virtually.

Mr. Figueira: If I may, to be clear, are they scholarships for teachers or students or both?

Mr. Dharamlall: The scholarships are provided through the Ministry of Public Service as well as under this line item. Insofar as this line item is concerned, in 2020 moving forward from October to December, this does not cater for scholarships at this point in time, but for capacity building.

Mr. Chairman: We are now exhausting the time for this entire agency. Go ahead, Mr. Sears.

Mr. Sears: Just a follow-up question with reference to line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Could you state, specifically, which Indigenous settlements – one of 16 in Region 10 – will be benefitting from this capacity enhancement training that you are talking about?

9.06 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: I indicated the types of activities that would be held under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), and I will repeat some of them, a debating competition, monthly primary cluster meetings – this will also take account of the Indigenous villages, as the Hon. Member said, also the Amerindian villages in Region 10 – welfare services cluster workshops and secondary schools’ cluster workshops; all of these activities, hopefully, will be done virtually or take account of the COVID-19 measures that are in place.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$2,573,231,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$165,785,000

Mr. Figueira: Project code 2505400 – Furniture and Equipment – Education: could the Hon. Minister identify the schools that will benefit from the purchase of these furniture?

Mr. Dharamlall: Practically all the schools in the entire Region 10 will be receiving support under this project code. I will list some of the schools, including the Department of Education, for example: Malali, De Veldt, Muritaro, Kalkuni, Mabura Mission, welfare officers’ quarters, the District Education Officer’s (DEO’s) quarters, quarters at Sand Hills, the teachers’ hostel in Sub-Region 2, Kurukururu, Muritaro; again, Malali/Rockstone, 58 Miles, Mabura Mission, and Mabura Hill.

Support will also be provided to following schools: Kwakwani, Howell Wilson, Christianburg, Coomacka, St. Aidan’s staff room, Amelia’s Ward music room, Wismar Hill’s music room, Watooka Day’s music room, Wisburg Secondary’s Information Technology Laboratory, New Silver City HM’s office, Mackenzie High’s IT Laboratory, Christianburg Wismar Secondary School’s IT Laboratory, Kimbia, Gateroy, Maria Henrietta, Wairuni, St. Lust, Kalkuni, Hururu, Aroaima Nursery, Aroaima Primary, Watooka Day Primary, 47 Miles, Amelia’s Ward, Regma, New Silver City and Mackenzie High – all of these.

Should I continue, Mr. Chairman, or will I delay the Committee of Supply because there are many more? I can go on and on.

Mr. Figueira: That is all right, Hon. Member.

Mr. Chairman: I know that you can go on and on but let us take another question.

Mr. Figueira: Project code 1205200 – Buildings - Education: Hon. Minister, I am seeing an allocation here of \$148 million, and you have already provided some details of what the schools would benefit with regard to furniture and equipment. But, specifically, for this item, could you provide the provisions for the schools only?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, maybe the Hon. Member would not like how I will answer the question, so the Hon. Member cannot ask me, based on how the Hon. Member has asked, it is my duty to also make known to the public what is being done in the Budget. Kwakwani students' hostel male and female dormitories, Muritaro Primary, Muritaro teachers' quarters and Kwakwani teachers' hostel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Gentlemen, I think we have been going fine so far in allowing the questions. We just have four heads, if can take two questions each, we will get through of them.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$165,785,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$810,810,000

Mr. Sears: Line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances: We see a sum allocated here for over \$37 million, I would like to know, as part of this line item, will the frontline workers, who have been deprived of overtime and their risk allowances, and who have demonstrated in the streets recently, will they be catered for under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: This budget, as provided for by the staff details, only allows us to provide *pro rata* vacation allowances for seven staff who are eligible for leave in 2020. I would like to assure the frontline workers of this country that the Ministry of Health will take care of all of them, as we have been doing, quite unlike what the last Administration performed which was to the detriment of the health sector in Guyana.

Mr. Sears: I am not sure, if the frontline workers will accept that as an answer.

Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): We see that this allocation has dropped, when compared to last year’s \$7.5 million, to \$2 million. Is this an indication that this Government does not care about enhancing staff capability and capacity?

Mr. Dharamlall: In order to be in this House, one has to have a certain level of maturity, and the unfortunate thing about the questioning of that Hon. Member is that he lacks maturity and understanding of what the Budget is. To be in Parliament, one ought to know certain basic things. The frontline workers are not covered under this line item. So, you cannot ask me a question about frontline workers when you lack knowledge of the line item that you are asking me about.

