

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 8]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1981) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

24 th Sitting	2 .p.m.	Friday, 13 th November, 1981
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (82)

Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (69)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister

Other Vice – Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Narain, A.A., M.P.,
Vice – President, Works and Transport

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,
Vice – President, Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice – President, Public Welfare (Absent)

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,
Vice – President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clark, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Minister of National Development

*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines (Absent)

*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture (Absent – on leave)

*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Education

*Non-elected Member

Ministers (12)

- Cde. J.P. Chowrimootoo, J.P., M.P.,
Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the
Ministry of Public Welfare (Absent)
- Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives
- Cde. J.N. Maitland – Singh, M.P.,
Minister, Consumer Protection, in the
Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister, Crops and Livestock, in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of
Economic Planning and Finance
- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.,
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry
of Agriculture
- *Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,
Minister of Information (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P.,
Minister, Forestry, in the Ministry
Agriculture
- *Cde. Y.V. Harewood – Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Public Service
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, Office of the President
- *Cde. R.C. Sluytman, M.P.,
Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. R.A. Van West – Charles, M.P.,
Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare (Absent)

Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State for Culture, in the
Ministry of Education, Social Development
and Culture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport, in the
Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,
Minister of State for Construction, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend – Kirton – Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women’s Affairs and
Housing
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent)

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.	
Cde. M. Ally, M.P.	
Cde. M. Armagon, M.P.	
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.	
Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.	(Absent – on leave)
Cde. J.B. Calderia, M.P.	
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.	
Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.	
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.	
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.	
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.	
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.	(Absent)
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.	
Cde. J. Gill – Mingo, M.P.	
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.	
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.	
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.	
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.	
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.	
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.	
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.	
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.	(Absent)
Cde. H.B. Walcott – Nascimento, J.P., M.P., Government Chief Whip	

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.	(Absent – on leave)
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.	

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)	
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)	
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)	
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)	
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)	
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)	
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)	(Absent)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)	
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/ Upper Essequibo)	(Absent)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)	

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.,
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.,
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,
Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.

(Absent)

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.

(Absent)

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

(Absent)

Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P., M.P.

Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. Frank Narain, A.A.

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLYPRAYERSANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLeave to Members

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

PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTIONAPPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 4/1981

“Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates – Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ended 31st October, 1981 – totaling \$20,164,851. [The Vice – President, Economic Planning and Finance].

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Vice – President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Chairman, in accordance with paragraph 2 of article 171 of the Constitution I signify that Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly the motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4/1981 Schedule of Supplementary Provisions on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ended 31st October 1981 totalling \$20,164,851, and I now move the Motion.

The Speaker: The Motion is proposed, we will consider the Schedule as usual that is the items will be taken from both the Capital and Current Estimates in the order in which the Ministers are responsible. First the Prime Minister's head – Current Estimates item 1.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, we on this side of the Assembly have always been critical about this particular head item 1 which has a vote of \$22.5 million already. We notice that a further sum of \$254,497 is sought this afternoon but all that we have on the legend is that for other expenditure, the voted provision is inadequate. I am sure the Prime Minister would like to offer an explanation as to why this additional sum is needed and what the sum would be used for.

The Prime Minister: (Cde. Dr. Reid): Cde. Chairman, a note is taken that this voted provision of \$22.5 million has become inadequate at this time of the year and has come under the Guyana Defence Force but as usual this would cover the People's Militia and the National Service as well. In this type of expenditure of course it is well known that it is not practical even though possible to give details of this expenditure. We note generally some of the things which incur the expenditure and as far as the details are concerned the number of this or a number of that it is not a practical thing to do and so for the purpose of our security and more so at this time one would expect that this vote will change upward with all that is happening e.g. the Venezuelans Government. It is expected that this vote will have a change because the Guyana Defence Force has the role, the duty, the function to ensure that we maintain the integrity of our country, so that we can have a country to develop. Of course this is not the only type of expenditure that is being used to maintain the integrity of our country. Other areas will also incur expenditure and so it is not a practical to give the details especially at this time.

