

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 7]

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

146th Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 9th March, 1978

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (49)

Prime Minister (1)

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

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (8)

Cde. H. D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

* Cde. H. Green, **(Absent)**
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour

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

*** Non-elected Minister**

- * Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- * Cde. S. S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Transport
- * Cde. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- * Cde. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H., **(Absent)**
Minister of Agriculture
- * Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C., **(Absent)**
Attorney General and
Minister of Justice

Ministers (5)

- Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House
- * Cde. C. V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs
- * Cde. V. R. Teekah,
Minister of Education, Social
Development and Culture
- * Cde. R. E. Jackson, **(Absent – on leave)**
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

- Cde. O. E. Clarke, **(Absent)**
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Economic Development and Co-operatives
- Cde. C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister
- * **Non-elected Minister**

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

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

Cde. J. R. Thomas,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Health, Housing and Labour

Cde. R. H. O. Corbin,
Minister of State, Ministry of
National Development

(Absent)

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (4)

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

Cde. E. L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Economic Development
and Co-operatives

Cde. M. Corrica, (absent)
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Social
Development and Culture

Other Members (21)

Cde. E. M. Bynoe

Cde. W. G. Carrington

Cde. L. A. Durant

(Absent – on leave)

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

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan
Leader of the Opposition

(Absent)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., Opposition Chief Whip
Cde. Narbada Persaud
Cde. C. Collymore
Cde. S. F. Mohamed
Cde. L. Lalbahadur
Cde. I. Basir
Cde. C. C. Belgrave
Cde. R. Ally
Cde. Dalchand, J.P.

Cde. Dindayal
Cde. H. Nokta

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, J.P.
Mrs. E. DaSilva

(Absent)

OFFICERS

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

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

9.3.78
2 p.m.

National Assembly

2 – 2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS
ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
LEAVE TO MEMBERS

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

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1978

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1978, totalling \$476,515,775.

Assembly in committee of Supply.

The Chairman: The Prime Minister's Heads and Division. Pages 16 and 17, Head 1, Office of the President. Will Members kindly indicate.

HEAD 1 – OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$186,828 for Head 1, Office of the President, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 1, Office of the President - \$186,828 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 32, Head 7, Public and Police Service Commissions.

HEAD 7 – PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$573,418 for Head 7, Public and Police Service commissions, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1. I would like to make a general comment on the entire head and ask one or two brief question of the Prime Minister. These Public and Police Service Commissions, we on this side of the House are very apprehensive and concerned at the way the administration is putting personnel into the Commission - -

The Chairman: Putting personnel into the what?

Cde. Collymore: Appointing people to the Commission. Cde. Chairman, we are of the view that the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic is not being honoured. For instance, the Cde. Prime Minister said yesterday that the People's Progressive Party had been demanding 49 percent. This is not true. We have been asking for substantial representation and we are of the view that if the spirit and the letter of the Constitution are to be honoured, then the Government must see it in its wisdom to accord some degree of representation to the People's Progressive Party.

The Chairman: Would you be kind enough to read what the Constitution says for me, please?

Cde. Collymore: I do not have a copy here.

The Chairman: I will lend you my copy.

Cde. Collymore: Do we have time for that, Cde. Chairman? I do not think it is necessary to go into the Constitution. We have experienced a degree of frustration in having consultations and having no positive results. We have a very large Party on this side of the House, two parties in effect and rather than have the political parties represented on these Public and Police Service Commissions, we have minor organisations like the Maha Sabha. This is ridiculous and we are asking the Cde. Prime Minister to indicate if and when the People's Progressive Party will be given a substantial degree of representation on the Public and Police Service Commissions.

We are also very concerned at the way in which personnel for the Police Service and the Public Service are being inducted through these Commissions. We feel that criteria which are applied are not in accordance all the time with justice and fair-play and we are sure and we have the confidence that if we were there in a substantial capacity we would be able to ensure that persons with the necessary qualifications, with the necessary qualities to be inducted into these essential services are inducted.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, very briefly, subhead 1, item (6), and subhead 4. Subhead 1, item (6), Administrative Assistant (In-Training) Administrative Cadet. We note that the amount approved in the 1977 Estimates was \$91,243 but the revised estimate is only \$38,304. Something seems to have gone wrong with this in-training programme of Administrative Cadets and I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister will tell us what seems to have gone wrong in that there was so much underspending; less than half of the amount which was budgeted to be spent was spent. Seeing that this is an area of training which we consider so very important in the context of Guyana at the present time, I wonder whether the hon. Prime Minister would like to tell us what is going to be done to correct this situation. We note that apparently it is intended to spend nearly \$108,000 for 1978, so we would like to know exactly what went wrong.

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With respect to subhead 4, Transport and Travelling, the revised amount for 1977 was \$6,408. The estimate for 1978 at \$5,860 is less than that revised for 1977. This is commendable and, in fact, it is in keeping with what the hon. Minister of Finance had said. In fact, I went through the Estimates and I noted in almost every case the provision for 1978 is less than the revised provision for 1977. This is very laudable and very commendable. We agree with that. In fact, it has been projected by the hon. Minister of Finance. But taking into consideration that in the Budget Speech the cost of licences and related certificates for cars was increased and the price of gasoline was increased, I feel certain that public servants are sure to press for an increase in their travelling rates which, if granted, would send up the cost of transport and travelling. Will public servants be granted any such increases? If they are granted those increases, then obviously this vote and all the other votes in the Estimates will necessarily have to be revised upwards.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, on the question of the Public Service Commission, may I just very briefly - -

The Chairman: I am not going to allow the same type of thing that I allowed with Cde. Collymore. If you look at the provision, it is for the remuneration of Chairman and Members. That is statutory. If you want to speak under subheads, it is okay.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What I want to speak on is the composition of the Public Service Commission. As you said, read the relevant Constitution - -

The Chairman: That was addressed to Cde. Collymore. I want to know on what item you are speaking.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 1, item (2), Secretary Public Service Commission. The Secretary of the Public Service Commission is appointed and there is provision in this Estimate for him to serve a body. In giving our approval – nominal as it is, it is not really whether we give it or not it will be passed – one must ask oneself whether the Commission is functioning in such a way as to require the services of a Secretary. I put it this way to make the point that the whole concept of a Commission founded in article 96, I think, of the Constitution, was to allow a body to function upon which there is broad representation. In fact, the Constitution goes to the extent of providing for consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. The whole idea of a Public Service Commission is that it should function to give the people serving the Commission the confidence that their interests will be fully taken care of, promotional facilities and other facilities. I think the Commission deals with things like discipline and employment within the Public Service. I probably speak with some certainty. The Commission should comprise people from various political parties and not necessarily from one single political party.

When this Constitution was framed, the report itself which preceded the actual preparation of the Constitution said that consultation meant, in effect, that the Leader of the Opposition ought to be permitted to nominate two people of his choice. This being so, if we cannot have a Commission that broadly represents the interests that ought to be represented on such a Commission, then it would mean that providing money for the Secretary of the Commission and hence the Commission would be a waste of the taxpayers' money.

Having made that point I want this afternoon to call upon the Prime Minister to give consideration to representation, which, I think, is very legitimate, for nominees of the Leader of the Opposition to sit on the commission so that we will have a Commission not representing one political interest or other small interests, but representation representing the major political Opposition in the Parliament. This was clearly the intention when that provision was put into the Constitution for consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, I think that my hon. friends Cde. Collymore and Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud suffer from a disadvantage. First of all, the Party to which they belong was not represented, by their own choice, at the Constitutional Conference in 1965 so they do not know what transpired there. What was agreed was that there should be meaningful consultation. “Consultation” is an English word and the meaning is easily accessible in any dictionary, even a pocket dictionary. It means that you discuss with a person with whom you are consulting and you take into account the views which that person gives. When the Constitution wants to state that the person consulted has the final say, the term “advice” is used.

May I say that the P.P.P. when in office in the early 1960s did put forward a Constitution which the P.N.C. called the “gasoline Constitution” - - **[Interruption]**

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister please let us proceed. Cde. Persaud if you do not behave yourself, I will ask you to leave the Chamber.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am sorry.

The Prime Minister: Apologies, Cde. Chairman, as I was saying before I was interrupted, in the famous “gasoline Constitution” there was absolutely no provision made for consultation with anyone else. The appointments were to be made at the sole discretion of the Prime Minister, so at least, the provision in article 95 is an advance on that draft Constitution which fortunately still remains only a draft. If one looks at article 95, paragraph (2) subparagraph (a), one would see that the Leader of the Opposition is consulted with respect to three members.

Let us assume, Cde. Chairman, that what is intended is that there should be Party representation. Now if those are the three on which the Leader of the Opposition is consulted, it

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seems reasonable that the Opposition could get only one of those three. If you assume party representation, the Opposition couldn't expect two or one and a half. Both concepts are impossible and the Prime Minister has always thought to let the Leader of the Opposition have one.

2:20 p.m.

But the Leader of the Opposition keeps on claiming that the appointments under subparagraph (b) of paragraph (2) of article 95 are in fact P.N.C. May I read the provision,

“two members appointed by the President acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister after the Prime Minister has consulted such bodies as appear to him to represent public officers or classes of public officers;”.

Normally, it is the P.S.U. that is consulted and F.U.G.E. The Leader of the Opposition and his Party claim that those two members that may be appointed under (b) are predominantly P.N.C. It may be that they are P.N.C. as far as their persuasions are concerned. They are not appointed there as representatives of the Unions which are consulted.

The Prime Minister then has one member on his basic discretion. It is contended under this that all the Leader of the Opposition is entitled to is one person. Regardless of how many he wants, the P.P.P. can get no more than one person. The Leader of the Opposition can go to the public now. The Leader of the Opposition wanted three out of the total of six and I said by no stretch of the imagination can I give you more than one in your absolute discretion. If perchance we concur in the identity of others, that is good enough. But it seems to me, Cde. Chairman, that the Opposition wants to run the Government from the Opposition Benches. When I was in the Opposition I was told by the then Premier, “**wait until you come over to the eastern side.**” I have come over to the eastern side, and there are certain rights that inhere in being on the eastern

side and certain limited rights that inhere in being on the western side. It is as simple as that, if you want to follow the Westminster pattern.

Further, the Leader of the Opposition comes to me and, just like Cde. Collymore, he doesn't know what is the position, he says he wants 49 percent. I say, **“How do you get the 49 percent?”** He says, **“I don't know, I just want 49 percent.”** We are as solid as the rock of Gibraltar. I am not going to change it. If the Leader of the Opposition, when consulted, is prepared to take one - - As I understand it to be in the spirit, in the letter he can get none. All I have to do is to consult and listen to what he has to say but according to the spirit all I have to do is to look at the spirit. The spirit, I would contend, allows one and they can always have the one. They want more than one and when they come back over here after the millennium they can have more than one. I think I have answered Cde. Collymore, unless the Chair so rules to the contrary.

We have the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh. He questions the underspending. These posts are open to application and during the year there were only three applications and those three applicants were appointed. One is with the Ombudsman, one is at the Office of the Prime Minister and one is at the Public Service Ministry. There were no more applications. Apparently the persons who qualified find other avenues or places for appointment.

With respect to the increase in transport and travelling, it is possible that that will have to be increased. There is an agreement between the Public Service Union and the Government and I think also between F.U.G.E. and the Government under which, if the cost of the inputs with respect to travelling increase beyond a certain point, there is an automatic adjustment upwards. I don't know exactly what it is. It is possible that there will be increases and that is one of the factors we have to face.

Head 7, Public and Police Service Commissions - \$573,418 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates..

The Chairman: Pages 36 and 37

HEAD 10 – OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,243,080 for Head 10 Office of the Prime Minister stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore.

Cde. Collymore: Subheads 11 and 16. We note here Subhead 11, Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries. I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he would be kind enough as to shed some light on this because looking at the legend it says, “Previous provision inadequate.” The revised Estimate in 1977 was \$128,000. For this year, the sum asked for is \$135,000 and we note that in 1976 the actual sum was \$120,000. We also note that there is no information in the column pertaining to establishment. I would like the Prime Minister to say how many Ministerial Private Secretaries there are and where they are situated. I would like to ask him if he can shed some light on the increase. The figure in the Approved Estimates in 1977 was \$120,000 and it was revised to \$128,000 - \$8,000 more in 1977 and it goes up now by \$7,000 in 1978. We would be very thankful for some information on this.

Subhead 16, Scheme for Remigration of Guyanese: We are always interested to know how many of our dear beloved citizens are coming back to carry on the struggle. We are always waiting for some information from the Cde. Prime Minister as to the quantum and skills of those persons returning. Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he can say how many Guyanese have returned in 1977.

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The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Subhead 1, item (9), Chief Accountant: Sir, I am not sure whether this is a typographical error but surely this needs some explanation. Subhead 1, item (9) deals with Chief Accountant on the scale A26: I noticed that the revised estimate for 1977 is the same as the approved estimate for 1977 but this year we have \$1,900 more. It was \$8,040 but there is an increase to \$10,272. The increase or decrease column on 1977 provision shows plus \$9,000 but that must be a typographical error. But, what I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister is why this whopping increase of \$2,000 at this period of austerity. There is no legend or note about reclassification or anything and the post of Chief Accountant does not seem to justify an increase of \$2,000 a year. I think my friend Cde. Collymore had already asked this one, but just in case he did not – I was not paying complete attention – I notice this Ministry is going to have an additional Confidential Secretary. It is all mixed up in that block Vote.

The Chairman: He asked already. So, there is no need going into that. Item 11, which one you are talking about?

Cde. Ram Karran: I am talking about item (19). We have a note here in the legend “. . . One new office of Confidential Secretary.” There is a Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister on A40 and it seems that since there is no mention of A40 listed under Clerical Establishment, this Confidential Secretary might possibly be paid a lower salary. Are they of the same status? And, why do we have two Confidential Secretaries in one Ministry? Are they both attached to the hon. Prime Minister? The last question I would like to ask is under the Guyana Youth Corps – we have quite a lot of blank spaces.

The Chairman: Please help me by stating the items or the numbers.

Cde. Ram Karran: The items are (21) to (39) and possibly on the next page right on to item (46), the space is all blank. We have a dollar provided. Is it the intention of the Government to fill these spaces at a later stage? There is no explanation in the margin. Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister would like to advise the House whether this is a form of redeployment or retrenchment or what, because I cannot imagine that a dollar provided for in these heads would be able to keep these people, especially the Camp Mothers, throughout the year. As I think we are on the next page, Your Honour, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister to tell us what are the duties of the Personal Attendant to the Prime Minister listed under item (50) and to whom is the Duty Allowance of \$1,440, shown under item (56), payable?

The Chairman: I am not with you. What item and subhead are you speaking about? We are dealing with two pages, 36 and 37.

Cde. Ram Karran: Page 37, item (56).

The Chairman: That is the Duty Allowance. There was something else you were talking about.

Cde. Ram Karran: Item (50). I asked what are the duties of this individual. Can we move on to Miscellaneous, subhead 3, where we are increasing in this second year of austerity, from \$40,600 to \$60,600? Surely an explanation is required here even without an answer being asked. Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us how many vehicles under subhead 7, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles, will be maintained with the legend “Increased maintenance costs”? Although the revised estimate for last year was \$30,000 and we are asking for \$25,000, we are talking about increased maintenance cost. The amount shown in the column there does not support the legend.

Subhead 10, Government Entertainment: I wish to congratulate the Government. This is one item that we have always been very critical of. It has gone down from \$105,000 in 1976 to \$45,000 this year. I do wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government in reducing Heads such as these and hope that the same reflection will appear in the other estimates. That is all I wish to say.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Sir, some of my questions have been asked already. I was going to comment on the Miscellaneous vote being increased by \$20,000 but if we can deal with page 37, subhead 5, Telephones, congratulations seem to be the order of the day in that respect in that from a revised figure of \$150,000, the estimate for 1978 is \$130,000, that is, \$20,000 less. I do not know whether that \$20,000 was put towards the Miscellaneous vote, but, be that as it may, even though the telephone rates have been increased, the telephone bill appears to have gone down about \$20,000 here and I think this is very commendable. I hope that this is not that the Prime Minister's Office will merely be making fewer calls because I want to make this point. If it merely makes fewer calls, it means that the Telecoms Corporation would be earning \$20,000 less in revenue.

What I would like to suggest and what I think it should be done – maybe the Prime Minister has already given those instructions – is that for optimum results, all the extra telephones which are not absolutely necessary should be handed back to the Telecoms Corporation so that they can re-allocate them to other people to get in revenue which they would have lost here by losing this \$20,000. They are getting \$20,000 less from the Prime Minister's Office if they can get back telephones that are not absolutely necessary, that will not be used, they can re-allocate them to other people and get back revenue from that so that they will make up that \$20,000 and maybe more in the coffers of the Telecoms Corporation.