Regarding the training – I will ask the REO to invite the Hon. Member to attend one of the training sessions on budgeting in Region 10 and if the Hon. Member will be the only student, I would also encourage other trainers to go and teach the Hon. Member – supervisory management, managerial skills, disaster management, occupational safety and health, helping babies breathe, adolescent health, family planning, earned value management (EVM) training, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), environmental training, dental health training, mental health support training and training on specialised equipment.

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$810,810,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$66,002,000

Mr. Figueira: Project code 2403500 – Land and Water Transport – Health: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the details of the vehicle and motorcycle that will be purchased?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is a four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicle and five motorcycles will be purchased.

Mr. Figueira: Project code 1205300 – Buildings - Health: could the Hon. Minister provide us with the locations of where these buildings will be?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a multi-year project at the health centre at Bamia; some final payments at Mabura; rehabilitation of the Upper Demerara Hospital; rehabilitation of the Linden Legal Aid Centre in Christianburg and general rehabilitation of...

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$66,002,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$31,027,000

Mr. Sears: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: We see an allocation of \$4.5 million here, I would like to know specifically, if the Regional Agricultural and Commercial Exhibition (RACE) will be a part of this event?

Mr. Dharamlall: This programme, under programme budgeting, has only four persons employed in the entire Region 10 and that is a travesty. We are speaking about employing people and obsessed and upset about 7,000 sugar workers going back to their jobs, but the Opposition is not telling the people of Region 10 – I would like to tell the people of Region 10 – that there are only four staff. We can speak about programme budgeting because there are only four employees in Region 10 who the last Government employed under agriculture – sorry, I meant two.

Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I would like to indicate to the Hon. Member that as part of what is happening now with COVID-19, and the way we would have to deal with it, with regard to containment and eradication, we will not be able to have massive public activities. The expenses here would focus on national and local agricultural events as well as regional events. Very soon it will be Agriculture Month, which is October and then there is World Food Day and other activities such as the monthly market day, RACE meetings and so forth, that is what will be covered.

9.21 p.m.

Mr. Sears: I would just like to put on record that it was the APNU/AFC Government that introduced this agriculture department which never existed pre-2015.

Moving on to line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): There is a provision of \$1 million. I would like to know, specifically for the Indigenous villages, if they are going to be part of this training programme? If I just may, the Indigenous villages feel left out of a lot of what is happening in the central regions.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would just like to reiterate that there was the massive employment of two persons in agriculture by the APNU/AFC in the last five years and they developed the agriculture programme as they indicated in Region 10. Two persons, and there are thousands of people in Region 10, who we have met and who are involved in agriculture. The last Administration that was rolled out on 2nd March, 2020, only employed two persons in Region 10 in five years, in the agriculture department or agriculture programme. This was an injustice to the people of Region 10.

I like that the Hon. Member has taken a position now to find out about the Amerindian and Amerindian villages. Please note that I am happy for the about-turn because our support will go towards all Guyanese, quite unlike what happened in the last Administration. We will provide support and training to Amerindians, especially in all the Amerindian villages in Region 10. We would like to ensure that they benefit from support in this Budget and in all other budgets of the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$31,027,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 805 – Agriculture - \$31,200,000

Mr. Figueira: Project code 1902200: There is a provision of more than \$31 million for agricultural development initiatives. Could the Hon. Minister say what these initiatives will be?

Mr. Dharamlall: The upgrading of a fair-weather track of land at Millies Hideout – Phase 2; revetment and erosion control structure and desilting of the Haimara [*inaudible*] Creek, Mackenzie and the construction of a slaughter pool at Canvas City, Wismar.

Mr. Figueira: Could the Hon. Minister indicate for the Millies Hideout road, the mileage of the upgrade?

Mr. Dharamlall: Sorry. The mileage of what?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, would you repeat.

Mr. Figueira: The Hon. Minister said that some works will be done on the Millies Hideout road. I would like to know the distance.

Mr. Dharamlall: The measurement is 1500 ft x 20ft; that is what will be done.

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$31,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: On the Committee's behalf, we all thank the Hon. Minister and his team for taking us through the allocations for Region 10. Thank you.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: This concludes our business for today. Hon. Prime Minister.

ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn to 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 25th September, 2020.”

[Prime Minister]

Prime Minister [Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips]: Mr. Speaker, I move the adjournment of the Assembly to 9.30 a.m. on Friday 25th September, 2020.

Motion put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at 9.27 p.m.