The Speaker: items 27 to 29 on the Current and items three and four on the Capital Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: One question I would like to ask Your Honor, with respect to item 27, whether these incentive payment embraces all categories of workers in the Public Works in the Ministry of Works or whether it is only for those people on the fixed establishment shown under Personal Emoluments. As you will appreciate Your Honor there are several categories of workers, fixed establishments, open vote and so on and if the sum of \$198,742 embrace them all will the honorable

Minister give some indication as to how these incentive are worked out. As I understand it the incentive scheme is something worked out between the Union and the Management. I am not sure this is not something forced down upon the workers but maybe the Minister will be able to give us an idea of the - -

The Speaker: we are dealing with Capital Estimates too 3 and 4 if you have any question on those.

Cde. Ram Karran: No, I do not have any questions.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, Capital Estimates item 4. I see this is Plant Maintenance and Hire Division (New) purchase of Equipment and the sum allocated for the very first time is \$660, 551, well we read in the legend that \$32,000 has already been advanced in the Contingencies Fund, I notice in the papers almost every week advertisements selling vehicles. It seems to me as if this Division is selling a lot of vehicles, I am sure everyone of us have seen the advertisements. I wonder whether the Honourable Minister could tell us therefore how come they are buying vehicles now. What it is they are buying and what will they buy for this \$660,551.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

2:20 p.m.

Vice – President, Works and Transport (Cde. Naraine): Cde. Chairman, the incentive scheme covers all categories of workers whether they are on the Fixed or pensionable establishment or they are what used to be known as the ‘Unfixed’, whether they are monthly, weekly or daily workers. They are regular workers and it is paid to all workers, or groups of workers, who qualify.

What happened was that at the commencement of the year, each division worked out for itself a mission in terms of the quality of work it proposed to do for the year and, depending on its performance in terms of its own mission, the incentive was worked out. Of course, this had to be sent to the Central Incentives Committee, who then ratified it. It had to be signed by the Union who represent the workers.

On this Incentive Committee, Cde. Yarde, who is the representative of one of the Unions, sat during the deliberation on how the incentive scheme would work and so, again, all the workers who qualify benefit from this scheme. Those that qualify range from 60 per cent up. One section made as high as 170 per cent. Depending on the level, the amounts of money were calculated.

The question of Plant Maintenance and Hire Division: these vehicles are new cars that were purchased by Plant Maintenance and Hire Division for a number of reasons. The Plant Maintenance and Hire Division pool had not been supplied with cars since 1975. A number of the vehicle had to be boarded and so 15 cars – these were the Lada cars which were bought from the Soviet Union – were supplied to the pool. Then there were cars which were supplied to certain categories of officials who were entitled to car allowances or cars supplied by the State. This included Ministers. Members of Parliament were allowed to buy cars with duty free concessions. So 25 cars were used in this way. In fact, two cars of this lot, a total of 42, are still available for allocation. The money voted here was used for the purchase of these 42 cars.

On the question of selling vehicles: these are vehicles that are boarded as unserviceable. It is a common practice for such vehicles to be sold. What the Plant Maintenance and Hire Division has done is that it has made a survey of all mobile mechanical equipment throughout the country. This equipment was stored at various localities and an in-depth study was done in relation to those vehicles which would be retained for repairs and rehabilitation. It was decided that those that were too bad for repairs were out of the present Government standardisation policy should be sold. The Notices, which the hon. Member Mr. Fielden Singh referred to, relate to those vehicles which are being sold and are no longer required for public use.

The Chairman: Items 33 to 40 on the Current Estimates and items 6 to 12 on the Capital Estimates.

Items 23 to 26 on the Current Estimates. Item 41 on the Current Estimate. Item 2 on the Current Estimate.

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, I want to raise a question.