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I see that the Police Department did that in respect of some Police Stations. It came over the news not so long ago. It was in the newspapers. The police gave up telephones in some police stations and they advised that to get some of these out-stations, we must go through the main switchboard at Brickdam. Very commendable, and I think that perhaps the hon. Prime Minister as head of the Public Service Ministry might think it useful to issue a directive to ensure that all the telephones that are not absolutely necessary are handed back to the Telecoms Corporation.

I know. I was a civil servant once and I know some of the attitudes of my then colleagues. If one of them had a personal telephone on his desk, he was always very loathe to give up that personal line. I think public servants can do with a bit of doubling up in respect of telephones so that if instructions can be given for the savings on these votes which the Telecommunication Corporation would lose, the Telecommunication Corporation can re-allocate them to people who have been waiting for a long time for telephones.

2:40 p.m.

The Prime Minister: With respect to who are and how many Ministerial Private Secretaries there are, I may say that the Ministerial Private Secretaries are to be found primarily in the Office of the Prime Minister and in the office of the Leader of the House and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. The increase of \$8,000, I am informed, is attributable to increase in salaries as a result of revisions during the year. I may observe that under this Head ...staff is included, so they are not all strictly private secretaries.

With respect to remigrants, I am informed that there were fifty-four of them who returned during 1977 and these are some of the fields: Medicine; Nursing; Accountancy; Mechanical, Civil and Electrical Engineering; Education; Agriculture; Surveying; Economics. Those are some of the fields in which we had remigrants. So far as the vote for the Chief Accountant is concerned, I am informed that there was a revision of the Chief Accountant's salary during last year, recommended by the Public Service Ministry and approved by the Cabinet and the Minister

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of Finance. The extra Confidential Secretary is for the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister.

The personal attendant is the senior, what we used to call, Messenger and whom we now describe as Office Assistant. This is the most senior of the Office Assistants who is attached to the Prime Minister. The duty allowance is for two officers who work long hours. They are attached to the Prime Minister's personal office. They work long hours and also during holidays and Sundays. They are always on call and this duty allowance is being given to them. With respect to the number of vehicles, I do not think my good friend Cde. Ram Karran really expects the Prime Minister to know how many vehicles there are. I am not the Prime Minister to know how many vehicles there are. I am not the Prime Minister of vehicles as yet. Maybe I can create that responsibility and charge Cde. Ram Karran with it.

In connection with the Youth Corps, this is the fifth occasion on which I have to explain that the Guyana Youth Corps has been wound up and these allocations of \$1 percent are merely kept to ensure the pension rights of the persons who held these posts, and who are now in the Guyana National Service, until such time as we are able to pass the necessary legislation for, tenure etc., for the Guyana National Service. With respect to the re-allocation of telephones, as suggested by the hon. Mr. Feilden Singh, it seems to have some attraction and I can assure him that the matter will be looked into.

The Chairman: Miscellaneous. Are there any observations on the question of Miscellaneous, subhead 3?

The Prime Minister: Well, Cde. Chairman, a number of things arise fortuitously, and that is why it has been increased somewhat. For instance, when we visited Canada on the last occasion, we thought that as a gesture, a mural should be given to one of the Universities there. This will come out of this vote and because these things keep on arising **ex improviso**, it was thought that the vote should be increased but that there should be careful control and monitoring

of the vote. The idea is to save us the trouble of coming back for supplementary provision and at the same time it does not remove the obligation placed on the Permanent Secretary and the staff to execute as great as possible economies.

Head 10, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - \$1,243,080 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 38

HEAD 11 – PRIME MINISTER

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$35,627,219 for Head 11, Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, our friends on the opposite side are fond of saying we do not give praise where praise is due. I do not say this is true. Looking at the Estimates for the Army – and I am speaking on the entire Head and comparing this year with previous years – we notice a sharp fall in military spending. We are very happy about this. When I spoke here in the 1977 Budget Debate, I congratulated the Government on slashing the military spending. Last year was austerity year and there were cuts. This year the austerity has been rolled over and we notice that there has been some reduction. We are happy about this but we are sure if a closer look is taken at military spending, serious or rigid cuts could be made. I want to make one thing pellucidly clear.

The Minister of Energy, replying to some comments I made, said we want to leave the country defenceless. This is not true. As the good Cde. Prime Minister himself said, if we do not have a country we cannot develop anything, therefore, we are all in favour of substantial and decisive military defence capabilities and preparedness in this country. But we are wondering if the Government is afraid to chop the Army more than it has chopped it. We have also said that tension on the borders should be reduced and this could only be done by an effective and dynamic foreign policy. Tension within the country should also be reduced by doing necessary things, national unity, for instance, making some positive moves towards reaching a common programme with the forces which are forward looking.

2:50 p.m.

The internal policy and the external policy go towards having an impact on the level of defence spending. We notice here for 1978 the defence budget and this includes the National Service and the People's Militia; they are all under the G.D.F. - \$44.6 million. For last year, the sum was \$55.7 million. The drop, therefore, is by nearly \$12 million. We are glad for this and we congratulate them but we are asking for a heavier cut. In 1976, the defence spending was \$96.2 million. If one compares all these figures, there is a progressive drop. There was a time in this country when defence spending was only \$11 million. We don't see why we need such a big Army. We don't have any problems now, to take Government pronouncements on the southern frontier and the frontier with Venezuela, where there is also calm. Why then are we creating something on the eastern frontier?

If as our comrades on the opposite side say they are a People's Government, a vanguard party, they are interested in the workers, why do we need military manoeuvres which cost money? Why do we need to maintain a very large military bureaucracy? And then we are going to cut out subsidies. We are trying to draw comparisons to show where there are major discrepancies in the Government's policy. When we look at a sub-division of the G.D.F., internal security, we notice that for this year there is no provision for internal security. We have

always been questioning why all this is needed. In 1976, the total which was earmarked for internal security was \$9.8 million; this dropped tremendously to \$3.5 in 1977 and now there is going to be nothing. This is all well and good but we don't see the need for this gigantic bureaucracy. We are going to ask the Prime Minister to see if he cannot use the pruning knife more on the ranks; cut the ranks. We are hearing about redeployment but we don't see the soldiers being redeployed. When the strike was on, they were redeployed in the cane fields. Put them there now. Cde. Chairman, we want the ranks to be cut but not to the extent of interfering with the efficiency of the military and when I say fighting efficiency I mean counterpoised to potential invaders, not internally, where we find the Army staging manoeuvres on an anti-popular basis.

I want to deal with another integral part of the Army, the People's Militia. We have already agreed that the G.P.M. is a part of the Army. We went through that last year. Although this organisation is part of the G.D.F. we see no Estimates separated. We never see Estimates in this official document as we see Estimates for the Guyana Nation Service. We want to ask the Government again, to emphasise the Guyana People's Militia. In this way we will be able to have very cheap reserve material for the Guyana Defence Force. I have here an application form and the Government has recently sent 300 of these forms to Freedom House. We are hoping that these 300 forms mean that we can induct 300 people into the G.P.M. We are going to test them to see whether they are serious.

The point I wish to make is this, that the G.P.M. says, the People's Militia will constitute the reserve of the Guyana Defence Force. We are very serious when we say that all efforts should be made to emphasise the G.P.M. and to cut the professional standing Army which we feel is too bloated.

Cde. Chairman, we have information to the effect that there has been a de-emphasis in the G.P.M. I don't know whether it is a plan of the Government or whether it comes from the

reaction of the people. There are fewer and fewer persons being trained. In places where they used to train, we see nothing happening, and in certain areas where training used to take place, there is a general paralysis; nobody seems to know what is going on. We would like to urge the Government and the Prime Minister himself, since he is in charge of defence, to ensure that the G.P.M. is made a vibrant organisation to serve as a reserve of the Guyana Defence Force.

Then Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask some specific questions of the Prime Minister about the Army. I want him to say what has become of the fraud trial of certain persons in the Army, if he can shed some light as to what has been the result or if the case is still going on and so on, and so forth. While he is doing this, we have information to the effect that some soldiers are under arrest, under close arrest, our informants say, for some months. I would like to ask him if this is true and if it is connected to the fraud trial. I would like to ask the Prime Minister to say if this is true. We have information that two soldiers, who have been interdicted from duty since 23rd November, 1976, are still being paid their salaries and there is a certain degree of tension and anxiety on their part. We want the Government to try them or release them from this tension. We want the Prime Minister to shed some light on these soldiers who are interdicted from duty since 1976 on full salaries. Another question about conditions in the Guyana Defence Force, we have received complaints that the cells are very small and that three or four soldiers are crammed into one cell; they can hardly lie down. Others say they are not being properly fed and on time, and some of the troops would rather abscond than to submit to punishment. The allegation is also made that officers usually throw water into the cells. This is only going to give them colds.

I would like to deal with the farming ability of the Guyana Defence Force. Once again, we are very happy to see that the Army is producing. We note here that they produced in 1976 \$450,000 worth of farm produce and that the Revised Estimate was \$600,000 in 1977 and it is calculated that this year they will produce the same sum, \$600,000. That is very good. We would like to have the Army diversified, producing some of its own food even though we don't

have comparative statistics as to what was the cost of producing this \$600,000 worth of food or as is the case in 1976, \$450,000 worth.

The Chairman: Cde. Roshan Ally.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Cde. Prime Minister how many Guyana Defence Force vehicles were involved in accidents during the years 1976 to 1977. As a result of accidents, how many of these vehicles came off the road?

What is the cost of repairing the rest that were involved in accidents? How many lives were lost through these accidents? Another question, would the Prime Minister say what was responsible for the fire at Adventure on the Corentyne at the Guyana Defence Force building which was completely burnt down? This fire started somewhere around 10 to 10:30 a.m. I would also like to ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware of the fact that soldiers posted at the toll gates, when they received the news of the burning of that building, started to dance for joy.

3 p.m.

Cde. Nokta: Cde. Chairman, seeing that the Guyana Defence Force comes directly under the Prime Minister, I would like to draw his attention to some matters of behaviour of the G.D.F. in the interior, particularly among the Amerindians. I think this type of behaviour does not augur well for national unity and especially among the people whom we describe as “children of the forest.” Over the many years, these people have been subjected to much brutal treatment by the G.D.F. and in my contribution to the Budget Debate, I mentioned the brutal shooting of the Amerindian boy at Mabaruma.

The Chairman: And I will not allow that again.

Cde. Nokta: Well I am just in passing mentioning it, and also the behaviour of the four soldiers at Lethem. I have a letter from an Amerindian Captain. Here is what it says:

“On Tuesday, 18th October, 1977, while I was at Mabaruma, the G.D.F. at Mabaruma went up to Wauna-Yarakita and went into my farm and they cut six bunches of plantain along with 20 roots of sweet cassava. They also pulled down the young plantain trees.”

This is signed by Amerindian Captain Simeon F. Pierre.

Incidentally, this Amerindian Captain and his whole family have now migrated to Venezuela. The question is why. Perhaps this needs an investigation too. What I want to ask the Prime Minister is to keep his eyes on the behaviour of these soldiers who are placed in the interior, because as we have seen time after time, reports of this nature come up and it is not very good for the armed forces, people who are armed with service weapons, to be terrorising people in the interior time and time again. I ask the Prime Minister to look into this matter and speak to the officers in charge that their men adopt a different attitude towards these poor people. That is my message to the Prime Minister.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram. Karran: Cde. Chairman, I wish to refer to the last item on page 38, subhead 101, Issues of Farm Produce, and to make the observation that from 1975 there was an increase from \$300,000 to \$450,000. In 1976 to 1977, the revised estimates show \$600,000. The same figure is reflected in 1978 and I want to ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is satisfied that the new slogan of “Increased production and productivity” is reflected in these figures. Surely if he expects the farmer to produce more, for his production and productivity to go up, this does not lead the way, this is no example, because, we are going to produce in the year 1978 the same amount as we produced last year, so we are not being led.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, so far as Cde. Roshan Ally's questions are concerned, I have to have notice. So far as Cde. Collymore's comments are concerned, I make no comment except to observe the tolerance with which you allow matters of policy to be discussed in the Committee of Supply and to remark my understanding of his solicitude for the comfort of prisoners in cells. I shall look into this matter most urgently.

Head 11, Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force - \$35,627,219 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 40.

DIVISION X – PRIME MINISTER

Question proposed that the sum of 9,000,000 for Division V, Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore. You see what my tolerance has permitted to happen now? I am criticised for giving you all this time. I will not allow it any more.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, I do not see where the Cde. Prime Minister's observation has merit. His criticisms are not valid. You are doing your job. It is good to see that you are asserting your dignity.

To deal with the capital expenditure for the Guyana Defence Force, Division V, I wish to speak on the entire division and largely in relation to the Guyana National Service.

The Chairman: This is the same thing I have been talking about year after year, this matter of talking on the entire division. I raised this with Cde. Persaud the Whip, several years before. That is policy. You have to speak on the items and be astute, as he attempts sometimes to be, to bring it in.

Cde. Collymore: I like to be frank. Anyway I am going to speak on subhead 4, National Service. Here again we note that there has been some austerity and we again congratulate the Government on this even though it is reluctant to accept it in the case. The National Service in 1977 had consumed \$14.7 million worth of taxpayers' money and for this year we note that a very-much reduced sum of \$8 million is allocated. Once more we have to point out that there has been a sharp drop in the allocation and we are indeed very grateful for this. This 1978 allocation is 54.4 percent of the allocation in 1977 and this is what one can call austerity, real austerity but we are sure that the National Service could be cut further and we are proposing a further cut of \$5 million.

When we look at the Estimates for the National Service over the years, we note that from 1974 to 1977 the sums which have been consumed are \$6.4 million in 1974, \$30.5 million in 1975, \$22.4 million in 1976, \$14.7 million in 1977 and for 1978 it is going to be \$8 million more. The total will be by year end, \$83 million. We have said before that this is tantamount to a Cadillac-style operation in a push-bike economy and we say it again here. Last year when I raised the question, I asked the Cde. Prime Minister to say if it is not possible to cut the G.N.S. by 50 percent, he was a little more expansive than he was today. He intimated that there will be no cut and he enlarged and said the National Service is here to stay, that it is a good organisation; it is a vibrant institution etc. But we were not surprised to see that he actually cut it by a considerable amount and we are sure that there could be further cuts.

3.10 p.m.

I am trying to say that the G.D.F., the G.P.M. and the G.N.S. constitute the military apparatus. In the interest of austerity we have been saying over and over again that the Government should emphasise the G.P.M. so as to reduce the ranks of the professional standing Army and also to reduce costs. We notice here that contrary to what the Government has been saying, military potential has more priority than agriculture. The Cde. Prime Minister has said over and over again in this honourable House that the G.N.S. is basically oriented towards the agricultural drive. On a previous occasion, he spoke of cotton and legume production, G.N.S. involved in quarry, fisheries, etc. I want to give you some figures to show that in actual fact the G.N.S. is military. We are saying that in the interest of austerity the military aspect should be 100 percent deleted and the G.N.S. should be converted into an organism for civic purposes.

The bureaucracy in 1977 for this institution cost \$6.7 million or 45.5 percent of the \$14.7 million allocated. The bureaucracy for 1978 is going to take \$5.5 million or 68.7 percent of the \$8 million allocated. But when we compare the bureaucracy with the agriculture vote, we see what is going on. Agriculture in 1977 got \$0.8 million or 5.4 percent, and agriculture in 1978 gets \$0.4 million or 5 percent. This goes to show that agriculture perhaps may only be very small, insignificant, and that the onus or the thrust of the G.N.S. is military. We are asking that this be completely deleted.

I want to quote from a document called the Guyana National Service fact sheet. I referred to this in the general debate to tell you of the suggestions which were made at the G.N.S. parley at Sophia, major suggestions to cut expenditure in 1978. We want to tell the Cde. Prime Minister that he concurred in some of these suggestions. Dismiss all AWOL staff, junior leaders and pioneers. Close Sophia Training Centre after graduation in 1978. Freeze recruitment 1978. There are some other things but these are the most important. We do not see the reason for having so many G.N.S. centres and if they are going to close Sophia, they should close two more. Definitely they should freeze recruitment for 1978 where the military aspect is concerned.

Dismissing those staff who are away without official leave, junior leaders and pioneers, should be gone into seriously because this is where the bureaucracy lies. We see here that out of \$14.7 million in 1977, 45.5 percent of the expenditure went to paying salaries and allowances and in 1978 it is increased to 68.7 percent. We are therefore urging the Prime Minister to make further cuts in the Guyana National Service in the interest of austerity.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: No comment, Cde. Chairman.