The Chairman: Just a minute, Cde. Ram Karran. /Pause/ Yes, Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to raise the question of inadequate information and also the principle of hiding the expenses under this Ministry, Ministry of National Development, - it has been repeated over in this House – in a blatant attempt to cheat the taxpayers.

The hon. Prime Minister said just now that, for security reasons, the votes under the Guyana Defence Force cannot be itemised. I have repeatedly drawn to your attention, sir, in this House, that in Parliamentary democracies, particularly in the United Kingdom Parliament, which we used to call the Mother Chamber, it is only in war time or in periods of crisis that the Defence Force hide their estimates.

Of course, this Government lives in a fool's paradise to believe that even from these meager figures that appear in these Heads people cannot work out details and know what is taking place. We know that a lot of manipulation goes on, not only under the Guyana Defence Force but more particularly under the Ministry of National Development. What is the excuse for hiding these figures? Everyone knows that the money is improperly spent.

Motions after Motions have appeared in this Chamber for the audited statements, for statements from the Auditor General, or for the breakdown of sub-heads under this Ministry, but Parliament and the people of this country, whose money they misappropriate – and I say so advisedly; perhaps I should use a strong word – are being taken for a ride through the years.

When is this nonsense going to stop? When are they going to stop sheltering under excuses that a bridge has to be made here and a bridge has to be there and it cannot be shown. The appropriation act itself, the Constitution itself, expects that if you are spending other people's money you must give an account of it and that is why in the Estimates we state so much for Personal Emoluments, so much for Travelling. Why is this Ministry excused?

Cde. Ram Karran: You have referred, sir, on many occasions to the inadequate information which they have in the legends here. Always they tell us voted provision inadequate. Voted provision for what? This sort of rascality has got to come to an end. We cannot go on like this and I think you as the Chairman of this Committee, Your Honor will not continue to tolerate it. The honorable Ministers must do their work. The people must be told what their monies will be spent for all the way, through additional information provided. New subhead created and those set of – I do not want to continue in that strain – have to accept it. New subhead created, that is all and the people's money going down the drain. The Ministry of National Development must be singled out, sir, as the greatest sinner in this respect and I would like to hear what the Minister has to say. Why have they not answered the questions which were asked? Specifically what sums of money were spent under various heads? What is the director of Audit or the Auditor General – we have prompted him – what is he doing about these things? When are we going to hear about these things in the Public Accounts Committee? I hope that something will be forthcoming.

You cannot say that you are an honest Government spending tax payers money; you have got their confidence and this, that and the other. Everybody knows there is a big – what do you call it in Trinidad again? Babool, a big babool going on, and it is going on here because I know money from this head has been used to buy people's houses; to buy people's – to buy houses for them. That sort of nonsense cannot continue to go on. I can call names when the time comes.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I am sincerely hoping that this would not yet again be an exercise in frustration, but I am doubtful whether it will still not be an exercise in frustration. If you remember rightly, from the time this Head was introduced – P.P.P. were boycotting Parliament in those days – I pleaded and asked for details. I said, “Why cannot this be done in the conventional manner, and why cannot details be given as in every other Head in the Estimates in the conventional manner”? I was told that Guyana was a developing country and you cannot list those things like building a bridge, this that and the other and I cannot – it is not capable of being itemized and quantified. I do not accept that. It is a lot of money, \$7.5 million, Plus an additional \$1.8 million. I cannot accept it. You cannot quantify these things, you cannot list them. In the final analysis, the honorable Minister at that time said, but, everything would be okay. The Director of Audit will be auditing the accounts and eventually they will come to you and we know what the position is with the Director of Audit report. I do not want to go into that, but I mentioned one thing though not so long ago, the Ministry of National Development was burnt down. What will the Director of Audit audit? Will there be any accounts for him to audit? Will there be any details? What will be forthcoming? We were given the assurance that we in Parliament will have a chance to see and and study the figures of the report of the Director of Audit. Can the hon. Minister tell us what records were burnt up, if there are any records available after the burning down of that building, or is it that all records to date were burnt up? Therefore, we will still be in the same place and we will know nothing at all about them.