Division V, Prime Minister - \$9,000,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 43.

HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC CORPORATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$17,568 for Head 14, Ministry of Public Corporation, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am seeking clarification. I notice that under this Ministry provision has been and again is being made for only one Permanent Secretary and no other personnel. I would like to ask the Cde. Prime Minister to state whether a Ministry can really effectively function with only a Permanent Secretary and not other staff. If the answer is yes, I would really like the Prime Minister to elaborate on the functions of the Ministry. I personally do not see how a Ministry can function with only one person. Perhaps in these bad times I would really want to suggest to the Prime Minister that we scrap this Ministry thus saving \$17,568.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, I have explained every year that really the Permanent Secretary, who is also Secretary to Guystac, is the only sort of public servant employed and then all of the business that would normally be done by the Public Corporations Ministry is done by the Public Corporation Ministry is done by Guystac. They have their own means of financing through the various member corporations.

Head 14, Ministry of Public Corporation - \$17,568 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 45 and 46.

HEAD 15 – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,606,926 for Head 15, Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Subhead 1, item (7) and (8). The remarks I want to make here are more or less the same remarks which would apply to items (11), (12) and (18). In respect of item (7), Senior Personnel Officer, the sum approved for the 1977 Estimates was \$33,758. The revised amount was \$14,918 which is less than half of what was approved for the four officers. Item (8), Personnel Officer II, the sum of \$50,853 was in the Approved Estimates. That amount was revised to \$9,464. That is about one-fifth of the original amount asked for, for the eight officers. We see that there has been a significant underspending in respect of 1977 and this suggests that there are vacancies in these two items.

3.20 p.m.

What seems surprising is that even though there were so much underspending suggesting vacancies in the Senior Personnel Officer category, during last year the number was increased from four officers to five officers. They couldn't find four officers but they have increased it by an additional one to five officers. Will we find these five officers this year or will there again be underspending on this Head? If there is this significant underspending on this Head maybe what we ought to do is to reduce the number of officers instead of increasing it. If they are not there performing the job maybe the Ministry can get on without those officers.

I note the same underspending suggesting vacancies or filling of the posts for only part of the time in respect to item (9) Chief Management Services Officer where even though \$12,384 was requested, the Approved Estimates for 1977 show that only \$2,064 was the revised amount.

Similarly, for item (11), Senior Management Services Officer \$28,114 was requested in the 1977 Estimates. This has been revised to \$19,968. All these Management Services Personnel seem to be short staffed. The same thing applies in respect to item (12), Management Services Officer II/I, \$96,499 was requested for 1977. This has been revised to \$32,780 for 1977. Of course, the amount being requested for 1978 is \$135,597 and five new officers have been added to this category. If we couldn't find fifteen, would we be able to find twenty?

In respect of item (18), Electronic Data Processing Operator II/I, there were 20 in 1977 and this has been increased to 36. In 1977 for these 20 officers, \$53,064 was the approved amount but this was revised for the 20 officers in 1977 to only \$19,161. Very significant underspending. The request for 1978 is \$122,770. I note the legend says "Sixteen offices transferred from Head 83." Indeed a lot of officers seem to have been transferred from Inland Revenue. This department is usually short staffed. Am I right in concluding from the hon. Prime Minister that this Electronic Data Processing division will now be operating also for the Inland Revenue Department? Because let us say 22 officers in all have been transferred from the

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Inland Revenue Department to this Data Processing division. I presume that they will now be doing the work for the Inland Revenue Department. If that is so, perhaps I could ask two questions. Where are they housed in relation to the Inland Revenue Department so that we could understand how they will operate in respect of ferrying documents, backwards and forwards? That is all.

Cde. Ram Karran: A very small question on Subhead 13, Restructuring of the Public Service. We spent some money on this from the previous years as we can see and we are going to spend this year \$1,000. I wonder if the hon. Prime Minister will tell us whether this will complete the restructuring of the Public Service or it is an on-going process. Will he give us some indication of the success or otherwise of the restructuring that has been going on; what has been the effect of it. Will it be the end of this \$1,000 or are we going to continue? In passing, I may say that this is a relatively new Ministry. It was not set up long ago and it seems to be one of the prizes in the Public Service. It is a bit of growing empire. I would like to inquire after that observation, whether this growing is going to continue it or will come to an end some time?

I note that last year the amount was \$797,251 the Revised Estimates \$661,510 and in this austerity year when we are supposed to save we are building this empire more to \$1,606,926. The same of course, can be said of the Capital Expenditure from \$2 million to \$11 million. Surely we ought to call a halt to this Public Service Ministry. Perhaps the Prime Minister will indicate to us whether it is going to grow a little more.

The Chairman: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, the post of Research Officer has now been converted into an extra post of Senior Personnel Officer. That accounts for the larger number of Senior Personnel Officers. It is true that during last year it wasn't possible to fill all of the posts but we are hoping to fill some, if not all, during 1978 because of a training scheme upon which the

Ministry has embarked in co-operation with CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency.

The increase in the number of Data Processing officers is referable, as suggested by Mr. Feilden Singh, to the C.I.R., that is, the Inland Revenue officers being brought under this division of the Public Service Ministry; there has been centralisation. They still house the officers at Inland Revenue but then it is possible for the P.S.M. to still control them. I am not quite sure because I am no expert in Data Processing but I have been so advised that the centralisation does not have to entail the physical movement of the officers from the places where they were originally working or stationed.

So far as the increase is concerned it will be noticed that some items which previously appeared as Capital are now under Recurrent. That has not been done for the purpose of deluding or anything like that, but after some argument it was decided that the maintenance and rental of data processing equipment is really a recurrent item.

And if one looks at subhead 9, Maintenance and Rental of Data Processing Machine, one will see earmarked \$600,000. That would have normally in the past been treated as Capital. Cde. Chairman, I think I have answered the real questions that have been put. Even my good friend, Cde. Ram Karran agrees.

3.30 p.m.

Head 15, Public Service Ministry - \$1,606,926 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 47.

DIVISION VIII – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$11,500,000 for Division VIII, Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Chairman, permit me to make a correction. In making the observation just now, I referred to the figure of \$2,741,000. Actually I had overlooked the figure I had intended to call and that is for 1977; \$6,938,959 is a Capital head and it has now gone up to \$11,500,000.

The Chairman: Thank you for your correction.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 5, scholarships and Training Courses – Local. Probably the Prime Minister will enlighten us. I think the Prime Minister is aware of the shortage of accountants, and I am not thinking of people qualified as Chartered Accountants or A.C.A or A.C.F. or what have you, but many of the Government Ministries are suffering at the moment. They are not able to bring their accounts up-to-date; reconciliation and all such exercises lag years behind, in some cases, for well over ten years. I think that the time has come for the Public Service Ministry to really give very deep thought and consideration to see if it is possible out of this vote to make an allocation and start a dynamic drive for the training of people to deal with finances within the framework of Government.

Cde. Chairman, you are not unaware of sugar estates where people with some background were employed as simple book-keepers to do income, expenditure, wages, and that type of exercise, and within a few years without going abroad they became proficient and they were able to deal with more intricate accounting matters. I think something ought to be mounted in this country whereby we can clearly train people with the potential to serve the accounting system within the Government agencies. I want to ask the Prime Minister this afternoon to give

consideration to this inadequacy which now exists and which is affecting nearly all the Government Ministries. I think if a step is taken positively in this direction, it will go a far way to bring all the accounts, which have been lagging, up to date and at least cater not only for the present but for the future. Otherwise, year after year we will find ourselves in the position where we do not have men with the necessary skills to service this particularly sensitive area.

The question of clerks being promoted to the accounting field within the Public Service or becoming accountants is also noted and probably you have to do this. Something has to be done; the work has to be done but I want to be the mouthpiece for those who would wish to take training in accounts, that there should be some better consideration in so far as their wages are concerned because I think the responsibilities would be greater. I am talking about salaries within the fixed establishment. The responsibility will be greater; the knowledge that they have to acquire will require a lot of work not only during the normal hours of work but when they go home, as well as to do courses and training. Possibly, the time has come for people serving in the accounting field to be paid a little differently from the clerks who usually are promoted to the accounting system within the Government. I want to call on the Prime Minister very sincerely to give consideration to this matter.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker I would wish to endorse what the last speaker said, particularly in view of what I know, being a member of the Public Accounts Committee, and in fact bearing in mind also what the Budget Speech states on page 35: It states in the third paragraph:

“Indeed, in order to reduce the occurrence of excess or uncontrolled expenditures above approved estimates, purchases by Ministries have been put on a cash basis and certain accounting staff of Ministries have been made accountable to the Accountant General,

thus intensifying control from the centre. In this way it is anticipated that Government expenditures would be more carefully monitored and controlled and the opportunities for unauthorised expenditure significantly reduced.”

In the Public Accounts Committee, time after time it has been the same problem, lack of proper accounting staff always. This is my experience in several categories serving as a Member of Parliament, there is an acute shortage of persons qualified in accountancy, persons versed in accountancy, and there is a lot of merit in what the last speaker said. My father started working as a little accounting boy in Lusignan Estate, Bookers Sugar Estates, and he worked his way up without any qualification particularly. He studied a little bit by himself and worked his way up so that when he retired, he retired as Secretary/Accountant of Enmore Estates Ltd. But he started working for two shillings per week. So, if people have the aptitude and there can be tests made to find out if people have the aptitude, give them the training. Let us embark on something like what we are doing in respect of the Medex. If we cannot find doctors, get a training course going so that we can train these people. We are so short of accounting staff in the Public Service that we need to have something done and in a hurry, too.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, we are in complete agreement with the observations. Number one, there is a course for in-service training of officers for them to become more skilled and better qualified in the handling of the ministerial accounts. It is a six-month course and there are 30 people there now and we hope to continue this course. In addition, there are 17 persons abroad on scholarships qualifying at the higher professional level. Furthermore, at the University of Guyana, there is a subject, Accountancy, in, I think, Economics where we have been encouraging officers who are at the university to take the option of Accountancy in the Economics degree. I further agree with the observation made by Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that it may be well to introduce some incentive so that the average young officer may be encouraged to go into the accounting stream. Mr. Feilden Singh’s point about encouraging people who qualify by experience rather than by university process is well taken

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and we agree with that completely. I shall discuss it in great detail with the Permanent Secretary, Public Service Ministry.

Division VIII, Public Service Ministry - \$11,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.40 p.m.

The Chairman: The Ministry of National Development, page 94.

HEAD 31 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,175,589 for Head 31, Ministry of National Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: We will make some comments to enlighten the House on these questions. Subhead 1, item (7), Assistant Youth Organiser. The legend states: “Office transferred from Head 10 Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.” The legends for item (6) and (8) are the same. When I look through Head 10 I see no description of these items there. There is no such post as Youth Organiser, or Assistant Youth Organiser, shown on salary scales A27 and A22 respectively. I have seen District Youth Officer II/I on salary scale A18/A14 under Head 10 but there is no A18 or any of the scales between A18 and A14 in an area which I thought might be the Head from which this was brought across. I would like to suggest that my friend has been engaged in doing other things and that is why this misprint or error has been shown here. I think I have described the problem sufficiently that my friend would be guided to give us some answer.

I wish to refer to subhead 2, National Development Expenses. The amount shown here for the 1978 provision is \$6,033,000. I want to repeat what I said last year –

The Chairman: You said it before.

Cde. Ram Karran: It does not matter. I want to record it because I know of no instance in which a ministerial Government will abuse this House, its Parliament, and abuse the population by putting a block vote of such magnitude - \$6 million. It is only in times of war that Ministers will be allowed - - **[Interruption.]** I only repeat it again because the hon. Deputy Prime Minister seems to have a very thick skull - -

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, I am not going to allow that. First of all you started out by being abusive to the House.

Cde. Ram Karran: I apologise for that. I cannot do more than that, unless the hon. Deputy Prime Minister wants me to fall at his feet. This is an abuse of the parliamentary process. If you look through these Estimates, you will find that Heads are shown individually; this post, this individual draws so much, and, as I said, it is only in times of crisis, in time of war where you do not want the enemy to know the strength of things that might betray the weaknesses of the country, that something like this is shown. I am convinced that there is no reason for it to be shown in this way except to allow the Government to spend money contrary to the financial regulations. We know, and there can be no doubt about it that the whole nation knows that when these Estimates are passed the Public Accounts Committee, which has charge to go through these accounts at the end of the year, cannot do so. I say it cannot do so because of the Government's – I am looking for the correct word because I do not want to offend my friend - -

The Chairman: I am waiting patiently.

Cde. Ram Karran: He says I cannot offend him. If I cannot offend him, I think he has thick skin.

The Chairman: You may not be offending him, you will be offending me.

Cde. Ram Karran: I do not know who has a thicker skin, but the position is that because the examination is done a decade afterwards and because in my own experience and the experience of my colleague here, who now holds the post of Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, which is supported by the Government Members, including my friend Mr. Ramson – he said he will try to do better but they are still one decade behind – these accounts cannot be properly examined. The Auditor-General cannot complete examination. He has made repeated complaints that vouchers cannot be found. This is dangerous and it borders on criminal neglect of the financial regulations.

Why does the hon. Deputy Prime Minister want to have under his control such a large sum of money without giving the Parliament an opportunity to examine it? We cannot stop it because they have the numbers over there, we say, by fraud. They have the voting strength but the Opposition and the nation must have some knowledge of what you are going to do with the \$6 million between now and the end of the year especially since you cannot, at the end of the year or at the end of next year, be able to submit these things for audit. Vouchers are going to be lost, Permanent Secretaries are going to be fired, some will resign or some will escape out of the country. Let him tell us that this will bring some measures of satisfaction, if he can. How was the amount of \$10 million spent in 1975, how was the \$13 million spent in 1976 and how was the \$6 million spent in 1977? Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister in a position to give us some explanation? Don't tell us the bridge is built when the bridge is washed away. Don't tell us you gave an old lady \$10 because you have a Social Assistance Department to provide that. Tell us how these sums were spent and then perhaps you might be able to say “**Aye**” when His Honour asks for the vote. Should the hon. Deputy Prime Minister fail to give the answer, then we will

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have no alternative but to describe that Minister as we have done in the past, correctly, as capable of only performing the functions that one would perform at Chodikar Grove. That is what is being done there.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he does not think, in this austerity year – I am speaking under subhead 2 – that the time has come for this entire Ministry to be scrapped. Maybe we can advise them on something else. Why can't we have details of this \$6,033,000? Year after year I criticise this Head. Like you, I am sick and tired of doing it but I have got to do it again for the record. Unlike other Ministries, not one single detail is ever given for this massive amount of \$6 million - -

The Chairman: You don't understand what the Deputy Prime Minister says year after year. This is in service of the people. Please proceed.

Mr. Singh: We have two hours to discuss this Head. That is what I see in the paper here. It is a small Head and will you please give me a chance to have my say. I know what he said in previous years, it is not that I don't understand. I don't agree with what he says, and it is my right to demand that he tells us the truth because in all honesty I have not heard the truth in this House. I am not satisfied that I have heard the truth in respect of this Ministry of National Development expenses. And because I am so determined to get to the bottom of the matter, I want to ask pointedly, whether this Ministry is not what the sign board says above the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C., whether this Ministry is operating as a P.N.C. Party Office using Government funds and Government personnel. If this is so then we have not had the truth from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, and it would be unfair

to the taxpayers as a whole, in this year of crisis to ask them to continue to support an office of the P.N.C. at Government expense. Paramouncy of the P.N.C. Party must not mean that taxpayers should finance a P.N.C. Party office from Government funds. We do not agree with paramouncy of the Party. This is really carrying it to the extreme.

Why should we not have details? Is it because they are afraid to give us details? That can be the only reason. The only reason is that we will find out that this Ministry is merely operating as a P.N.C. Office. That is why they put a sign board outside it, Office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C. Let us have details so we can give our consent to this when we see that the money is being really validly spent.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, you will recall in my presentation in the Budget Debate I made reference to some figures which were wrong when compared with what was put in the Estimates for last year and for this year. One must bear in mind that these figures are put in the Estimates so that comparison can be made. This is why they are there.

In the 1977 Estimates, the actual for 1975, we find under total Personal Emoluments \$40,320. In the 1978 Estimates, Actual for 1975, the sum amounts to \$143,120, a difference of \$102,800. On the same page, National Development expenses under Other Charges in the 1977 Estimates, the actual figure given is \$9,870,029; in the 1978 Estimates it is \$10,128,714. The totals, therefore, are different. In the 1977 Estimates the grand total amounts to \$9,910,349. In the 1978 Estimates, it is \$10,271,834.

In this way how are we really going to compare these figures when we ask questions relating to what has now been estimated to be expended in the year 1978 if we are going to have such big differences? I would like the Deputy Prime Minister to answer this question or perhaps the Minister of Finance, I don't know to whom I should address the question because this is the case actually in every single Ministry.

The Chairman: Cde. Roshan Ally.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Chairman, I looked through all the subheads and items on this page but haven't seen anything like co-ordinator on the page. I notice they have got a set of people they call co-ordinators all over the country doing P.N.C. work, using vehicles from this Ministry and even P.N.C. organisers are drivers of these vehicles. I know a certain case at Black Bush Polder where vehicles from this Ministry are strictly under the control of the P.N.C. organiser. A vehicle is parked at his place at night; he uses the vehicles how he wants to and they take the co-ordinator all around. When I investigated the matter of how these people are paid, I was made to understand that they are being paid from this Ministry doing strictly P.N.C. work all over the place. This is the reason why this money is voted. I would like the Prime Minister to give us an explanation as to who are these co-ordinators and what type of work they are doing.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, if you will permit me to refer to page 201 to make a point because it would be impossible otherwise, at the bottom, subhead 18, Workers Education Unit, it says in the Legend "Transferred to Ministry of National Development." But in the 1975 Actual you will see the figure \$7,000; 1976 Actual, \$50,360; 1977 Approved and Revised \$70,000 and under 1978, (a) it has been transferred to Ministry of National Development. Even in subhead 31 there exists no proviso for such exercises.

I am a bit worried about this. Maybe the Deputy Prime Minister can give me some information because I thought when I discussed this question that it was under the Ministry of Labour, we understood that the plans were to take it seeing it is an educational process, under the Ministry of Education. I know there are differences with the Ministry of Labour with present and past. There is a change of office in this respect. Maybe the Minister of Education is too young to command the respect of the former Minister, I don't know, maybe, that's internal, but then it falls under National Development despite there is no proviso under Head 31. Now - -

The Chairman: There is a comprehensive Head 2 National Development Expenses, on page 201, Adult Education it has gone over there.

Cde. Belgrave: What I am saying Cde. Chairman, it says (a) Transferred to the Ministry of National Development. Under the Ministry of National Development there is nothing.

The Chairman: There is a comprehensive Head, National Development Expenses.

Cde. Belgrave: This does not reflect the point I am trying to make. If you look you will see clearly \$6,007,926 was for 1977 and this Head was not transferred to the Ministry of National Development. And if you look clearly too, there is minus \$1 which means that the expenses of the Ministry of National Development remain the same.

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The point that I would want to raise here is that workers' education is a vitally important role in the development of the new man. The Ministry of National Development is also the Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress which means that the Party is integrated into this Ministry. How can we be assured in this House, how can this House be assured that that Party's work will not affect the general theory of workers' education to suit the Party's own line? This is the Government we are talking about; we are talking of expenditure of the people, we are talking about people's finances. We are not talking about Party's work. Party's ideological work can be done at the party's institute. This is clear. Our ideological work was done at Accabre. But, how can we be assured in this House?

I am positive that this sum will have to be increased in this new period from \$70,000 maybe to \$100,000 to bring about the new man, to understand the new concept of the Government's idea of workers' participation moving into workers' control. This will drive persons, to my mind, from understanding the basics of socialism because, if it is I am a worker

and I am told that possibly if I have to go to discuss something, I have to go to the Ministry of National Development, to the office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C., I would not go. It is obvious because I cannot separate the two. I understand politics only too well. I was brought up in politics since I was seventeen when some of my friends over there were hunting after their future goals, aspirations. Some maybe have failed in their dreams of getting forward and they are using the political situation for their development. Am I to understand that the Party's line must also be integrated into the mind of every worker who has a difference of opinion with the P.N.C.? This is not fair! Workers' education is a vitally important role and must be separated from political control. It has to be separated because it is not every worker in this country who supports the P.N.C. We have the multi-party system in this country. Until the time is changed, until clearly we have got the idea of the progressive forces - -

I am positive, as said by the leader, that a National Patriotic Front will become a reality in the future, I am positive. I am certain about this. They will run like hell when the workers' revolution starts. All the rightists will be removed. I know. I said this last year in this very parliament and I trust that it will be remembered clearly. I said clearly that it is a contradiction between the left and the right in the P.N.C. and the contradiction has started to develop. I notice some leftists are being treated in a different manner and most likely some resigned, some are being pushed in a corner, side-tracked, etc., and the prominence of the right seem to be becoming more evident in this society today. But I am very much afraid for the development of workers' education as it is now and I would like the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also the General Secretary of the P.N.C., to look at this question once more because we are talking about productivity. In productivity you will have to re-mould the man; you have to change his attitude, his behaviour, his general attitude to work and if it is thought that that stigma from the past that the P.N.C. - -

Whoever rejects the P.N.C. here finds himself in a hell of state. He will have to join it possibly, as I was being told when I went to the first People's Militia exercise. Looking at it, the P.N.C. flag was being hoisted and you had to stand at attention. It was hoisted alongside the

Guyana flag, so when the P.N.C. flag is raised everybody is at “attention” whether they have political differences or otherwise. How will you be assured that persons who will be called into these exercises for workers’ education, to shape their minds, socialism is our goal, that they will not be subjected to the P.N.C. principles with which, at the moment, we have conflicts in the way they approach the question of socialism. We feel that it is not in a Marxist, scientific socialist manner; they are saying so, but we have our difference of opinion. How can we be assured that other supporters of other parties will be treated as they feel they should be treated in terms of workers’ education? I feel, Cde. Chairman, that something is wrong here and it will undoubtedly hinder the future development of workers’ education in this country.

The Chairman: Cde. Deputy Prime Minister, I do not know if you will be long, because it is after 4 o’clock.

Cde. Reid: I would not be long.

Cde. Chairman: Okay, let us proceed.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development (Cde. Reid): Cde. Chairman, probably I can begin with the last. Our friend, Cde. Belgrave, made reference to workers’ education. First, I wish to say that whatever sum is used for workers’ education is included in this amount but it is not the amount that matters so much, it is the work that is done. That is really where he is bearing down. I want him to know that all the people who live in this country, it is in their interest to know about the political movement that informs the Government. It is useful for them to know the philosophy and the ideology of that movement and that has nothing to do with changing them from their partisan behaviour at all. We have no intention of doing that but if we are to understand what is going on in this country then it is vital that all of us should understand the philosophy and the ideology that inform the Government. It is clear that if you are to establish a new society, then you need a political group, a political movement, a

political power that is spearheading the change. For Guyana, it is the People's National Congress, the vanguard movement, that is piloting, directing and guiding the change that has to take place in this country. – [Applause] – And as far as those changes are concerned, they are numerous and obvious. From the time we became part of the Government in 1964 and then into

complete control of the Government, the changes have been many, they are impressive and they have an impact on all the people of this country, so there is no apology for that. With regard to the figures mentioned by Cde. Narbada Persaud, it is just a transfer of the whole thing and they have brought across from the P.M.'s office all the figures for the past year and so that is why those things appear. Cde. Singh - -

The Chairman: No. The hon. Member, Mr. Singh, please, he is no "comrade." He likes to be referred to as "the hon. Member Mr. Singh."

Cde. Reid: Oh yes, sorry. The hon. Mr. Singh believes that there is a mix-up with the Party's funds and the Government's funds. I want to make clear as I said the last time, there is no mixing-up of the funds. This political movement named the P.N.C. has funds of its own. It has the ability to raise funds from the masses of the people and there is no mixing up of the funds. But as far as the fact of the Office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C. and the Ministry of National Development being together is concerned, it is because it happens that, at this time, it is one and the same person and I cannot really divide myself into two parts and separate myself. So since I cannot be separated, I am the same person. If it happens in the future that they change that situation, then we would not have the same fact. But, I want this House to know in closing that we have new tasks in this country. We are going through a new experience and it is unfortunate that people are looking for the old ways to do it, the old institutions, the old systems, to do this transformation.

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My friend has said that we have to do a transformation. It is well known that the transformation of human beings is the biggest task we are faced with. You can transform the countryside but when it comes to the transformation of human beings then you have to do real genuine work. This calls for education, training and persuasion. You will see that the bulk of this money is used for that.

I indicated the last time when I spoke on this matter that we can always give indications of how this money is being spent all over this country. There is no secret about it. We have research and surveys to do in this country so that when we implement something we have done it not on hypothesis but on sound theory and we go about to do that. There are training courses, we have staff conferences, cultural presentations, exchange programmes between countries so that people will get experiences elsewhere. We have international visits, educational recordings, purchase of books, periodicals, magazines, educational rallies, special celebrations to mark events in this country so that the whole society will be caught up in this learning exercise and this transformation.

It is good to know that the masses of people are enjoying this learning exercise that is going on and they are responding well to it. If the masses did not get this kind of persuasion and direction, this country would have been in chaos now, when you think of the behaviour of the P.P.P. in an economic crisis, calling people off their work. But for this persisting, we would have had a shutdown of one of our major industries, chaos within and probably conflict again. They did all they could to bring back racial issues and racial conflicts. It is the work of this Ministry and other Ministries that helped people to use their strength that we are able in this House to sit in peace and quiet to discuss these matters in a democratic way.

Cde. Ram Karran: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister did not answer my question.

The Chairman: It does not deserve an answer.

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Head 31, Ministry of National Development - \$6,175,589 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: The Sitting of the Assembly is suspended for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 4.13 p.m.

4.55 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in committee.

The Chairman: The Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives. Pages 102 to 105.

HEAD 33 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,046,382 for Head 33, Ministry of Economic Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Page 102, subhead 1, items (2) and (5). Item (2), Supernumerary Permanent Secretary. This item is in respect of two posts. There is provision for one Permanent Secretary and two Supernumerary Permanent Secretaries. This is a small point but one that needs some explanation. In 1977 the Approved Estimate was \$15,000. This year it is \$15,001 but there are times when \$1 is very important because it could mean preserving someone's pension right. Since there were two Supernumerary Permanent Secretaries in 1977 and since in 1977 we

provided \$15,000 and it is the same two Supernumerary Permanent Secretaries in 1978, what is the significance of the extra dollar when the bodies are the same in 1978?

In respect of item (5) Assistant Secretary (General), the voted provision for 1977 was \$14,784, the revised provision was \$7,392 and the provision for 1978 is \$7,076. We see under the Increase or Decrease column, minus \$7,708 and the legend states: "One Office vacant." Well that is pretty obvious, that in 1977 one office must have been vacant because they spent only about half the amount that was requested in the 1977 Estimates. My point is this, obviously, since they are asking for only half in 1978, it is not the intention to fill the vacancy. So why do we put in the legend that one office is vacant. This seems to presuppose that the vacancy will be filled. But they have not provided for filling the vacancy. If the post is not necessary, then reduce the establishment, take it off the estimates and reflect one post of Assistant Secretary (General). That is what should be done so that when we look at item (14), Principal Assistant Secretary, we see that one new office was created there. Maybe one new office was created there and the intention is not to fill this because you do not need it anymore. If that is the case then take it out.

Page 104, item (46), Typist Clerk II/I: The sum originally approved for 1977 was \$25,721. This was revised to \$14,064. That is just a little over half the amount originally requested. This again seems to suggest that there are vacancies existing in this establishment of ten Typist Clerks. I see for 1978 you are asking the House to approve the amount of \$32,910. Presumably the increase is to provide normal increments for ten typists.

Have we been having difficulty in getting Typist Clerks which results in that underspending for 1977? If, so what are the prospects of getting those posts filled for 1978 in an important Ministry like the Ministry of Economic Development? One sees that having the State Planning Commission will put additional burdens on it and therefore, one would expect that the staffing would be brought up to the level. If they are not required, delete the posts.

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On page 105, just a small question in respect of subhead 22, Consumer Expenditure Survey. The figure for 1977 was \$4,000 but the amount requested for 1978 is \$10,000 that is an increase of \$6,000. The legend says to provide for a Farm Household survey. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would give us some details of the Farm Household survey. I don't recollect having heard of it before. What exactly would be done and what is the real purpose of this survey. I am not saying it is not a good thing; it is just that I don't know anything about it.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Cde. Speaker, the first thing I want to touch on here is on page 102, item (11), Clerical Establishment, where they elaborate, 3 Accounts Clerks and so on. What concerns me a little there is this question of 6 Confidential Secretaries. I would be very grateful if the Minister will explain to us the areas where these Confidential Secretaries may be working and what is the need for having 6 Confidential Secretaries in that Ministry.

Item (14), Principal Assistant Secretary: We notice there for 1977 the Approved Estimate was \$11,640 and in 1978 \$20,112. The legend says, "One new office created. Probably an explanation will be necessary here. What is the office created for?"

The Chairman: Well, it would be Principal Assistant Secretary.

Cde. Lalbahadur: The legend says "One new office created." Why is it you need two? We move on to page 103, item (25), Data Processing Unit. Here we see, for example, \$26,652 for the 1977 Approved then we go on to \$34,518. Maybe some explanation may be necessary for this increase because it is roughly about \$8,000 increase. Maybe the Minister concerned will be able to clarify it because there is no explanation, no legend on this question, and it will be necessary for us to understand what is really taking place there.

Moving further to the Technical Division, items (26), (27), and (28) concern the same person, Technical Specialist. The salary is \$13,128. The personal pensionable allowance for

P.A.D. Allsopp, \$4,272. Then they go up further. Pensionable Allowance in lieu of Consultation practice, \$2,400. If we go further we will find this same name on page 104, items (59), (60), and (61). House Allowance to P.A.D. Allsopp, \$3,000; Duty Allowance to P.A.D. Allsopp, \$2,400. Now, Cde. Chairman, if you add all of that up, the salary along with these allowances, it works out to about \$25,200 for that person of which \$12,072 would be allowances. As a socialist I am wondering why one person should receive so much in salary. The allowances are worse than the salary because he doesn't pay tax on them. Probably you can expect that, because an explanation is really necessary there for a person alone to receive in allowances \$12,072 and salary \$13,128 bringing it up to \$25,200. This is one of the questions Cde. Chairman, we have always been quarrelling about, some people receiving super salaries. And this is the reason why at the end of the year apparently our expenditure is more than our income. We cannot balance our budget. There is a deficit that we are suffering year after year. And this is generally one instance. We can double this by thousands of instances where such situations occur.

The Chairman: Really that is a very unfair statement to make. If you can show me any other Technical Specialist multiplied by a thousand times in the Estimates I will be grateful.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Sorry for that. But anyway, that takes care of that. On same page 103, item (36), Economic Research Assistant, I notice we moved from \$14,496 to \$15,829. I haven't seen any legend on this. I don't know why there should be such a substantial increase of over \$1,332. No legend is there and there is no explanation. Maybe it will be necessary for the Cde. Minister to explain to us the reason for this sudden rise one year after the other.

We move down to item (40), 3 EDP Operator II and 2 EDP Operator I. I notice there has been a substantial increase. The Approved Estimate was \$13,044 in 1977 and we have gone to \$17,333 although the Revised Estimates was \$6,600. There is no legend there. This is a very substantial increase of \$4,189. I think in these cases where you have these substantial increases - I am trying to find an explanation so that we could be able to understand what is really taking

place in these areas. It may be more than necessary for the Minister to explain to us what is really taking place there.

Item (49), Crop Reporter I: There is a similar situation here. We have for 1978 \$165,307; 1977 Approved Estimates, \$116,293, a difference of \$49,014. Also, there, I haven't seen any legend. In any case, sometimes I wonder what these people really do. Have they submitted any report for the public at least to see why we are spending so much money to pay these people? This is a very important aspect of this work and if we are not aware of the reports on what they are doing when we authorise that fantastic sum of money, the taxpayers' money, one must wonder what is really taking place in this Ministry.

Before I go to page 105, on the same page 104, they say "Clothing Allowance to Economic Adviser." This is item (64). I wonder what this is really. Probably the Minister can give an explanation for the sake of the record too. The Economic Adviser is receiving \$900 for clothing allowance.

5.10 p.m.

On page 105, subhead 5, Telephone, I think the comrade may want to tell me that telephone rates have been increased. We have moved from \$80,000 to \$90,000, an increase of \$10,000. The legend states: "Increase in telephone rates." I am wondering, why do we have to spend so much money in telephone calls? Although I can remember some explanation in one of the debates in Parliament, they claimed they are doing business by way of telephone which is very fast and they are able to resolve problems in a faster way. But \$90,000 simple for telephones is quite a fantastic sum. Maybe some other means should be used, telegraph, cables, because \$90,000 for telephones alone is quite a burden on the taxpayers.