Minority Leader (Cde. Dr. Jagan): Mr. Speaker, this matter is very serious and I do not think that the Government should take it very lightly. The last speaker said since 1973 he raised this matter in this Assembly. Now, only recently we have seen where the U.S. Government, one of the strongest backers of this Government, vetoed a loan – [Interruption] – Yes, temporarily, on the ground that they could not verify, they could not quantify how this money was being spent. What does that suggest? Fraud! Corruption! And the aid donors are worried because they are pumping money in the country and it is not producing the political results they want because this Government is bankrupt politically. I saw there was

a little chuckle when I talked about supporting this Government. The figures are there. From '74 to '79, the four year period the average loan - -

The Chairman: Cde. Jagan let us not go into that part yet. That is a dialogue for another occasion.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: that is for at least \$187 million in the last four years, average per year. So do not let us hide – but they are worried and if that is a signal to them to push them backwards, to warn them also to go backwards, this also is well known. If you look into the U.S. State Department report on the violation of Human Rights - -

The Chairman: let us deal with this please. You are not dealing with this. Let us deal with this.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: we are dealing with the question of a loan; money which is being spent, taxpayers money which is not being audited properly.

The Chairman: We are not dealing with any loan here, we are dealing with a provision of increased expenditure under the heading of National Development.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: I move that this sum be reduced to \$1.

Cde. Ram Karran seconded.

Question put, and negatived.

The Chairman: that remains as it is. Cde. Corbin.

Minister of National Development (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Speaker, this item the Ministry of National Development has indeed been the subject of constant debate in this Parliament. I think too, and the records are very clear, that the Minister before me spent a grate deal of time to explain the functions and purposes of this organization. This afternoon there is only really one question which has been raised on this Head. The question of the loan which the hon. Leader of the Minority raised, is not really relevant to the Ministry of National Development. It is only interesting to note that ha has said that the U.S. Government has not given the money because they are not getting the political results they desire. I do not know whether he wished us to carry out the wishes of the U.S. Government.

The Chairman: Cde. Corbin, do not let us carry on with that section of it.

Cde. Corbin: on the second issue raised by the Leader of the smaller section of the Minority, Cde. Speaker, I am not in a position to say what are the details of the records which were burnt when the Ministry of National Development was burnt down. All I can say is that all the documents which were in that building at that particular time were destroyed.

On the Question raised by the Deputy Leader of the Minority Group, Cde. Speaker, I was very surprised to hear him speak so much about Parliamentary Democracy. Using the British model as far as the New Constitution, which we have approved in this Parliament is concerned, the masses of the people of this country, speaks about building a socialist democracy in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. [Applause.] In the construction of the Socialist democracy, I am sure that these comrades who have spoken at least on the question of the construction of Socialism recognise that, the transition period is not a very easy one. It is a period when the working class needs to be given the necessary support and the necessary education, which is important if they are to give leadership and to play their role in the construction of socialism. The Government of the People's National Congress recognises its responsibility since it is in the vanguard of building the socialism which we are speaking about in Guyana. [Applause.] As a result the Ministry of National Development would have been an agency for mobilisation of people for educating people so they can appreciate and understand the necessary changes which are taking place, and at the same time play a more meaningful role in the developing process of this country.

Cde. Corbin: The reason for this sum, Cde. Speaker, because you will recognise that in last December we adopted a new Constitution. This heralded in a new system of democracy. It brought into effect the system of Local Democratic Organs and throughout the length and breadth of this country many people did not understand what taking place. The Ministry of National Development, recognising its responsibility saw the need to initiate or organise programmes throughout the length and breadth of this country, in keeping with its responsibility of being in the vanguard, to explain to the people what is taking place and the changes which are necessary, and this sum was utilised in the process of mobilisation and education.