We move forward on the same page 105, subhead 10, Rental and Maintenance of E.D.P. Equipment. We find it is \$150,000 all the time. How are we maintaining this equipment? We

are spending that amount of money all the time. In 1975, we spent \$50,500. Then automatically we moved to \$141,000, nearly \$142,000 and then we went up straight away vertically to \$150,000. It may be necessary for us to understand what type of machinery this is. Maybe there is a combined rental and maintenance.

Maybe it would be very good for the Minister to divide what amount has been allocated to rental what amount has been allocated to maintenance because we have seen vehicles of all Government departments including the Ministry of Economic Development being used all over the country and being damaged. Many vehicles are all over the place. This is not strange to anybody in the country. I would like first of all the Minister to divide what part has been allocated to rental and what part to maintenance. It is very important for us to understand how much is spent on each.

Now, we move to this question of electricity, subhead 17. I notice it is the same \$80,000 but the legend states: "Previous provision inadequate." Maybe there has been some reason like expansion. Or, are we working in the nights now or the place is too dark for us so we are keeping lights all the time. Do we have more refrigerators, more fans, more air-conditioners, what is the reason? We would like to know. There may be some explanation instead of saying, "Previous provision inadequate". Sometimes people work at night. I do not know how many because these here leave as soon as it is 4 o'clock. Maybe the others are working in the night and there is some provision.

Again we see on subhead 23, Maintenance and Operation of Vehicles. Again we hear this question of maintenance and they combine it with operation. I would like to make the same comment. We should show what part goes to maintenance and what part goes to operation. Maybe, operation is so vague a term. Is it an operation of taking officers from one place to the other or is it on business to visit sites, projects and so on? We need clarification here because these global terms hide a lot of things. A lot of things are covered by these global terms and when they put Maintenance and Operation, we don't know how much is spent on maintenance

and how much on operation. For proper accountancy, there is need to divide these things. We hear about Miscellaneous and there is a new thing called “invisible occurrence” but I do not know what is invisible anyhow, because that is when it disappears.

So these are things we need to clarify. The details of current expenditure are the questions I would like to pose to the Minister.

Cde Belgrave: Cde. Chairman - -

The Chairman: Cde. Belgrave, I did not know this was your portfolio too.

Cde. Belgrave: You have to get a portfolio, Cde. Chairman? As a member of the National Assembly, you must have a special portfolio? Subhead 8, on page 105, a little word here baffles me because I see here no sum approved in 1975, a sum approved in 1976, increased in 1977 by nearly \$20,000 and then it came down by \$160,000. But I can see no legend. We know very well that there is another Ministry, which we will come to a little later on in the Estimates, which has Manpower Surveys. I am a bit confused. Workers’ education, manpower surveys, labour force, all are eating up money in this country. What is worrying me is that at this period, if this Ministry must effectively carry out some labour force survey, laying emphasis on labour placement, as the Ministry of National Development says, that there might have been an increase. In this case there is a decrease of \$160,000. But what I observe there in 1977 is that the \$200,000 was utilised. If so, maybe the Minister can tell this honourable House what results came out of the utilisation of \$200,000 for the purpose of this labour force survey. Or maybe if the Minister cannot tell this House now, if the Minister can assure this House very shortly that he may be laying on the table or informing the House by way of document, how the money was spent. What results came out of the \$200,000 that would necessitate a further \$40,000 for 1978?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Under subhead 25, Agriculture Statistics, I am not opposed to the vote but the hon. Minister of Economic Development must be aware that there is

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great difficulty in getting agricultural statistics in this country. The last agricultural report was presented to this Parliament in 1969 and since then we had no report. What we get is a quarterly report with some statistics on agriculture. I think that in order to plan for agricultural development, statistics are vital.

5.20 p.m.

I want to ask the Minister this afternoon if he would be inclined to give consideration to a comprehensive statistical work in the field of agriculture, a comparable figure showing the development, the change in every year, in every area of agriculture so that not only Parliament but those who are planning agricultural development can use those figures as guides. Despite the vote each year of \$10,000, I do not think we can get an accurate supply of agricultural figures and we suffer tremendously. I ought to say to the Minister that it is not easy but probably impossible to get statistics from the various Ministries. When you call the Statistics Section of the Ministry of Agriculture, there is reluctance to give the statistics. Hence, one has to go to get it out of the Ministry of Economic Development and the Quarterly Report does not give adequate statistics for agriculture. I would like to see something more comprehensive particularly with respect to agriculture in so far as statistics are concerned.

The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives: (Cde. Hoyte) Perhaps I should dispose of the confusion of Cde. Belgrave first of all, who admits to an inability to understand the difference between a labour force survey and a manpower survey. A labour force survey is a survey intended to establish the labour force, to establish the levels of employment, underemployment and unemployment. A manpower survey is a different sort of survey intended to establish the skills in a country, the total skill endowment, and also to make some projection about the kinds of skills and the levels of skills which will be needed over some stated period, having regard to the developmental plans of the country. I hope that he is now enlightened.

He wants to know what are the results of this exercise. He wants to know why is it that the provision has been reduced from \$200,000 in 1977 to \$40,000 in 1978. The answer is simple, a survey such as this one takes time. It has been going on for some time and it will come to an end around the middle of this year, so that later this year we expect that the Statistical Bureau will be publishing the results of the survey.

Cde. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to deal with the questions in the sequence in which the items appear in the Estimates. I will deal first of all with the question raised under Subhead 1, item (2), supernumerary Permanent Secretary. The addition of \$1 is to preserve the post. Let me put it this way. We have a substantive Permanent Secretary in Cde. Maraj. We have two Supernumerary Permanent Secretaries, one is Cde. Bernard Crawford and the other one is Major Worrell who has been seconded to the National Service. In 1976, there was one Permanent Secretary (Supernumerary) in Cde. Crawford. Both salaries were shown here because both salaries were paid so both posts were preserved. In 1977, Cde. Worrell was seconded to the National Service and Cde. Maraj became the Substantive Permanent Secretary. There was sufficient provision in the Estimates to take care of the salaries of all three. But in 1978, if we were to leave the provision at \$15,000 then that would be taking care of the salaries of only two Permanent Secretaries and it would mean automatically in law that one post would have been abolished. The answer would be as simple as that.

The next question refers to subhead 1, item (5), Assistant Secretary (General). Here again, the intention is that one of these posts should go. Legally, it would not be possible to merely reflect one post, otherwise the other post would have been abolished and we would have had a public officer who would have lost her post – in this case it is a female – merely because no provision had been made in the Estimates. In other words, if the Estimates had been passed before the end of last year we could have had one post here but since consideration of the Estimates came over to 1978 then legally it is not possible to show the post of the officer unless

that officer had been re-assigned and had been substantively appointed to another post by 1st January, 1978.

Subhead 1, item (11), Clerical Establishment: The hon. Member asked why six Confidential Secretaries. The answer is simple. There is a Confidential Secretary to the Minister, one Confidential Secretary to the Permanent Secretary, a Confidential Secretary to the Chief Planning Officer, a Confidential Secretary to the Economic Adviser, a Confidential Secretary to the Chief Statistician, and a Confidential Secretary to the Technical Specialist. All these persons are heads of departments, of course, excluding the Minister and excluding the Permanent Secretary who is the administrative head of the whole Ministry. In terms of the Civil Service structure these persons are entitled to Confidential Secretaries because of the nature of their work.

Subhead 1, item (14), Principal Assistant Secretary: This is a new post. We do have an officer who is on contract. He has been on contract for a number of years and has now elected to become a permanent member of the Public Service. In those circumstances, it is proposed that when this contractual service comes to an end he should be recommended to fill this post. In a sense it is not an increase in the overall emoluments within the Ministry but it is creating a permanent post in place of a contractual post paid from the Specialist Assistance vote

5:30 p.m.

Subhead 1 item (25), 4 EDP Operators Grade I. The question was asked why an increase in salaries from \$26,652 to \$34,518. The answer is, that this increase reflects the consequential increases as a result of the new minimum wage rates in the public sector. I was particularly hurt by the comment made by Cde. Lalbahadur about the emoluments paid to Cde. Phillip Allsopp. This matter was raised last year, I remember, and I answered.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister, he wasn't here.

Cde. Hoyte: Well, it is unfortunate. By any standard, by any yardstick, Cde. Allsopp is an underpaid public officer. To say that a sum total of \$25,000 per annum is a super salary is really the most ridiculous statement I have heard in my long years in this House.

Cde. Allsopp is one of the most highly qualified competent and able civil engineers in this country. As Technical Specialist his duties are multifarious. Not only is he Government's Chief Technical Adviser but he is also Government's Chief Technical Negotiator with multilateral institutions. That post requires not only a man of high technical and professional ability but it requires a man of great negotiating skill, a man of complete integrity, and Cde. Allsopp satisfies all of those criteria.

These emoluments paid to him, as I said, are modest by any standards and let it be said that over the years Cde. Allsopp has been wooed by institutions like the World Bank, an institution like the Inter American Development Bank, by institutions like the Caricom Secretariat and by International Consultancies, and out of loyalty and dedication to this country he has elected to remain here and serve Guyana. And I think that it is quite wrong for members to make unwarranted remarks against public officers of the competence, integrity and dedication of Cde. Phillip Allsopp. We are asked, Cde. Chairman, about the post mentioned at subhead I, item 36, Economic Research Assistant. Again, the increase in salary reflects the increases resulting from the new minimum wage package.

Subhead 1, item (40). There has been an apparent steep increase between the revised salaries for 1977 for these posts and what is provided for 1978. But if one were to look at the approved figure for 1977, one would see that the difference is not all that great because it was projected in 1977 that we would spend \$13,000 in round figures, in 1978, \$17,000 in round figures. The \$17,000 reflects an increase resulting from the new minimum wage package. The

revised figure of \$6,600 reflects the fact that all the posts were not filled in 1977. In fact, there were resignations because this type of officer is in very great demand and one of the problems we face is that as we train people they leave for greener pastures inside Guyana. Because of differentials in wage structure we find that within the classic Public Service, what we popularly call the Civil Service, the salaries are lowest and people can leave the Civil Service and go into Public Corporations and even into private firms and receive higher emoluments. It is something we will need to look at with a view to correcting.

Subhead 1, item (46), Typist Clerks. We are asked, why the increase. Again, the answer is that this increased figure shows the result of the new minimum wage package, and appointments. In fact, we did have actual bodies in the Ministry but they had not been appointed by the Public Service Commission and therefore could not be paid from that vote. They were paid from Other Charges. Now that their appointments have been regularised they will be paid from the appropriate vote.

Subhead 1, item (49) Crop Reporter: The figure of \$165,307 reflects the increase in both the staff and in the emoluments of Crop Reporters. Now, these Crop Reporters are part of the staff of the Statistical Bureau, but, in point of fact, they are deployed and have been deployed for about three years now to the Ministry of Agriculture where they work directly under the statistical section and the Agriculture Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture. The provision for Crop Reporters has to be taken into account with the provision appearing at subhead 25 about which Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud enquired. In dealing with the whole question of agricultural statistics it is not merely this \$10,000 one has to take into account, one has to take into account the emoluments of the Crop Reporters and one has to take into account the Extension Officers and the other officers of the Ministry of Agriculture who are concerned with and involved in the question of crop reporting.

I agree with Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that this whole question of crop reporting is a difficult one and except in a few highly developed countries crop reporting poses difficulties. We have been making strenuous efforts to strengthen and improve our system of crop reporting and to this end we have been able to secure Mr. Panjeti, an expert, made available to us by the Government of India. He has been doing excellent work in upgrading our systems, improving our techniques, with a view to enabling us not only to achieve a higher level of accuracy but also to enable us to acquire the statistics with greater despatch.

5:40 p.m.

A question was asked about subhead 1, item (64), Clothing Allowance to Economic Adviser. Again, this was a question asked last year. The Economic Adviser, Cde. Winston King, is both actually and figuratively Guyana's economic roving ambassador. In fact, he has ambassadorial status when he is abroad. His work requires him to travel extensively at short notice to all parts of the world. Indeed, last year I think it was, I pointed out that he had spent something like two-thirds of the year travelling to places as different in climatic conditions as Cuba, Romania, the G.D.R., the U.K., U.S.A., Nigeria, the Caribbean and parts of Latin America. It is therefore right in Government's view that such an officer should be given an allowance to enable him to clothe himself adequately as he goes out on these diplomatic and economic assignments where the clothing requirements vary so very much. Most of my comrades have travelled and they know for example that if they have to go to Moscow in the winter, they do not go in their shirtjac. On the same hand, if you have to go to Nigeria or Egypt then you do not go in a fur coat. And if you have to make a number of journeys to places as diverse as those places I have mentioned in the course of one year, then you have to have an adequate wardrobe. That is the rationale for this allowance which we pay to our roving Ambassador and our Economic Adviser.

The question of subhead 5, Telephone, I do not think it is really a serious one. I think everybody knows that the telephone rates have gone up and all Ministries have been enjoined to ensure that there is no abuse of telephones, to try as much as possible to monitor overseas calls to make sure that Government phones are not misused for this purpose. Government business can only take place, indeed, there is no business which can operate today without making use of the telephone system and the biggest business in any country is Government. I do not think that Cde. Lalbachan Lalbahadur is really serious when he calls these figures fantastic. It seems to be a favourite word of his but these are modest sums.

Then, he raised the question of rental and maintenance of what he calls “E.I.P. Equipment. It is not “E.I.P.”, it is E.D.P., Electronic Data Processing Equipment and I am a little astonished and a little saddened at the fact that my good friend Cde. Lalbahadur who is a trained economist should not recognise the fact that Electronic Data Processing Equipment is a vital and necessary tool today. This equipment is rented and as part of the rental package, one has to pay a rental and maintenance fee. There is no separation. The owners of the equipment charge you a standard fee and what is reflected here is an expansion of the equipment, and increase in the use of the equipment and of course, an increase in charges which is taking place all over the world and in respect of everything that one can think about.

The comments I made about telephones, I would apply to electricity. A question was raised about electricity, subhead 17.

With respect to subhead 22, Consumer Expenditure Survey to provide for a farm household survey, I think that the hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh raised an important question. Now this survey is intended to try and establish the actual levels of the real incomes of farmers. It is easy to know that is the income of a clerk or a mechanic or a shopkeeper. You can get those figures very easily. When it comes to a farmer, it is a little more difficult and if we are going to talk about improving the lot of our farmers, then we have to know really what it is our farmers

earn and what it is various types of farmers earn in relation not only to the type of crops they grow, but in relation to the size of their holdings. That requires investigation of a number of things including how much of the produce the farmer makes use of within his own household, so this survey is aimed at trying to determine those facts so that we can move on a scientific basis when we try to devise policies and programmes intended to raise the economic levels of our farmers.

The last question referred to maintenance and operation of vehicles, subhead 23. Again, I think Cde. Lalbachan is being a little facetious. It is difficult to separate maintenance from operation. This sum is used to buy gasoline, oil, to effect repairs to the vehicles, to replace tyres, replace parts, and it is a global sum which reflects roughly a figure which we consider to be reasonable having regard to historical data and having regard to what we estimate the operations during the year to be. But to say how much of it will be for actual operations and how much will be for maintenance is a task which is really futile; there is no value in it. One can do a straight line division and say \$10,000 but then that would be an exercise in fooling and it would not achieve anything. I really cannot give any breakdown nor do I think it is necessary or desirable.

Head 33, Ministry of Economic Development - \$2,046,382 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 106.

DIVISION XIX – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$16,680,000 for Division XIX, Ministry of Economic Development, stand part of the Estimates.

5.50 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I should say what I feel and that is that I feel very pleased at the answers given by the hon. Minister. They were very full and precise. I wish I had got the same kind of answers from Dr. Reid. Having said that let me deal with page 106, subheads 12, 13, 14 and 18. Before I do so, may I point out a correction that ought to be made. The last two columns show Actual Expenditure for 1976. It cannot be for 1976 in both columns. The last one should be 1975, then 1976 and 1977.

The Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Dealing with subhead 12, Guyana Marketing Corporation, we note that the amount requested for 1978 is \$700,000. The legend states: "To provide for miscellaneous works." I wonder whether the hon. Minister could give us some idea of what are these works. May I say that despite all the glowing reports Minister Kennard gave us about the increase of crops and the wonderful work being done by the Guyana Marketing Corporation – I have no doubt that there is some merit in what he says – the Corporation still is operating at a loss and farmers are still complaining bitterly about the non-payment for their crops. Obviously, something is wrong because there can be no two ways about it. The Budget clearly states that they are operating at a loss that it needs subsidies and the farmers are still complaining. I do not think we can question that. Something is wrong. The Budget Speech suggests that there is a problem with respect to storage and transportation. In my view, a proper assessment and investigation should be done. I think the entire Corporation seems to be in need of re-organising and re-arranging. I wonder if the Minister has any plans to look into the entire operation and to get a re-organisation in order to make it a more viable organisation. We keep on subsidising it all the time. I know we have to do this for a while but there seems to be no end to the subsidy

that we seem to be giving to this Guyana Marketing Corporation. I would like some projection as to when these subsidies will come to an end, if ever.

Subhead 13, Demerara Fish Port Complex: The amount requested for 1978 is \$400,000. The amount under the Specific Finance column is \$300,000 and presumably our part will be \$100,000. What bothers me is that both the Marine Food Corporation and the Guyana Food Processors Ltd., must have something to do with the Demerara Fish Port Complex. I hope I am right. Both of these organisations are projecting losses, in one case, at least up to 1980. I think we need to understand it or have it explained to us by the hon. Minister what is the relationship and why it is felt that this should be gone ahead with. Permit me to read from page 45 of the Budget Speech which states:

“On the basis that export prices are unlikely to show significant improvement, the Guyana Marine Foods Corporation is projecting deficits of \$1.0 Mn. in 1978, of \$1.5 Mn., in 1979 and of \$1.7 Mn. in 1980.

GUYANA FOOD PROCESSORS LIMITED is projected to increase its current revenue from \$2.0 Mn. in 1977 to \$2.7 Mn. in 1978 largely on account of an increase in the processing fee by about 40% from 1st March 1978. This increase already has the agreement of the relevant companies. Despite this increase, however, there is likely to be a deficit on current operations in 1978 of \$0.5 Mn. compared with a deficit of \$1.2 Mn. in 1977.”

It does not say anything for 1978 – 1981. Both these have to do with fish. Further up it states:

“GUYANA FOOD PROCESSORS LIMITED AND GUYANA MARINE FOODS LIMITED are inter-related companies since the inputs of the former are the output of the

latter. There are two main problems which face GUYANA MARINE FOODS namely, diminished catches per trip and the fall in the export price of the product.”

If this Demerara Fish Port Complex has anything to do with catches then I would like the hon. Minister to tell us what the projected returns of revenue would be after the completion of this project which I think will be somewhere in 1981 at a cost of roughly over \$10 million. So we are having problems with our two existing ones. Does the hon. Minister feel we should still go ahead with this Demerara Fish Port Complex? If we do, what are the projections of revenue when it is completed?

Subhead 14, Cotton Textile Mill: We are told that this mill is likely to be completed very shortly but the question I wanted to ask is where we propose to get the cotton from? I know the National Service has very sophisticated American cotton-picking machines. I saw them myself and they have got a gin which I also saw. When I was there, and that was two years ago, I was told that the mill worked on two occasions and I did read that on one occasion we did have some exports of cotton to Trinidad. I did see the cotton fields and on that occasion, I was with a Parliamentary team. One of the members of that team was a Parliamentarian from Montserrat where he told me they grow the best sea-island cotton. What he told me was very revealing. He said that in Montserrat if they had cotton like that they would plough it back into the earth because it would be uneconomical to reap it. I am telling this House what this gentleman, who said he was born and grew up in cotton, said on that occasion.

What bothers me is that since this big story in the newspapers of the shipment to Trinidad, I have heard nothing further about cotton and the stocks of cotton. It is over two years ago that I went up there and the shipment was there. If we had been reaping cotton, I would expect that perhaps we have stocks of cotton in the mill or somewhere in the bond waiting for this textile mill to open so that we could go into operation. If this is so I am very happy. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us what stocks there are of cotton, if any, lying down waiting to be processed by this cotton textile mill.

Subhead 18, Small Industries Corporation Operations: The sum requested is \$300,000 and the legend states: “To provide for the operation of the Corporation.” Is this merely to look after staffing and the rest of it for Small Industries Corporation operations? What are these? For the operation of this Corporation, I thought the Small Industries might have had in input, as with Guystac, into its running, therefore there would be no need for Government to provide money. Could the hon. Minister tell us if, unlike Guystac, we are providing straight running expenses for this Corporation?

Cde. Dalchand: Page 106, subhead 12. Could the Minister specifically say what are the miscellaneous works.

The Chairman: The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh asked for details of miscellaneous works.

6 p.m.

Cde. Dalchand: Item 13, Demerara Fish Port Complex. The legend says “To continue works n the Complex.” I have looked at the Estimates and I have seen no previous expenditure. I would like to know if there is any previous expenditure and how much was expended.

Items 15, 16 and 17. According to the legend it says: “Foreign loan anticipated.” I would like to quote from the Budget Speech, page 58, first paragraph, which says:

“... and the bicycle plant, the leather tannery and the shoe factory, all by the end of 1978.”

If you notice, the legend says Foreign Loan anticipated. The bicycle plant is in process and the leather factory is in process of being constructed. There is no previous expenditure shown. I would like to know how much money was expended on this.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Most of the points have already been made except on subhead 14, Cotton Textile Mill. We have there \$8,500,000. I ask the same question. We haven't seen any previous expenditure in previous years. Maybe the Minister would be kind enough to let us know how much has been spent already along with this. And maybe, if it is possible, the quantity of money in the form of loans and the interest to be paid.

Item 20, Cement Plant: We have here \$360,000 to provide for feasibility studies for Cement Plant. I notice that it has been mentioned in the speech by the Cde. Minister. Have we not done any feasibility studies on this question yet? It is in the Budget Speech and it is projected for this four-year period. If we haven't done any feasibility studies yet, it means it will be a long time before we can be able to get the factory in operation.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud you are speaking on every item; you are minister for everything.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I wish to tell you I am Minister of nothing, I am a Member of Parliament. I want to deal with a matter that concerns the subject matter that I deal with in the House, the same Subhead 12. The question I wish to ask is this. A decision was taken, suddenly, for the G.M.C. to discontinue the purchasing of fish from the fishermen and the fishing boats that were accustomed to land at the G.M.C. wharf. Several things have happened since. It means that G.M.C. is no longer buying the fish, it is not longer an outlet for the sale of fish to the vendors nor to consumers and the Minister must be aware that this is causing great hardships and difficulties. The fishermen themselves are complaining that if they are allowed to divert and go to the Demerara Fish Complex, located, I think, at Houston, it will involve greater gasoline consumption for the operation of their fishing boats.

I also ask the Minister if consideration was given to the fact – I know the G.M.C. I have seen it – that facilities were provided there some time ago for the storage of fish and those

facilities still exist there. We have a problem of the trawler vessels; they bring in fish, trawling against the tide and so on, which cannot be kept long, the catches rot and that sort of thing. The G.M.C. has the facilities for storage. It is more centrally located both for the vendors who buy for selling in the market and for individual consumers. To divert to Houston without creating a centre near to both the vendor and the consumer, to my mind is not a wise decision. For that reason, I thought I must raise it. I have been asked to raise it by the fishermen and also by vendors.

I want also to make the point that there is need, if you want to change and allow the fishing boats to run at Houston at the Fish Complex, that you should provide storage facilities in the markets, La Penitence, Stabroek, Bourda and Kitty, so that the vendors who buy daily supplies of fish can store them and sell fresh fish the next day. But the Minister must be aware that fish comes in not every day. There are some days when you do not get any at all. This will in effect mean that there will be no fish on the market because the facilities are not there for those who are buying, the vendors at the market, to store the fish so that they will be able to keep an equal supply to cover every day.

I think this decision was not well considered. I am sure the Minister of Economic Development was not involved in this matter; it more concerns the Ministry of Agriculture. But it appears on this vote. I would like to call upon the Minister to direct an inquiry into the sudden stoppage of purchasing of fish at the G.M.C. and the selling of fish to the vendors and consumers. Perhaps he can also speak to members of the public who are suffering as a result of this change. We have got the Fishermen's Co-operative society and I was told this is my information, that they were not consulted on the decision taken.

If you are operating and you need the co-operation of people who are directly concerned, I feel that if the G.M.C. takes a decision to stop buying fish, to stop dealing with fish generally, common courtesy demands that the people directly concerned should have been told of it so that

some consensus could have been reached. This is not being done hence you have got this confusion.

I don't want to give the gentleman's name; I would be willing to pass it over to the minister privately but there is a man who now operates as a middleman, so to speak. He buys the fish from the boatmen privately and he has been selling to people. You are talking about this central buying, this central marketing. The Government has gone on record and several speakers spoke about the protein content of fish and cheap protein for the public at large and particularly the poor. Consumers are saying that this decision has impeded the realisation of that objective and it is a grave matter that deserves deep consideration. It would mean therefore, Cde. Chairman, that that middleman is buying, he probably is selling to vendors, he is selling to private institutions and I am told he is selling to Government institutions. He has in fact sold to the G.D.F. I don't know if this is so but the Minister can investigate. I got that information from one of the fishermen. I don't know if it is so.

I think this is an area that deserves immediate attention and consideration. I wonder if the G.M.C. Manager acted on his own. I wonder if the Ministry concerned was properly involved and consulted. If it was a decision just taken without considering all the implications involving the consumers, the fishermen, the fact that more distance is involved, more fuel will be involved, I want to appeal to the Government to provide the storage facilities both to the fishermen as well as the consumers. People cannot at present get fish even in Georgetown. I hope this contribution very sincerely will be investigated and something done to change what is happening at the moment.

6.10 p.m.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, many questions were asked about the Guyana Marketing Corporation. It is true that the G.M.C. is bedevilled by many problems and I am sure that the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh would be happy to hear that the Government has anticipated his

recommendation that there should be an inquiry into the operations of the G.M.C. That inquiry was carried out at great length and in great depth by Cde. W.G. Stoll, well-known Accountant in this country and his report has been submitted to the Government, studied by the Government and is about to be implemented. Prior to the Stoll report, there had been some preliminary observations made by a team from the Caribbean Development Bank. Cde. Stoll's report was a more intensive study of the problems which were rightly identified by the people from the Caribbean Development Bank.

Basically, the problem is this: G.M.C. has a number of operations. Some of those operations are and ought to be commercial operations and therefore, profitable operations. Other operations are not intended to be strict commercial operations in the sense that, as a matter of social policy, Government would be prepared to subsidise those operations. For example, the purchase and sale of some food items. Those operations cannot always be looked upon with a strict commercial eye. But because of the way in which G.M.C. was structured, there was no sharp differentiation between the separate operations either in managerial terms or in financial and accounting terms. Therefore, one of the things which will have to be done will be to separate organisationally those activities which are recognised as being subsidised activities and those activities which are recognised as being commercial activities which ought to generate surpluses or profits. That re-organisation is about to take place.

Now, I have no personal knowledge about the stoppage of the purchase of fish by G.M.C. I do not know. It may well be that G.M.C. is divesting itself of certain operations which are not really compatible with its proposed organisational structure. But as I said, I can give no firm or clear answer about that. Maybe, the subject Minister can do that.

The question was asked about the miscellaneous works for which the sum of \$700,000 would be applied. That sum would be applied to do some of the very things about which Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud and, I believe, some other members of the Opposition spoke, that is, to

provide storage facilities in different parts of the country. This is one of the problems. It causes bottle-neck and, of course, it causes wastage. So G.M.C. has embarked upon a programme to start improving its storage and distribution facilities.

There is some misunderstanding on the part of the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh about the Demerara Fish Port Complex, Guyana Marine Foods Ltd. and Guyana Food Processors Ltd. These are all different operations. Guyana Marine Foods Ltd. is a trawling operating. That company is concerned principally with shrimping. Guyana Food Processors Ltd. is concerned with processing of shrimp. It has taken on this subsidiary task recently of distributing fish but that is not its main business. That is a peripheral thing it has taken on but it processes shrimp. The Cde. Minister of Finance was referring to diminished catches. It is true that over the years there had been a progressive decline in the catches of shrimping trawlers based in Guyana but since the extension of the 200 miles zone, we have noticed an interesting phenomenon which is that the catch rate has been increasing significantly, which means that because of the fact that we have excluded from our economic zone so many people who operated in a predatory way there, there has been a favourable ecological impact upon marine life. The catch rate is going up and the chances are that the predictions of the Cde. Minister of Finance, based upon historical data, may well turn out happily to be not as depressing as the historical figures have shown. Now, the Minister of Finance, as all Ministers of Finance, deals on hard facts and he cannot proceed to tell this House something based on hopes and expectations. **[Interruption]** No pun intended.

The Demerara Fish Port Complex is intended to process fish. It is a project which has been planned in two phases. Phase one, dealing with the provision of berthing facilities, that has been substantially completed, and phase two, which has to do with the provision of processing and distribution facilities. Now the whole Complex is intended to handle 40 million pounds of wet fish annually and to process that fish in many ways, smoked fish, dried fish, salted fish, making of fish meal and also to distribute the product to different parts of the country. The figure reflected here in the Estimates takes into account the involvement of the E.E.C. in this project. Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the E.E.C., there is the amount

9.3.78

National Assembly

6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

of \$10 million allocated from E.D.F. funds for the Demerara Fish Port Complex but as is usual with these international agencies, the E.E.C. requires a feasibility study to tie together the production part of the operation with the marketing part. Now that study will identify the needs for storage refrigerated distribution, things like that, things Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud referred to and all of that will be included in the project document.

6.20 p.m.

We have had the preliminary report of the team which is doing the study and we are assured that by June this year we should have the final report. When that report is submitted, and we assume it will be accepted by the E.E.C., then the way will be clear for the drawdown of the balance of \$10 million to proceed with further construction work. So even though we have this figure, this figure is put here because it is assured. If that figure comes, then one can draft it on to the Estimates. But out of abundant caution, and rightly so, he has put figures which are firm.

Questions were raised about the cotton textile mill, the bicycle plant, the shoe factory, the leather tannery. One question was, why is it that in previous years there has been no expenditure shown. The answer is that up to last year there was global figure under an industrial development vote and internally, within the Ministry of Economic Development, that vote was broken down. We knew what the projects were but we thought that maybe that might not be the better approach. It would be better to list the projects and put the figures related to the project in the Estimates for the benefit of Members of the House.

The hon. Member Mr. Singh asked about our cotton stocks. I wish to assure him that the G.N.S. is continuing to grow cotton; it is no longer exporting cotton to Trinidad but is stockpiling. The story he told about the visitor from Montserrat may well be true but the answer to that is this. Montserrat produces sea-island cotton which is a very expensive, high-class kind of cotton. We are not producing that. We are producing medium stable cotton which is, of course something entirely different. It is a cheaper type of cotton and so if that kind appears in

the fields of Montserrat, they will plough it back because that is not what they want. They could not put that on the market as sea-island cotton.

The second point I want to make is this. GuySuCo, which, as is well known now, is being converted into an agricultural complex as distinct from a mere sugar operation, has been charged with responsibility for developing major cotton production. Already the initial report has been prepared showing what needs to be done at the level of GuySuCo, what needs to be done at the level of the Guyana National Service and what needs to be done at the level of small farmers who occupy areas where cotton can be grown successfully. In fact, Members may know that many years ago there were successful experiments in cotton growing at Blairmont carried on by Bookers and the Bookers Officer at the time who carried out those experiments is a Guyanese who is now with us. He is now Assistant Director General in the National Service. He is Cde. Piggott. He is in charge of the cotton production. So we have a man who has had experience in the growing of cotton, who has had experience in the experiments which took place before and who has the knowledge, enthusiasm and drive to really make a success of the production of cotton in this country. Incidentally, yesterday afternoon I visited the Cotton Textile Mill and was assured that all being well we should have the first production of cloth later this year. That does not mean that the entire mill would be finished. The printing part of the mill will not be finished but the project would be sufficiently advanced for cloth – I think they call it grey cloth in the industry – which will be produced before the end of this year from stocks that we have.

On the question of the financing of the bicycle plant, the shoe factory and the leather tannery, the answer is this. We started to utilise our own resources to build these factories. Because of the economic and financial stringency, we have decided to complete these projects by way of seeking off-shore loans. It is the same thing with the glass factory. The glass factory was started with our own resources and it is now being completed with an off-shore loan. That, of course, helps us considerably and relieves the pressure upon our own internal resources.

9.3.78

National Assembly

6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

The hon. Member Mr. Singh asked about the Small Industries Corporation. The Small Industries Corporation is up for review. It has done reasonably good work from the time it was established but a number of problems began to emerge. These problems spring from the fact that the Small Industries Corporation turned out to be both a promotional organisation and a financial intermediary and somewhere along the line it kept falling between the stools. Financial institutions have all been centralised under the Ministry of Finance and there is pretty strict control over them. Then there was a financial intermediary which was not within the ambit of that control so to speak and which seemed really to fit in properly nowhere as far as its financial dealings were concerned and certain practices, which were not considered to be sound financial practices, developed. For example, working capital was being advanced on term conditions. That was no good to small businessmen in that it gave them a false sense of well being, so to speak. They got soft money and they believed they were doing well and were making profits. Obviously that was not making for efficiency.