The Speaker: Item 32, Head 79 – Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection, subhead 18 – Contribution to Caricom Secretariat. Item 6, Head 9 – Attorney General subhead 16 – (New) Maintenance and Operation of Vehicle.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, Item 6. New subhead created. There is no explanation as to how and when this money will be spent. It is a new subhead and the legend says Maintenance and Operation of vehicle. What kind of vehicle? How many vehicles? I think we should be told.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Cde. Speaker, I was merely going to supplement what the last speaker said that these things really are insulting to Parliament, in that we would really like to have more details. Do not put (New) Maintenance and Operation of vehicle. A new subhead is created. New subhead created all right. We know it is new because they say it is new under the subhead. So the note should not say new subhead created. It is there already. How is it being created. A vehicle is being used, by whom, for whom, to what respect? What are the details. This is what I would like to see in future.

Cde. Hoyte: it is very simple and routine matter. The Ministry has acquired a vehicle in the same way as all Ministries have vehicles, and that vehicle has to be serviced.

The Speaker: Items 7 – 22 and Item 42 on the General Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, what I would like to ask on Item 7, Head 27 – Ministry of Agriculture, subhead 10 – Entertainment allowance, is that when we are talking about austerity and constraints and the need for sacrifices we find, this afternoon that we are providing not only for 4 Permanent Secretaries for a single Ministry – Agriculture, but we also have to give all the other perks that go with the appointment of Permanent Secretaries, like on this occasion, entertainment allowance. I wish strongly to express the opposition concerned for this kind of wastage of public funds and call upon Government this afternoon in one area where they can start making the sacrifice to reduce, I do not want to be unkind to public officers, entertainment allowance for all by 50 per cent. I want to call, from this side of the Assembly to reduce all entertainment allowance for all by 50 per cent instead of coming at the end of the year to ask Parliament to provide money for entertainment allowance.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Cde. Speaker, in fact there is little to answer, if any at all, because what has been noted here is allowance for four new Permanent Secretaries and one would recall that in the cluster of Ministries in the Ministry of Agriculture there are four new Ministries. Ministry of Drainage and Irrigation, the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Crops and livestock. Obviously, if there are new Ministries there must be new Permanent Secretaries, and obviously if there are Permanent Secretaries they must carry entertainment allowance. I do not see any question to answer in this respect. I do not know any Permanent Secretary who has not had his entertainment allowance. I repeat, Cde. Speaker, I see very little to answer.

The Speaker: Item 1. Items 30 and 31, Head 56 – Ministry of Education and Item 5, Division

XXVIII – Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture on the capital estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, dealing firstly with Item 30 – Head 56 – Primary and Secondary Schools. I recall that on the last occasion the Minister of Education gave a very lengthy reply to this question. But my information is, I am sure he will not deny it, that in a number of schools children have not been given uniforms until today. You will find that in so many schools. Now, I think what the Assembly needs to know, bearing in mind you have provision here for in November for \$1,666,849, the question that one must ask is if this will complete the exercise of providing uniforms for children in the schools and when, as Government has been making a big thing about it, all the children will really get free uniforms? If there is any impediment for some to get or is it the policy for all to get or only certain categories to get. The earlier speaker of the Ministry of National Development spoke of educating the people. I can tell you that as far as children are concerned they are confused. They hear from every Government spokesman that free uniforms, free books, free this, free that and free the other and until this moment there are children without this so-called freeness that the Ministry has been talking about. I would like the Minister to tell us exactly what the position is.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

Item 31, Head 56 – Primary and Secondary Schools. I am sure the Minister will agree that so far as supplies for schools are concerned it has reached scandal point. You name the school today in the country and the headmaster and teachers would have been complaining. In fact, headmasters told parents when they were taking children there for the new term that “we are willing to have your children, we have no equipment, we have no benches, we have no desks, we have no teachers. If the Ministry will give us these facilities that are vital and necessary for the schools to be run properly we are ready and willing to accept your children.” These things are so inter-related that while you might have a building, if the building is not equipped then what would happen. Even if you have equipment, if there are no teachers you have problems again. On this occasion I would not criticise the Ministry for asking for \$80,000, but I would like to ask the Minister why it is that he is asking for such a small sum when I am sure he must concede this afternoon that there is need for equipment and supplies in many, many schools. This sum is a ridiculous sum. It should be more than four or five times this amount so that we can properly equip all our schools so that the children pursuing their education would not in any way be impeded but would be given all the opportunity to study in a good environment. This sum, in my view, Cde. Chairman, clearly indicates that the school will have to continue to go without essential supplies and equipment.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 5 under the Capital Estimates, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, subhead 30 – Festivals and Exhibitions. We see that the sum which had been specifically set aside as having been considered adequate for festivals and exhibitions was \$100,000. You and I know that in these days of austerity we are short of money, we are short of foreign exchange. The Government experts felt at the beginning of the year that \$100,000 would have been enough for festivals and exhibitions. I think this sum has probably already been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. It seems to me rather alarming that we are now being asked to approve of nearly three times more than was originally thought to be sufficient for festivals and exhibitions. The legend states: “To meet increased expenses including cost of participation in Carifesta.” In these days, with all the threats we are being told about by our neighbours and all the problems that have, are we really sure that we are spending this money properly and correctly? Obviously we underestimated it. What else did we do to cause us to be spending nearly \$400,000 instead of the \$100,000 that we originally anticipated and thought would have been perfectly adequate for festivals and exhibitions.

The Minister of Education (Cde. Thomas): Cde. Chairman, I would ask that the Cde. Minister of State for Culture respond to the questions which were asked by the Member across there. I want to respond to the questions raised by the Member Reepu Daman Persaud by saying right away that he himself recognises that \$80,000 was a small sum if we are to talk in terms of supplies for schools in a general way. It is clear that he was addressing his mind to questions which would have been answered under another Head because this Head has nothing to do with furniture and the other items he referred to. It is an item which has to do primarily with grants to schools for the different departments and for other extra-curricular activities. It has an unfortunate styleline but as it is the Head is not being used for that. Surely, if it were to be used for that then we would need four to five times worth that money.

In so far as the first set of questions are concerned, I would like to say that I did attempt to answer this question during the course of the budget debate by saying that on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Co-operative Republic, it was the Cde. President who said as a Tenth Anniversary gesture that school children will be given free uniforms. As a result of that promise we have already

distributed 20,000 suits of uniforms to nursery students, 45,346 suits to new entrants of our primary schools; 20,830 suits to those new entrants to the secondary level, 9,100 suits to those students who participated in mass games and 654 suits to other necessitous cases including the Boy's Orphanage at Kitty, which as you know is an arm of the Guyana United Sad'r Islamic Anjuman, at their request. This makes a total of 105,930 suits of uniforms. [Applause] Therefore, this sum is now requested to tidy up that arrangement. In itself the exercise is not complete and Cabinet is now engaged in looking at this question of school uniforms again.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: There is only one clarification. The Cde. Minister at the conclusion of his answer attempted to deal specifically with the question I was asking. I was not asking for the answers which he gave earlier in the debate. Since the Government is saying that uniforms will be given to everybody, one would assume that when a statement of that kind is made Cabinet would have already given approval and not it is a question of implementing. The Minister concludes his answer by saying that Cabinet is now to look at it. My enquiry is, suppose Cabinet says no, would it mean that all children would not have uniforms? This is just for clarification of the Assembly.

The Minister of State for Culture in the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Cde. Corrica): Cde. Chairman, under item 5, Festivals and Exhibitions, as clearly stated here the proposed amount was inadequate. As we all know, Guyana is fully committed to Carifesta since we all know, too, that it was the brainchild of our beloved President, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, and our participation is always the very highest level.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Cde. Corrica: Now we took a team of 133 persons to perform and we had to provide over four hundred costumes. We took this opportunity also Cde. Chairman to show our Caribbean neighbours through culture why Venezuelans are claiming Guyana and this was done in the Kadooment “Essequibe in all its glory” and I could assure you Cde. Chairman that it was the best presentation at the Kadooment. We all know also Cde. Chairman, that as Mr. Singh rightly said that the prices of things went up, the foreign exchange differences etc., and when we send our artists and musicians outside we do not send them empty pocketed (as poor as we are we have some pride) we give them something and lastly Cde. Chairman, I would like to assure Mr. hon. Singh that this was one sum which was well spent and the artists did Guyana proud. /Applause/

The Speaker: Items 3 to 5 Current Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Item 5 Cde. Chairman, Public Relations Programme. The original vote was \$525,000 and the sum sought for now is 565,000 which is higher than the sum provided originally. One cannot see the importance of this vote at all within the framework of the Ministry of Information. While one would be prepared not to bother to question though it ought to be questioned that is item four from \$470,000 to \$972,000 which is double the amount for publishing and publicising. One would ask the question publishing what and publicising what, and would expect that any publication emanating from the Ministry of Information or from any government department which is of public importance that those publications ought to be made available to every member of this House. It is discourteous for members of this House to go abroad and find publications which they have never seen in this country. I do not think any member sitting on that side of the House can speak against that principle. I think this is elementary, we are sitting in the highest forum of the land and legislators ought to be kept informed of all matters that emanate from the Ministry of Information and I would like to urge that when we talk about publication and we talk about publicising that those publications must be confined to government business and there must be a clear separation between government and party publication. Party publications are financed out of the Treasury, out of tax payers money and it is another scandal. What kind of Public Relations Programme is needed? I want to know when members of the hierarchy of the Government are going abroad if they take Public Relations Officers and if they are drawn from the Ministry of Information and if those who are taken are being paid specifically and so on if that is the result of this amount, if not Cde. Chairman I stand corrected. I would like to know from this side of the Assembly what necessitated a sum higher than the original sum for Public Relations on this Estimate.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, the last speaker did not think that he should ask particularly about item 4, I think it is very relevant that we should ask about it because the original amount voted was \$470,000 the Supplementary Provisions now being sought for \$972,000 over two hundred per cent more but all the legend says is voted provision inadequate. So I am asking now for us to be told if \$470,000 for publications and publicising was not adequate at the beginning of the year, why is it necessary now for us to vote over twice the amount, what was the total sum used for, what were the publications, where were they sent to? I agree with the last point made by the last speaker I have not seen any particular publication from the Ministry of Information and I certainly would implore the hon. Minister to make available to the members of the Opposition such stuff as is printed for general publication and even for private publication so that members of the Opposition would know what the money is being used for because we have got to vote here to pass it, it is tax payers money. Thank you.

The Minister of Public Service (Cde. Benn): Cde. Speaker, to answer the last question first I would like to assure Mr. Singh that there are many many new publications and I would like to undertake to make them available to him. [Applause] On the other question, Cde. Speaker, Public Relations Programme, everybody is by now aware of all the additional expenses involved in attempting to cope with the Venezuelan threat. Many or most of our publications have had to do with just that item. We have done a tremendous amount of work un that area. In addition to that all the members on the opposite side are aware that printing costs have sky-rocketed, everything is much more expensive than it used to be and I think that for those two reasons additional expenditure is justified in this case. Thank you Cde. Chairman.

The Speaker: This completes consideration of all the items.

Question –

That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 4/1981, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ended 31st October, 1981 totalling \$20,164,851.

put and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in the Financial Paper No. 4/1981 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.

[Vice – President for Economic Planning and Finance.]

Adjourned accordingly at 3:11 p.m.