We did have again, first of all, a preliminary review by the Caribbean Development Bank and this was followed by a more intensive investigation by Dr. Senn, an Indian expert who came under the auspices of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. Based upon those two reports, the intention is to review its role as a promotional organisation most effectively, while perhaps, I am not saying that this is a decision because no decision has yet been taken, relieving it of the burden of acting as a financial intermediary. The point I make is that these provisions reflect the fact that some changes are going to be made.

6.30 p.m.

Finally, the question was raised about the cement plant again. I think it was Cde. Lalbahadur who asked the question. Perhaps members will recall that there was a proposal for a joint regional project between Barbados and Guyana during the period of the Barrow Government, the idea being that Barbados, which has vast quantities of limestone, would set up a factory, produce cement, and sell us clinker. We would have some equity, a minority equity in

the Barbados plant and we would receive clinker which would be used in our clinker-grinding circuit to produce something like 120,000 tons of cement annually.

That project seems to be no longer on the card but that does not affect our clinker-grinding project which can stand on its own as an independent project, because we can buy clinker from other sources. But while that project was gestating, we discovered in the North West region substantial deposits of shell on-shore. That discovery was made by a geologist from the G.D.R. who was working with us. And what was also indicated by the discovery was that perhaps the greater quantity of the deposit lay off-shore. We have off-shore and on-shore deposits. So that is another project which we will have to develop.

We don't have limestone but we have shell which, of course, can be utilised, and is utilised in many parts of the world for making cement. That project is a project which we hope to develop in the years to come. We have, first of all, to have the total off-shore deposits quantified. Then we have to have the project feasibility prepared; decide whether we will use the deposits for cement or whether we will use the deposits for fertilisers or for both, and that depends upon the quantities found and also upon the economics of using the deposits for one purpose as against the other. These projects are both in the pipeline, so to speak, and we hope to develop them over the plan period.

Division XIX, Ministry of Economic Development - \$16,680,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 107 to 112.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,673,969 for Head 34, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Lalbahadur.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Cde. Chairman, page 107, item (15), Senior Clerk. I notice from \$9,564 in 1977, it has moved to \$27,421 which is quite a substantial increase. There is no legend so probably the Minister may be able to explain what has taken place here because the increase is quite a lot, over \$17,000.

Item (18), Clerical Establishment: Cde. Chairman, if you check there – I don't know what is happening in this regional system – they have 16 Confidential Secretaries, 6 Clerk III (General), 24 Accounts Clerk III, 44 Accounts Clerk II, 32 Clerk II (General) and 15 Clerk-Stenographers making a total of 137 plus 88 Typist Clerks. If you add both you get 225 in this Clerical Establishment. I don't know what they will do with 88 typists and 127 clerks of all sorts, it works out to \$700,000.

I am wondering. Even in the Ministry itself we have 32 of these clerks and here we have 225. I think this is a serious bureaucracy. I am wondering what these Regional Ministers are doing with so many secretaries and so many Accounts Clerks. What are they using them for? The comrade said he doesn't like the word fantastic but it is applicable here. In fact the Minister seems to have second place here. These Regional Ministers have more bureaucracy than even he has. You see it very clearly here. I wonder what is taking place. His importance seems to be reducing. Even the cars seem to be more and the houses – if you check them, they have over three houses. Cde. Chairman, I think this needs some explanation in detail from the Cde. Minister as to why they have this bureaucracy of 225 people on the staff in this Ministry of Regional Development. I think the Minister takes my point there.

The other question is on item (23), Drivers/Mechanic. There has been a substantial increase here again. If you notice the Revised Estimates, the figure is \$19,999 nearly \$20,000 and we have gone to \$41,782. This also needs some explanation from the Minister. I don't understand why there is this steep increase.

6.40 p.m.

Page 108, Assistant Chief Local Government Officer: I would like to ask the Minister why we need all these people. The Ministry has the Regional Development Officer, Assistant Regional Development Officer, Assistant Regional Development Officer, again one is for Finance, I do not know what the other one is for, Supernumerary District Development Officer, District Development Officer, Assistant District Development Officer, and so on. Why do we need all these kinds of positions? I wonder what is taking place. If you check all these people, I wonder what they are really doing. Are we seeing development inasmuch as we have all these officers? I can remember I went to look after some problem in the West Demerara area – I cannot help saying so – apart from saying that I understand that the Minister has two or three houses and two or three cars, still I could not find him. But when I went to this meeting, I found that all these people were there representing they say, the people. I want to know what all these officers are doing. What is their function? Apparently, some clarification may be necessary to understand whether there is duplication or whether they are just there for jobs for the boys or whatever the case may be. I do not understand because fantastic sums are voted for them.

On the same page from item (47) going down all the way to item (54), you have the Co-operative Development Division, Chief Co-operative Development Officer, Deputy Chief Co-operative Development Officer, Assistant Chief Co-operative Development Officer, Regional Co-operative Development Officer, Assistant Regional Co-operative Development Officer, Co-operative Development Officer, Principal Co-operatives Auditor. I just cannot understand what is taking place. I wonder whether the Minister knows of the functions these people are carrying out. What are their functions? What are their duties? What is taking place? I cannot understand. This is where the money is being spent. All these officers of all sorts and I cannot see really what is taking place. Development is not taking place except you see them driving in cars, visiting these areas while spending fantastic sums of money. It is about time the Minister clarifies why we have all these posts here. There are a number of positions that really do not warrant the expenditure being voted under the Ministry.

Now, not to take up much time, if we go over to the next page, page 109, item (70), Kitchen Maid, the Approved Estimate was \$3,672 and it has gone to \$6,265. Who is this maid? Is this maid for the Regional Minister? Where is this maid working and why is this fantastic jump? You find maids outside in other areas, gardener and so on, and you want to know where these people work and where is the money being spent. For example, on item (78), there is Compound attendant. Is that the person cleaning the Regional Minister's yard or something? What is he doing? He moved from \$1,000 to \$3,000 plus. I wonder if the Minister has all these things. I do not know what the position is, he can probably clarify where all these people work and what they are doing and why the steep rise.

Item (81), Hinterland Development Officer: The legend states: "New office created" but the sum is fantastic, nearly \$40,000. I would like to hear the duties of this officer because the legend does not explain anything and seeing that it had not existed before, it is a new item, therefore, we would like to know why this large amount and the duties of this officer.

On page 110, item (99), it states 76 Community Development Workers. **[Interruption]** It is abolished; I am sorry. On page 111, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, there is over \$410,000. It is necessary to understand this travelling. Of course it seems to be going on. It has increased substantially by over \$10,000. These people have their cars. Is it the normal travelling where they are being paid vehicle allowances and so on, or is it some specific duty involving travelling out of town and so on? I do not understand because some people travel from home to work and from work to other areas. I do not know. Probably the Minister can clarify this one. I have been working in a Government Department for some time and people put in a lot of claims and so maybe the Minister can clarify this for me.

Subhead 7, Uniforms, we have about \$18,000 voted for uniforms. Uniforms for whom? For the chauffeurs, of the Minister? Who? No explanation is given here. Subhead 9, Entertainment expenses, Regional Development Officers. What entertainment do they have? There is \$7,000 there. Of course, it has been reduced and we must complement them for that.

But I want to know what sort of entertainment these officers have, whom do they entertain, and why do we have to spend all this money.

Subhead 10, House and Office Rental: Although the Minister mentioned in the past that certain things cannot be separated, I think the question of a house and office, there is a distinguishing mark there. An office is for a specific purpose; it is probably for working in. A house, may be the person is an officer and he is receiving an allowance for it. In this case I will still pose the question for the records, of the distinguishing part.

Subhead 14, Maintenance and Operation Land and Water Transport: We have spent \$226,000. I want to know whether this land and water transport relates to Government vehicles or is it some other aspect connected with the Ministry? Maybe a clarification is necessary here because I cannot understand. It is quite a substantial amount that is being spent on this question of land and water transport. For what reason? I do not know if someone had to go to the Rupununi or the interior or through the rivers, or whatever the case may be, this would be the proper vote. Probably the Minister can clarify. I still like to pose this sort of question here, this maintenance business, although the Minister tried to explain in other areas, I am referring to subhead 26. The last point here is subhead 30, Assistance for the Establishment of Unions of Co-operative Societies. There is no previous explanation; we just see here a new subhead of \$50,000. What is this? What is its function? Why is it created? What do they do? What result do we expect from them? That is so far for this aspect of it, Cde. Chairman.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, I would like to pose on subhead 14, some different questions to the Minister. This would be page 111, subhead 14. Maybe he can look at it, \$222,000 for Maintenance and Operation of Land and Motor Transport. I have seen without doubt and most of us, I am positive all Guyanese, are very much concerned at the manner in which Government vehicles are being used, mistreated and abused and maybe the Minister can look at this question. We are voting so much money in this Parliament and then you will find in all the different areas, in all the different regions, that vehicles become private property of

individuals. Now that there is the increase in gasoline, it will cost more. There are increases for spare parts, tyres etc. They take them where they like, how they like. There is no proper supervision and I think if we are going to vote such a substantial amount in this House it is only fair that there should be some proper system of lagging in relation to the abuse which everybody in this House, I am positive, knows exists in the various Government departments. Maybe this is where proper checking could be done to reduce this sum substantially. I am very concerned about this heavy total. The amount of \$222,000 is a lot of money. Maybe the Minister can tell us how many vehicles are involved in this process. It may be a different one but nevertheless he might be able to give some indication.

6.50 p.m.

Subhead 26, Contribution towards Maintenance of Roads and Streets of Local Authority Areas: I am very much concerned about this. The Minister might be able to tell this House if he is satisfied that this vote is not necessary. The legend states: **“Reduction of assistance for 1978.”** Will he tell us if all the Local Authority areas are properly lighted up? It is not necessary for this vote to continue. In 1977, the approved amount was \$250,000, the revised amount was \$200,000 and now it is being reduced to \$10,000. We know that in regional areas people are calling for greater electrification and we must take note of what the Opposition Leader mentioned in relation to giving thought to electrification. It is obvious that it is a service that is very necessary and it may be able to help in bringing about certain changes in certain problems, attitudes, behaviour, etc.

Subhead 35, Expenses Kuru Kuru Co-op College: We have been hearing and reading so much about co-operatives being written off. The actual amount for 1975 was \$800,000; in 1976, it was \$1,056,000, in 1977, the approved estimate was \$800,000 and the revised amount was \$740,000. In this year we are asking for \$700,000. What is really going on here? Despite the fact that we are voting all this money – I have noticed that there is a de-emphasis by Government

on the Co-operative Republic. I do not know if the Government has been advised by its socialist friends or our socialist friends - -

The Chairman: Let us talk about the College.

Cde. Belgrave: What I am concerned with is that we have been getting reports of folding up of co-operatives. If we are spending so much money on the co-operatives college and are not getting results, it shows that something is wrong. If you are taking people to the College and instead of having development of co-operatives, you find that they are breaking up, disintegrating one after the other, being struck off the register, it means something is wrong. Maybe we can re-utilise this money for the purpose of rural electrification. We can probably transfer this vote to the regional areas to ensure that there is further light for the people of the areas.

I am very much concerned with something which is not listed as an item but it falls under 025, 0204. The legend states: “**Subhead no longer required.**” It is a special grant to the Mayor and Councillors of New Amsterdam Town Council. I am very much concerned over this.

The Chairman: I am not allowing that. There is nothing to discuss there.

Cde. Belgrave: Could you hear me?

The Chairman: There is no provision.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, I hate to bother the Minister at this delicate moment but it would be an injustice to the people in the Essequibo, and in the Charity area, if I did not try to raise some observation on the problems. Subhead 19, Amerindian Residence and Hostels – Maintenance, etc. There was supposed to be a hostel constructed at Riverstown, Essequibo Coast, to perhaps facilitate the Amerindians of the Ituribisi savannahs. The Amerindians of that

area have promised to do that work by self-help and so far, I think, materials have been gathered and have been deteriorating. Nothing has been done with them. I have tried to raise the issue with the officers on the Essequibo Coast but it seems as if I was not successful. I would wish to ask the hon. Minister to make a note of that to see if he could put some emphasis in that direction.

Secondly, the hostel in the Charity, Pomeroon River area, needs to be expanded. Lighting facilities are so far inadequate and the last time I spoke to the caretaker there, I examined the position myself and I wish to ask the hon. Minister to look into that aspect. Unfortunately, I want to end up by saying that it seems to me that on many occasions the

Minister passes down certain instructions but these instructions are never carried out. I have some personal experience.

Cde. Nokta: I have just a few questions to ask the Minister. Page 111, subhead 18, Amerindian Captains. I notice here that the vote has been increased and the legend states: **“To provide for increases in stipends.”** I take it for granted that Amerindian Captains will get something more on the small allowances they receive. But what I want to ask the Minister is if he could tell this House if all the Amerindians are receiving stipends. As I know, sometime in 1969 when the Government had a big Amerindian Conference in Georgetown, this was the promise made. I have here the photograph of a sixty-one year old Granny who was brought to Georgetown and made a Captain. She was promised payment but instead, all she could get was a constable’s staff, a cap, and something around her shoulder. I have the photograph and I would like the Minister to have a look at it.

The Chairman: Which year are you talking about? Is it 1978?

Cde. Nokta: Yes. The point I want to make is that this is an area where Amerindian Captains are being browbeaten – the South Rupununi area. Cde. Speaker, I am going to circulate this photograph. The place is Shirri Village.

The Chairman: Just a minute. You are making an enquiry whether all Amerindian Captains are paid. When you are given the answer, if you are not satisfied, you have the right to ask him again.

Cde. Nokta: It is known that most Amerindian Captains, if not all, are given a constable's staff and cap. I want to enquire if they are paid as a constable or as a Captain.

7 p.m.

And what is more insulting here, let me put it this way, to have a Granny like this sixty-one year old given staff and cap – I will pass it on to the Minister. I don't know how this looks.

The Chairman: Cde. Nokta what has that got to do with this item? If she is a Captain, is she being paid a Captain's salary? Isn't that what you want to know?

Cde. Nokta: I want to ask the Minister if he is satisfied with this. A sixty-one year old being a rural constable.

Subhead 21, Hinterland Scholarships: I notice here that the vote has been increased from \$10,000 to \$200,000 and I am very happy with this increase. I would like to draw to the Minister's attention that there are presently, students from the interior who go to various schools in the city and who enjoy a scholarship allowance of approximately \$65 per month. This was adequate when the cost of living was very small at that time in comparison to now. Having spoken to several students, it is the common feeling that this vote should be increased because the poor students can hardly maintain themselves on that very small amount of \$65. One child

told me that he goes to school – he attends the Queen’s College – in the morning without breakfast. I would like to ask the Minister to consider increasing the allowances to these students who come from the interior to attend high schools in Georgetown. Another point I would like to make is that for the last three months these students who normally get toilet paper, toilet accessories and pocket money, have not received their pocket money. Perhaps the Minister can enquire into that also.

Subhead 23. Cost of Operating Lethal Chamber: This is a small question. I don’t know what this means. Perhaps the Minister can tell us what it is all about.

The last question is on subhead 20, Miscellaneous Expenses – Rest Houses.

Some two years ago, the residents of Sand Creek, South Rupununi, were told by Government officers that they should construct a rest house in the village so that when Government officers and Mosquito control personnel and other government people go into the area they would have a place to rest. The Captain was very enthusiastic about it and he encouraged the people to start construction of this rest house. They were promised that if they could provide labour and perhaps go to the mountain foot and get the materials, the frames, Government would provide zinc sheets and other materials. I have a photograph here. This was taken two years ago, just a bare frame. The hon. Minister Cde. Hoyte was at Sand Creek some time ago. I wonder if he noticed it. Two years ago this building was started and because they did not get the materials from the Government the whole project is now left unfinished. I would like the Minister to look into this, to provide the people with the necessary materials so that perhaps when next the Minister goes up there, or perhaps when next I go up there, I will have somewhere to rest.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I have two short questions. Page 107, items (25) and (26), the same point I will make on both. There is, in respect of the Revised Estimates for 1977 for both these items, Chief Hinterland affairs Officer and Hinterland Affairs Officer (Welfare) significant underspending, thereby indicating that the posts are either vacant or they have only

recently been filled. But in respect of item (25), it is stated in the legend that the office is vacant. In respect of item (26), only \$366 was spent in 1977. I presume that the office must be vacant too. If these posts are necessary then as long as they remain unfilled the interior people will to some extent be suffering –

The Chairman: Doesn't the legend say the office is re-designated?

Mr. Singh: They're underspending in the vacancy also. That is the trend since I have been in this House. Underspending pre-supposes vacancy. Page 109, item (75), Warden, Amerindian Residence. Again underspending of only \$231 for 1977. These are to do with Amerindians. We would like to know that they are given as much consideration as anybody else and therefore, these posts should be filled as early as possible. Item (81) on that same page, Hinterland Development Officer. These are new posts. I wonder if we could get some details from the hon. Minister as to these 19 new posts, the necessity for creating them, whether they are filled now, where these 19 people will be deployed to, or maybe redeployed –

The Chairman: Cde. Lalbahadur asked all that.

Mr. Singh: Did you ask that? He says no. I take it he should be able to tell me what he asked. The last question is on page 111, subhead 30, Assistance for the Establishment of Unions of Co-operative Societies. This, I note, seems to be a new subhead. There isn't reflected in the Estimates any figures other than the new figure for 1978 of \$50,000. Could we have some details on this, what is it all about?

The Chairman: Cde. Hoyte.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, a question was raised on subhead 1, item (15), and it was a question which queried the increase in the number of Senior Clerks from 2 to 7. Similarly, there

were questions about the increases in the Clerical Establishment, item (18), and on item (23). Those questions were raised by Cde. Lalbachan Lalbahadur.

7.10 p.m.

Now, during the course of last year there was a reorganisation of Ministries and re-assignment of portfolios and there were assigned to the Minister of Economic Development, responsibilities for what used to be the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation, therefore, the following divisions came within his portfolio: Co-operatives, Community Development, Local Government and Valuation Division. At the end of the year, that former Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation was merged with the Ministry of Regional Development, so, instead of there being three Ministries, there are now two Ministries and that explains why there now appears to be an increase in staff in the Ministry of Regional Development. I would draw to the attention of Members of this House the fact that as a result of the merger of these two Ministries, 132 posts starting from senior posts proved to be redundant, so there were savings to that effect.

Maybe I can illustrate some of the problems which we identified when we brought the Ministries together. We found, for example, that there was a technical unit in the Ministry of Regional Development, there is a technical unit in the Community Development Department, there is a technical unit in the Valuation Division. All of these units grew up autonomously because there was no central control over the development of the Public Service which is a point I made in the course of the general debate when talking about redundancy and redeployment. Obviously we needed only one technical unit. It meant that there were several people, technically qualified who could not be accommodated within the framework of the Ministry and therefore had to be deployed to other areas where their skills were needed.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh asked about subhead 1, items (25) and (26), the posts being Chief Hinterland Affairs Officer and Hinterland Affairs Officer (Welfare). His perception is correct, the posts are vacant; there are people acting in them but the Public Service Commission has not as yet made the formal appointments. I think from time to time we point out in this House that we have no control over the pace at which the Public Service Commission works.

We have to wait until the Commission makes the appointments. I assume that the Commission has its own reasons for the pace at which it proceeds.

Then, Cde. Lalbachan Lalbahadur spoke about subhead 1, items (30) to (34). He made a number of strictures. He wanted to know why there were so many people, what they were doing and things like that. In the first place, one has to appreciate that these are not people in Georgetown; the regional system spans the entire country. The regions are very large. Region No. 1, for example, is over 22,000 square miles of very rugged and difficult terrain. We are talking about the North West Region. Region No. 6, the Rupununi, is about 37,000 square miles, again a very difficult terrain. Officers have to be posted as far as Konashen, in the Pakaraimas, and places like Annai. **[Interruption]** We need more, I agree entirely. As I travel the country, I sometimes realise that many of our remote areas are perhaps not being served as effectively as we would like because of lack of personnel and problems of communications but then one cannot in the same breadth say that you need more people and then say, why have you got so many people in the Estimates? I should also mention that many of the old posts have been abolished. For example, many people who used to be District Administration Officers, that is, the Local Government people, we have done away with them and we have brought them into the regional system. So these posts do not reflect necessarily additional personnel. They reflect the fact that there has been some streamlining of the administration and there has been an integration of functions so that you do not have people falling over one another and saying that they belong

to different agencies, different Ministries, and getting into each other's way, instead of combining to serve the people.

The general strictures against the Ministry of Co-operative Development, I will not deal with at this stage; I do not take them to be serious. The question was asked as to whether the post at item (70), subhead 1, was the personal maid of the Regional Minister. It is not. It is a maid for the Rest House. We have several Rest Houses which fall under the administration of the Ministry of Regional Development and as comrades know, when they travel, and several comrades on the Opposition side have travelled and made use of their Rest House facilities, there are cooks and maids and people who look after their comfort and welfare.

Mr. Singh did ask about subhead 1, item (75), Warden, Amerindian Residence. Again, that is a P.S.C. appointment. There is somebody acting in the post but the P.S.C. has not formally appointed that person. The Chief Interior Development Officer has been acting all along – for three years. You cannot blame the Government for that. I do not know what the problem is.

Subhead 1, item (81), the question was asked what these Hinterland Development Officers are going to do. They are going to do some of the work in the Hinterland Regions that I was just talking about. We have too many people based on the coast. This is part of the redeployment exercise. We are going to put most of our officers in among the people who need to be served by the officers. We are going to strip to the bone the administration in Georgetown, at least within my Ministry, and most of the people you see here, including the senior officers in the Co-operative Development Division, about whom Cde. Lalbachan Lalbahadur spoke, are going to live in the regions where they have to work.

Then a question was asked about Transport and Travelling. Again you know, Cde. Chairman, we have in the regional system some 70-odd boats. Otherwise, the Regional Ministers, the Regional Officers, dispensers and other people, whose services are vital to our

riverain comrades, would not be able to travel, visit and discharge their duties. Our experience has been that this provision is really too small. We would like our officers to get out more frequently but very often they are constrained by the fact that they have a certain allocation which they cannot exhaust within the first half of the year because they have no certainty that they will get more. So, when one takes into account the large number of vehicles, both land and water, when one takes into account the difficult terrain which regional officers have to traverse, when one takes into account the scattered nature of population in the North West, the Mazaruni/Potaro, Cuyuni and in the Rupununi, one will see that the need for travel is very important. The uniforms referred to at subhead 7 are uniforms for people like boat-hands, boat captains and so on. We do provide them with uniforms.

Subhead 9, Entertainment Expenses – Regional Development Officers.: I think it is \$100 a month which is accountable, which is made available to Regional Development Officers. A Regional Development Officer functions in the nature of Permanent Secretary to a Regional Minister. People come from far distances and visit his office and it is a little difficult to put a senior officer in a position where he cannot offer that comrade a cup of coffee, tea or some refreshing drink. He gets that small amount to enable him to do just that and it is accountable unlike some other allowances which some other officers receive.

Subhead 10, House and Office Rental: Again, we are posting officers into all parts of the country. In many cases there is not Government accommodation, or Government accommodation is not readily available. Therefore we have this provision which enables the Ministry to rent a house. So the officer cannot say he cannot find accommodation and use that as an excuse for not taking up his assignment. Sometimes his house is also used as his office. In some cases we rent a building as an office. We have done that on the East Coast until we are able to build a Government office. I know in places like Bartica, we have had to rent until we were able to acquire Government premises. That is what this provision is for.

Subhead 14, Maintenance and Operation of Land and Water Transport: Again I really cannot separate the persistence of my good friend Cde. Lalbachan Lalbahadur. Cde. Nokta, my peripatetic friend, is travelling in all the Amerindian areas telling them how badly off they are. I would wish to say first of all that there is no Amerindian Village called Shiriri. There is no Captain at any Amerindian Village called Shiriri. It follows as a matter of logic, since there is no Amerindian Village called Shiriri, there is a mountain called Shiriri and there are four families living there. If you tell me the name of the Captain – because we are responsible for Amerindian affairs and we have a list of all Amerindian Captains – I do not want the photograph. I want the name of the Captain because I am asserting here that your information is inaccurate. It is like the photograph which appeared in the **Mirror** of Ignatius Charlie with some children, when there was this wild allegation that the Amerindian children were starving. The only thing about it is that that photograph had appeared a year ago in the same paper, the **Mirror**, saying that Ignatius Charlie was a man who had a great regard for little children.

Cde. Chairman, having recognised the fact that Government had increased Hinterland scholarships significantly, as reflected by the figures from \$10,000 to \$200,000, the member went on to make a number of inaccurate allegations, inaccurate because the figures he called were incomplete figures. A child who has been awarded a hinterland scholarships gets his or her passage paid to and from his place of residence and back home, that is to Georgetown, to go to school, and during the holidays he goes back home. Some go by air, some by boat, some by road and boat, depending upon where they live. Those passages cost Government nearly \$40,000 and they include passages for transportation in Georgetown where those children live some distance away from their school.

Secondly, each student receives a pocket piece for his or her personal use of \$15 a month. Thirdly, each student is provided with uniforms, the uniforms appropriate to the schools which they attend. Only the boarding and lodging expenses of each child are paid. In other words, the child is not given money and told go and feed yourself. Arrangements are made with citizens

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who are screened, interviewed and approved to take these children into their homes. We look for stable homes where people are humane, seem to have a love for children and very often have children themselves.

In addition, books are provided and paid for by the Government. We do have a contingency allowance which is controlled by the Ministry which takes care of any little problem that might arise in the case of a child. To come here and say Government gives them \$65 per month is a little inaccurate, to put it mildly and to put it gently. **[Interruption]**

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Cde. Basir made two very important points. I would look into them, that is, the need for a hostel at Riverstown and the need for improvement to the hostel at Charity. Since my Permanent Secretary is here, I will take this opportunity to give him the necessary instructions to have that matter looked into immediately. Subhead 23, cost of Operating Lethal Chamber. This was a grant made to the Georgetown Town Council. They have a chamber for putting to sleep, I think it is a euphemism, diseased cats and dogs and animals like that. It is a Local Government branch really. I don't know why we persist in keeping it here, it is so small a sum.

Then the question was raised as to why the contributions towards the maintenance of roads and streets, that is subhead 26, have been reduced. Now, there are two reasons. One is that the Ministry of Works, that is, Roads Division, and the Georgetown Town Council are at the moment, experimenting in the use of clay bricks for street building, road construction. Many comrades who know London well will know that many of the streets in London especially the News are built of clay blocks. We hope that those experiments will prove successful and therefore the cost of road building ought to be reduced dramatically because then we wouldn't have to bother with cement and the bitumen and all those high priced inputs, which we have to import.

Now, secondly, there are arrears of rates amounting to \$7.5 million owing to Local Authorities and the procedures for recovering rates are very cumbersome, very slow. There are with the law officers, at the moment, the necessary drafting instructions to amend the law to provide for a really expeditious system of recovering these rates and we hope that that law will be ready sufficiently early to allow Local authorities to recover these rates and get on with their capital works without waiting for transfers from the central Government.

Subhead 30, Assistance for the Establishment of Unions of Co-operative Societies: There were questions on this and rightly so. This is, as has been observed by the questioners, a new provision. Now if comrades would turn to page 108, right at the bottom they will see 29 posts of Senior Co-operative Officer and Co-operative officer have been abolished. What we propose to do is to place the responsibility for managing and administering co-operatives and for co-operative development more firmly in the hands of the people, the co-operators themselves. In other words, we are going to get away from this old paternalistic approach whereby people look for Government officers to help them to do this and help them to do that. And that answers the question raised by, I think, Cde. Lalbachan Lalbahadur on the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College. The Kuru Kuru Co-operative College, over the years has been turning out large numbers of people trained in various skills relevant to running Co-operative Societies, relevant to running consumers' societies, agricultural societies, co-operative manufacturing societies.

We have, every year, more and more young people, graduating. What we hope to do is to set up a number of regional co-operative societies made up of the units within the region. So you have regional bodies who will be responsible for promoting co-operative work within the region, developing training and generally managing co-operatives. After all, that is the whole concept of co-operatives. It is not something where the Government controls it, it is something where the people control it. That is a further step in what we conceive to be the democratization of our society. This provision here is to enable the Co-operative Department to get these regional bodies going. There is going to be some initial additional expense. We can't get away from that,

but we hope that once we get the regional bodies going they will be self financing. In other words, co-operative societies will make contributions to their Unions, the Unions will employ their own staff, will employ development staff, and get on with the task.

The Kuru Kuru Co-operative College is very important to the work that we have to do in developing the Co-operative sector. Contrary to what Cde. Belgrave sees, there is no de-emphasis upon co-operativism in this country as a philosophy for socialist development. The reason for the figure in 1976 being over \$1 million, is that in 1976 we had some construction work so that the figure in 1978 is related largely to maintenance and administrative costs, but in 1976 we had construction works to be completed at the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College.

It is true that Co-operatives have failed but I think that one should also say that capitalist ventures fail. I was reading recently that for 1977 there were 200,000 failures of private businesses in Japan, one of the most capitalist of countries. There was an extremely large number in the U.K. running into thousands. But the point is that any business will fail if it is not properly managed. Co-operatives fail; they will continue to fail but that is no reason why we should abandon them. What we need to do is exactly what we are doing, we are strengthening the personnel, strengthening the institutions to produce the personnel who can manage them successfully and that will continue to be the thrust of this Government; it will continue to be the philosophy which informs our developmental process.

Head 34, Ministry of Regional Development - \$5,673, 969 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 113, Division XX, Ministry of Regional Development.

DIVISION XX, MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,800,000 for Division XX, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Nokta: Mr. Chairman, Subhead 9, Matarkai Development Authority. I notice again \$2 million is to be voted.

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Well, I do not want to ask a question about what development is taking place because we know what is happening there. Estimates of Revenue showed for the past couple of years that no revenue has been coming out. So it means no development. But what I want to ask the Minister is, within this Project Matarkai, which embraces Matthews Ridge, Arakaka and Port Kaituma, there is a place called Jonestown and from information we have, about 700 Americans – I am subject to correction, perhaps the Minister can tell us – if not 700, a large number of Americans are having a substantial amount of land on which they claim to be doing agriculture. In fact, these people have a base in Georgetown and they move around in vans marked “People’s Temple”. I understand the head of that project People’s Temple is a man called “Jim Jones.” I would like to ask the Minister, in keeping with this national thrust where we are nationalising foreign property, how are we allowing foreigners to occupy land in this area and how many acres of land –

The Chairman: Cde. Nokta, do you know how many Indian nationals own land and property in Georgetown?

Cde. Nokta: Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to tell us how many acres of land within the Matarkai Development Authority are owned or leased by these people who call themselves “People’s Temple”, whether this land is freehold or on lease and how much money is

being derived, whether these people are required to pay any rental fees for these lands that they occupy.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Cde. Chairman, on this same question put by Cde. Nokta, but not what he said, we have a lot of inputs in this area for years now. All I want to know in economic terms is the output. There has to be some kind of balance –

The Chairman: May I say that is a very relevant question.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Thank you, Cde. Chairman, because we have been hearing for many years now, that amounts have been put into that area. All I want to know is the input and output and what the projection is in order to recover expenditure so far.

The other last point is on the Community Development Project. We see we have here \$800,000. Just briefly, I ask of the Minister concerned what are the projects and what are the projections involved.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, the Member Cde. Nokta claimed that the revenue statement shows that no revenue came out of the Matarkai area. I wonder if he will refer me to the Revenue statements in the estimates which say that. I cannot reply to him unless I know that.

Cde. Nokta: Cde. Chairman, on page 6, there is a heading called Matthew's Ridge. Well under this same heading, that whole area now is being incorporated, Matthews's Ridge/Arakaka.

The Chairman: There are several items and numbers. You expect me to go through each one of them?

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Cde. Nokta: The last one under the heading, Code Number, right down under the bottom, 157, number of Head and Subhead.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, let me help you. It is subhead 55, it is headed Matthew's Ridge.

Cde. Nokta: Yes, it is subhead 55. That whole area is now incorporated in what we call Matarkai, Matthews's Ridge, Arakaka and Port Kaituma and as I see it, no revenue. Perhaps the Minister can tell us then how much revenue has come out of that area.

Cde. Hoyte: Well, I have to express some pity for the hon. Member. We are talking about a legal entity called the Matarkai Development authority which is something separate and distinct from a mere geographical area. We are talking about legally different things.

Cde. Chairman, the question of the Community Development Projects, I am afraid that there are several of them and I could not get a list off-hand but I can indicate that they have to do with a number of small projects in rural areas.

NB: PAGES ARE MISSING FROM THE ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT